

Appeal Ref	APP/B1550/A/06/2018375
Application No	06/00230/FUL
Appellant	Albon Engineering & Manufacturing plc
Location	Turret Farm, High Road, Hockley SS5 4TF
Decision	Dismissed (07.03.07)

The Inspector dismissed the appeal proposal for an extension to Turret Farm to provide three guest suites linked to Albon Engineering & Manufacturing plc. The Inspector took into consideration Government Planning Policy Guidance Note 2: Green Belts (PPG2), Note 4: Industrial Development and small Firms (PPG4), Note 13: Transport (PPG13), Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (PPS1), Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (PPS7) the Essex and Southend-on-Sea Replacement Structure Plan (Policy C2, and the Rochford Replacement Local Plan (Policy R1, R2, R5, CS3, CS5, TP1, LT19, NR1 and NR2).

The appeal site is a detached house accessed via a shared driveway from High Road. It is part of a larger group of buildings and lies outside the defined High Road settlement boundary. The proposed development therefore falls to be considered under Local Plan policy R5 governing extensions to dwellings in the Green Belt and national policies which seek to control development in the Green Belt and the countryside, rather than R2 which covers the defined rural settlement areas.

The Council does not take issue with the design of the proposed extension and the Inspector had no reason to disagree with this view. However, added to a previous extension to the house which was constructed some years ago, in the Council's estimation the proposal represents extension of around 477% over and above the size of the original dwelling, clearly far in excess of the 35% allowed for by policy R5.

Albon Engineering and Manufacturing is a successful, specialist company. It is one of the largest employers in Rochford and puts much of its success down to the personal approach and accessibility of its owners/managers who regularly entertain customers at Turret Farm, the home of the founder of the company. Many visitors come from abroad and are high-ranking executives and civic dignitaries who expect a high standard of accommodation. The appellants maintain that there are no high quality hotels in and around the Rochford area in which they can accommodate customers, so that they increasingly have to chauffeur business visitors to and from hotels in London.

The guest accommodation would comprise 3 en-suite rooms, breakfast/dining room, laundry facilities and conference room. The appellants argue that the Local Plan recognises the need for, and encourages the development of, hotel accommodation, but this would not be a facility open to the general public and is not therefore the hotel development supported by policy LT19. While a separate entrance to the guest area would be provided, it seems that the interconnectivity of the guest suites with the rest of the house means that this would be, to all intents and purposes a domestic extension, albeit that there would be more room to accommodate guests in comfort.

The Inspector concluded that the proposals amount to inappropriate development in the Green Belt that is not outweighed by very special circumstances and dismissed the appeal.

Appeal Ref	APP/B1550/A/06/2021664
Application No	06/00338/FUL
Appellant	Mr S Vinden
Location	The Pear Tree (Adj. Hillside), New Park Road, Hockley SS5 5JX
Decision	Allowed subject to conditions (15.02.07)

The Inspector allowed the appeal for the development proposed is retention of use of land for the stationing of a caravan for residential use together with storage of second caravan and keep hardstanding, stables and existing ancillary buildings and fences. The Inspector took into consideration the Essex and Southend-on-Sea Replacement Structure Plan (policy C2 and H6), and the Rochford District Replacement Local Plan (policy R1 and HP20).

The appeal site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt; such definitional harm is accepted by the appellant. The requirement in Policy HP20 is that applicants must have demonstrated that they have considered alternative non-Green Belt locations for their development. The Inspector considered the appellant had not adequately demonstrated that alternative non-Green Belt locations have been considered. The Council, however, was unable to suggest any alternative location for the family to move to, in the District or neighbouring authority areas.

The Inspector stated that the proposed development would be inappropriate and cause some harm to the openness of the Green Belt and its visual amenities. The Inspector regarded the circumstances of Rochford District and the lack of available non-Green Belt land as unusual, and the needs for additional gypsy sites regionally and locally are particularly pressing. The family's education needs go beyond the normal expectations of parents for their children, and the family has some local connections. While planned provision of sites is generally to be preferred, in the Inspector's view it is especially noteworthy that the appeal site satisfies all 7 criteria of Policy HP20 and, therefore, considered these factors, in combination, clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and are sufficient to constitute the very special circumstances necessary to justify permission.

The Inspector granted planning permission for use of land for the stationing of a caravan for residential use together with storage of second caravan and keep hardstanding, stables and existing ancillary buildings and fences at The Pear Tree in accordance with the terms of the application ref 06/00338/FUL and the plans numbered 05/89/1 and 05/89/2, subject to the following conditions:

- 1) The occupation of the site hereby permitted shall be carried on only by Mr Sam Vinden and/or Mrs Sarah Vinden and their resident dependants.
- 2) When the land ceases to be occupied by those named in condition 1 above, the use hereby permitted shall cease. Within 2 months of that time, all caravans, structures, materials and equipment brought on to the land in connection with the use (excluding the shed, stable block, fencing, wall and gates) shall be removed.
- 3) No more than 2 caravans, as defined in the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 and the Caravan Sites Act 1968, shall be stationed on the site at any time.