

7 Remenham Hill Planning Statement

June 2025

Proposed scheme: rationale and justification

1. Character of the Green Belt for NPPF

The part of Remenham Hill in which the property sits has a more suburban feel, being a row of semi-detached properties with large gardens and reasonable spaces between the properties. The properties opposite and further down the road are much more rural in nature, as you would anticipate in a Green Belt designation. We suggest that the strip of buildings on the north side of the road should be considered in the context of a village, where the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) operates in a more relaxed sense as the reason for incorporation in the Green Belt zone is to protect general character rather than openness.

2. Openness and scale in the Green Belt

Local plan policy states that for residential extensions in the Green Belt, development would not normally be permitted except where it *'does not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original dwelling'*. In policy TB01, it states that they will *'only be permitted where they maintain the openness of and do not conflict with the purposes of, including land in, the Green Belt'*. The NPPF also confirms that *'an exception will be given where the extension can be said not to result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building'*. The proposals are of limited scale, maintaining the openness and purpose of the Green Belt, and are not disproportionate to the original dwelling.

3. Scheme design to preserve openness

The openness of the plot will not be compromised by the rear extension, as it adds nothing to the visible width of the building frontage to the road side of the plot. Any oblique views of the extension between the house and the neighbouring property will be very minimal, and likely to be obstructed by vegetation in the adjacent front gardens. The existing garage has been demolished to facilitate the extension of the property and therefore will enhance the openness between the properties. There are five purposes set out in the NPPF for Green Belt designation (paragraph 80). The proposed rear extension will not impact on any of these.

4. Scheme design in moderate scale

The local policy CP12 and TB01 states that limited scale is defined generally by a maximum 35% increase in volume. There are several examples in the locality of 7 Remenham Hill where this increase has been inconsistently applied in recent years:

- Two storey rear extension (almost identical to the proposal), 9 Remenham Hill
- Two storey rear extension, 6 Remenham Hill
- Two storey side extension, Old Police House, Remenham Hill.
- Two storey side extension, 1 Remenham Hill
- Several extensions including full width rear extension, Majorica, Remenham Hill
- Replacement dwelling, Field End

These have all been more than 35% over the existing dwelling volume and also include several side extensions which restrict openness in a potentially harmful way, while our proposal does not. Officers' reports on these extensions imply that there is more flexibility in the interpretation of the 35% figure.

The volume calculations for the existing and proposed dwelling are as follows:-

	Original house (including garage)	As now proposed	% change
Site cover	12%	12%	0%
Footprint	81.2 sq.m	80.5 sq.m	0%
Floor space	108.49 sq.m	143.17 sq.m	32%
Volume	355 cu.m	484.61 cu.m	37%

There is no change to the width of house and a positive change to the built-up width of the plot.

5. A smaller scheme than the permitted development alternative

By following the rules for permitted development at this property, a single storey side extension and single storey rear extension could be added without need to be considered through the formal planning application process. The additional volume added under these restrictions would be 152 cu.m which represents a 43% increase in the volume, showing that a 'disproportionate' area in Green Belt terms could be added without the need for a submission. It also indicates that whilst the numerical calculations can help to assess whether an application is of acceptable scale within the Green Belt, there should be some consideration of the specific nature of the extension and the circumstances surrounding it, to enable a decision to be made in relation to the harmfulness of the application on the Green Belt.

Neighbour Amenity

The extension is centrally located within the site and well setback from the boundaries and contains no side facing windows. As a result, there are no foreseeable amenity issues.

Environmental impact

The proposals, in meeting and/or exceeding the current Building Regulations, will greatly improve the environmental performance of the house and therefore have a positive impact.

Summary

We suggest that the application is assessed on aspects of its size, siting, design and the character of its specific surroundings to establish the special circumstances which mitigate the inappropriateness suggested by the basic and inflexible numerical calculation of percentage volume.

We are mindful that the Planning Department has adopted a more flexible approach for other properties in the Remenham Hill area in context of Green Belt policy, and hope that the same pragmatism and good judgment may be applied to this scheme.

It is our opinion that the scale of the proposed development in relation to the original dwelling does not amount to inappropriate development, and the small amount by which the proposal exceeds the suggested requirement is far outweighed by the circumstances surrounding the design and its location. The improvement to the fabric of the existing building and its contribution to positive environmental solutions should also be taken into account.