

Planning Appeal Statement

Appellant Mr & Mrs Vary

Application Reference: 3/2025/0275

Site Address: Clementina, Barker Lane, Mellor, BB2 7EE

Proposal: Proposed Conservatory to Side Elevation

Local Planning Authority: Ribble Valley Borough Council

1. Introduction

This statement is submitted in support of an appeal against Ribble Valley Borough Council's decision to refuse planning permission for a modest side conservatory at the above address.

The sole reason for refusal relates to the proposal's impact on the Green Belt, specifically that the extension is considered a "disproportionate addition" to the original dwelling and therefore harmful to openness, contrary to Key Statement EN1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and Section 13 of the NPPF.

The proposal is modest, visually unobtrusive, and should be considered appropriate development under paragraph 154(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework.

2. Summary of Proposal

- The proposal is for a 3m x 3m conservatory, with a maximum height of 3.4m, constructed of brickwork, white uPVC windows, and a polycarbonate roof.
 - It would be attached to the south-eastern (side) elevation of the property.
 - The dwelling is a detached bungalow, situated within the Green Belt, but outside any defined settlement.
 - No objections were received from the Parish Council, statutory consultees, or any neighbours.
 - A bat survey confirmed no ecological constraints.
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3. Grounds for Appeal

3.1 Disproportionate Addition – Lack of Defined Policy Test

The Council's reason for refusal hinges on the assertion that the extension is "disproportionate" due to a total 60% increase in volume from the original dwelling. However:

- The NPPF does not define what constitutes a "disproportionate" extension, nor does the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.
- While many LPAs use 30-50% as informal benchmarks, these are not formal policy thresholds in this case.
- The proposed conservatory would add only 8% additional volume — a minor increase in physical and visual terms.

The rigid use of cumulative percentage volume as the sole determinant of “disproportionate” ignores the modest scale and low visual impact of this particular proposal. A qualitative planning judgement is required, not just a numerical one.

3.2 No Material Harm to Openness or the Green Belt

Paragraph 154(d) of the NPPF (2023) allows for extensions to existing buildings within the Green Belt, provided they are not disproportionate and do not harm openness.

In this case:

- The conservatory is small in scale and well-related to the existing built form.
- It does not extend beyond the established building line, and does not intrude into previously undeveloped land.
- While it is theoretically visible from Barker Lane, it is screened by existing structures and vegetation, and would not represent a significant encroachment.
- There is no increase in usable dwelling units or new curtilage definition.

The appellant considers the spatial and visual impact on the openness of the Green Belt is negligible.

3.3 Other Material Considerations in Favour

- The proposal meets all other relevant development plan policies, including DMG1, DMG2, DMH5, and poses no harm to residential amenity, ecology, highways, or visual character.
- There are no local objections to the development.
- The Parish Council raised no concerns.
- The conservatory improves usable living space in a sustainable and low-impact manner, which aligns with Key Statement DS2 (Sustainable Development).

4. Conclusion

This appeal relates to a minor domestic conservatory which the appellant believes would have no material impact on the character, openness, or purposes of the Green Belt. It constitutes appropriate development in line with paragraph 154(d) of the NPPF.

The Council’s assessment over-relied on a rigid interpretation of volumetric increase without giving proper weight to context, design, or visual impact. The modest size, appropriate siting, and absence of harm in all other areas strongly support approval.

Therefore the appellant respectfully request that the Planning Inspectorate allows the appeal and grants planning permission for the proposed development.