

Planning Statement

Hillside, Quarry Hill, Box, Wiltshire.

Increase rear extension gable width, replace side lean to roof with lower flat roof.



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Planning Statement:

Widening of rear first floor extension to improve room layout, removal of hipped/lean to roof areas to south west and north west elevations above single storey addition.

1. Introduction

This supporting statement accompanies a planning application for the improvement to the building aesthetically as well as improving the internal arrangement of the building. The dwelling is located within the Green Belt* (now meeting the Grey Belt test see below) and the Cotswolds National Landscape Area. The proposal has been carefully designed to align with both national and local planning policy, including guidance set out in PPG2 and relevant Local Plan policies.

2. Site Context

'Hillside' is a traditional stone-built dwelling built around 1800 in a traditional style and detail contributing positively to the character of Quarry Hill. It has been extended a few times from the mid 1900's on, adding and replacing single storey extensions to both sides and rear of the main dwelling.

The existing first floor rear extension subject to this application formed part of an earlier first floor roof extension that has been altered recently to a smaller gabled bathroom extension with small window. It has been built using traditional materials matching the property and is incorporated into the rear ground floor kitchen/dining rear extension roof area.

The south west facing side extension lean to roof terminates to the rear in a hipped roof structure over the kitchen extension, this is to be removed and replaced with a more contemporary flat roof allowing a more balanced and uncluttered first floor elevation with less obstruction to the original building.

The site lies within now considered Grey Belt and Cotswolds National Landscape area (formerly AONB), where development must be designed to respect the sensitive landscape setting as well as preserve or enhance the area's special landscape, architectural and historic interest.

3. Planning Policy Framework

National Policy

Green Belt and the changes now possible – up until recently the NPPF treated inappropriate development in the Green Belt as harmful and only allowed it in specific circumstances with justification; proposals had to be minimal and not cause material harm to the openness or the purposes of the Green Belt. However, such proposals may be acceptable where they did not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. **Grey Belt** changes the policy test entirely, the "disproportionate additions" test no longer applies. Therefore, the proposal now is not considered as inappropriate development, the old 50% rule of thumb being irrelevant, no longer constrained by the "original building" calculation, and the extension is judged on normal planning merits. Under the updated NPPF (Dec 2024) and updated PPG (Feb 2025), land that qualifies as **Grey Belt** is treated differently.

Grey Belt definition: Grey Belt is land within the Green Belt that **does not strongly contribute** to purposes (a), (b), or (d) of the Green Belt. If a site is Grey Belt **and** meets the criteria in NPPF paragraph 155, then: **Development on Grey Belt is *not* treated as inappropriate development.**

This is the crucial shift.

Design under the new Grey Belt test follows standard planning appraisal in design terms for scale, bulk and materials. Minor remodelling to a previously approved first floor rear extension together with the reduction in the existing lean-to side roofscape, being sensitively scaled and positioned to ensure it does not constitute a disproportionate addition, thereby complying with Green Belt policy regardless.

NPPF considerations:

- **National Landscapes area protection** — the NPPF seeks to both conserve and enhance landscape and scenic beauty in National Landscape areas; development in or affecting such areas should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated landscape.
- **Design, heritage and landscape conservation** — the NPPF requires good design that responds to local character, conserves heritage assets and their settings, and protects valued landscapes; proposals should demonstrate proportionate evidence that they preserve or enhance these qualities.

Local Policy – Wiltshire Core Strategy

- **Core Policy 51 Landscape** —development is designed to protect, conserve and enhance Wiltshire’s distinctive landscape character, to have full regard to the conservation and enhancement objectives of the National Landscape area, and to avoid adverse visual impacts; it also promotes opportunities for landscape enhancement.
- **Core Policy 57: Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping** requires that “development is designed to a high standard, responding positively to the existing context and ensuring that it integrates effectively with its surroundings”.
- **Core Policy 58: Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment** requires that “designated heritage assets and their settings will be conserved, and where possible enhanced, in a manner appropriate to their significance”.

These policies establish a clear requirement for sympathetic design and the removal of more unsympathetic additions with suitable proportionate enhancements to the building and area.

4. Design Rationale

- **The aim:** To demonstrate that the extension is modest and subordinate, removing an unnecessarily bulky roof with a low flat roof. The changes will result in a better first floor arrangement by integrating floor areas into the widened rear extension. With the more obtrusive side extension roof with high gable parapet removed the original stone gable will be re-exposed, this will allow more openness and scenic vistas from the public vantage points.
 - **Extension Form:** The new extension is modest, subservient, and designed to respect the proportions and roofline of the extension to the side as well as more successfully integrate into rear extension below.
 - **Materials:** Traditional materials (stone walls to match existing and matching slate tiles roofing) ensure visual harmony.
 - **Functionality:** Provides a more practical space for the existing more limited first floor area of the house, improving circulation without excessive enlargement.
 - **Green/Grey Belt:** Areas of the existing property have been sensibly removed/reduced to ensure that the widened gable of the rear extension causes little or no harm with no further cumulative addition (effectively a 10.62 cu.m. reduction).
 - **National Landscape:** Given the site's location within the National Landscape, the proposal has been developed with a clear emphasis on conserving and enhancing the scenic qualities of the area. The design responds positively to the landscape context, with particular attention paid to minimal massing, matching materials, and limited visual impact
 - **Policy Alignment:**
 - Meets **Core Policy 51** by enhancing and improving design within the landscape.
 - Meets **Core Policy 57** by delivering a minimal, high-quality design that responds to local character.
 - Meets **Core Policy 58** by conserving and enhancing through removal of an unsympathetic structure and sensitive in scale replacement.
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5. Design Concept:

A central consideration in replanning the first floor was to minimise the external massing of the extension on both the primary and secondary elevations and to ensure its sensitive integration with the surrounding landscape. A larger extension was discounted immediately because the property has been extended several times and such an addition would be contrary to policy.

Decisions about an application's merit should be made on a case-by-case basis with practical judgment taking precedence over rigid policy interpretation; therefore, evaluating and sensibly replanning the existing form—even if that required removing elements—was essential to the design. The design and access statement outlines the cubic areas of the building as well as the new form together with historical mapping in order to make logical justifications for the changes proposed.

The client requirement was to replan the main bedroom and ensuite to improve workable space and outlook, through some iterations the final and most appropriate solution found was to widen the rear gable and incorporate it into the front bedroom area, moving the ensuite to the front area of the house. This involved only a modest increase to the extension that is more than compensated by the removal of the side/rear roof.

The existing roof to the south-west elevation over both the side and rear extension forms a fairly steep lean to against the main gable of the host building terminating on the rear as a hipped roof form.

To summarise the final design benefits as follows:

- External bulk from front and side elevations reduced
 - The flat roof /low parapet detail improves the openness to the southern aspect
 - The widened extension will not result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original dwelling and the development will conserve the scenic qualities of this part of the National Landscape Area.
 - All materials and scale will match the host building.
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6. Impact

The property is sited on rising ground in both directions the northern end partially dug into the hillside, the changes will help to reduce visual prominence from public vantage points. While visible from the rear, the slight additional massing and bulk are not considered harmful to neighbouring outlook or amenity or the landscape. The proposed extension is sympathetic, modest, and enhances the setting of 'Hillside'.

Green / Grey Belt

The small scale of the extension or alteration are not disproportionate to the original structure. The proposal would involve the construction of a modest enlargement of an existing extension which when compared to dwelling as a whole would not result in a significant addition to the property adding only 3.8 sq m to the existing floorspace within the built form of the rear elevation of the property.

Cumulatively the impact of the proposal alongside previous extensions as well as including the changes to the existing side roof to the dwelling it would not result in development which is 'disproportionate' is not considered to be harmful to the Green Belt, however this has now changed and the L.P.A. must assess this application not using the old 50% rule of thumb, (no longer constrained by the "original building" calculation), and the extension is now judged on normal planning merits.

The proposal would not significantly harm the openness or have a harmful effect of the Green Belt

National Landscape

The proposal conserves and enhances the scenic qualities of the National Landscape through sensitive siting, appropriate materials, and restrained design. The extension is not considered to be visually intrusive and maintains the rural character of the area, representing a reduction in the cubic massing as proposed.

Located on the settlement edge, the site has a semi-rural character with open and wooded landscapes. The application proposes a modest, curtilage-contained first floor alteration that would read against the existing built form and would not materially increase the dwelling's footprint or be prominent in the local or wider context.

The proposal would not materially affect the visual amenity of the adjoining open fields or the character of the enclosed limestone valley, a recognised feature of the National Landscape. Consequently, the proposal would not compromise the visual amenity of this nationally protected landscape.

Wiltshire Core Strategy & Local Plan

The site lies outside the defined framework of Box. Relevant policies permit extensions to existing dwellings in such locations where proposals:

- Harmonise with the existing building and surrounding character.
- Protect the privacy and amenity of neighbouring properties.
- Preserve the rural character of the area.
- Demonstrate good design and use of appropriate materials.

This proposal meets all of these criteria.

7. Conclusion

This measured approach supports the conclusion that the proposal does **not** constitute a disproportionate addition and is therefore acceptable within Green Belt policy parameters. It also aligns with the visual containment principles expected in the Cotswolds National Landscape aims.

For reasons as previously stated it is considered that by reason of its modest size, continuation of existing structures to rear at first floor, and its position to the rear, etc. that the enlargement is of an appropriate design. The use of materials and glazing is also considered appropriate.

The proposal is **not inappropriate development** under the updated NPPF. The former Green Belt limitation relating to “disproportionate additions” is no longer applicable.

The extension is modest, proportionate, and well-designed. It results in **no harm to openness**, does not undermine the performance of the wider Green Belt, and respects the character and pattern of development along Quarry Hill. It delivers clear benefits in terms of improved living accommodation, energy efficiency, and long-term adaptability.

No adverse impacts arise in relation to landscape, heritage, ecology, amenity, or highways. The proposal accords with the NPPF's Golden Rules and Wiltshire Council's development management policies.

The planning balance weighs clearly in favour of approval, accordingly, the application represents a positive contribution to the built environment and should be supported.

Photographs of existing property:



Front or south east facing elevation of 'Hillside', Quarry Hill, Box,



Road frontage to 'Hillside' Quarry Hill, Box.



Close up front elevation of the property showing gable parapet to side extension (to be lowered).



Rear elevation of property, smaller first floor extension to be enlarged in centre of picture.



View of rear extension to be enlarged with extension below



As above but showing hip roof and valley gutter abutment as well as small rear window to front bedroom



Rear hipped roof and valley intersection with en-suite addition.



Rear hipped roof and valley gutter (to be removed and replace with flat roof detail as plans.



Side gable of main house (faces south west) and single storey extension lean to roof area abutting.



View of existing properties to south west side boundary (Grason and Ellesmere).



Part ground floor dining extension rear elevation and patio area.

Appendix:

1. Policy Background: Grey Belt Framework

The updated NPPF (2024/25) introduces **Grey Belt**, recognising that not all Green Belt land performs equally. Land making a **limited contribution** to key Green Belt purposes may be treated differently, and development on such land can be considered **not inappropriate** if it meets the criteria in **NPPF paragraphs 155–157**.

Where a site qualifies as Grey Belt:

- The “disproportionate additions” test does not apply
- The proposal is not inappropriate development
- Assessment focuses on design, character, amenity, sustainability, and standard planning considerations

This represents a significant shift from the previous approach.

2. The Proposal

The application seeks permission for a modest extension to the existing dwelling. The extension:

- remains within the established residential curtilage
- is proportionate and subservient
- respects the scale and character of the host building
- does not project into open countryside
- improves internal functionality and energy performance

The design is sympathetic to the existing dwelling and surrounding context.

3. Grey Belt Assessment

Below table provides a structured assessment of the proposal against the Grey Belt criteria.

Grey Belt Assessment Table – Hillside, Quarry Hill, Box

Grey Belt Criterion	Assessment	Conclusion
Limited contribution to Green Belt purposes	Site is visually contained, part of an established cluster, and does not contribute to sprawl or coalescence.	Meets criterion
No undermining of wider Green Belt	Extension is modest, within curtilage, and has no impact on openness.	No harm identified
Demonstrable need	Provides improved living accommodation and energy efficiency.	Need demonstrated
Sustainable location	Accessible to Box village services and transport links.	Sustainable
Compliance with Golden Rules	High-quality, proportionate, energy-efficient design with no environmental harm.	Compliant
Proportionate to context	Subservient and appropriate in scale.	Appropriate
No adverse constraints	No impacts on landscape, heritage, ecology, or amenity.	No constraints breached

4. Compliance with NPPF Paragraph 155

NPPF paragraph 155 sets out four conditions under which development on Grey Belt land is **not inappropriate development**. The proposal satisfies all four:

4.1 No undermining of the remaining Green Belt

- Visually contained site
- Extension within domestic curtilage
- No encroachment into open countryside
- No impact on spatial or visual openness

4.2 Demonstrable need

- Improved internal functionality
 - Modernised, energy-efficient accommodation
 - Supports long-term occupation of existing housing stock
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4.3 Sustainable location

- Existing infrastructure and road connections
- Access to Box village services and public transport
- No unsustainable travel patterns

4.4 Compliance with Golden Rules

- Small-scale, subservient, proportionate
- High-quality, energy-efficient design
- No adverse impacts on landscape, heritage, ecology, or amenity

The proposal therefore meets all four paragraph 155 criteria.

END OF STATEMENT