
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 October 2016

by W Fabian BA Hons Dip Arch RIBA IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 19 October 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/D2320/D/16/3156888

Over Hall Nook, South Road, Bretherton, Leyland PR26 9AB

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr & Mrs P Bradley against the decision of Chorley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/00164/FULHH, dated 9 February 2016, was refused by notice dated 18 April 2016.
 - The development proposed is a rear first floor bedroom extension and replacement of existing conservatory with an orangery.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues in this appeal are:
 - i. whether the proposal is inappropriate development in the Green Belt;
 - ii. the impact of the proposal on the openness and other purposes of the Green Belt; and
 - iii. if the proposal is inappropriate development, whether the harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm is clearly outweighed by other considerations so as to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development.

Reasons

3. Old Nook Hall is a large detached half-timbered and rendered former farmhouse, located on a busy rural main road close to the small village of Bretherton. It sits a little back from the road behind a tall mature hedge, within a large garden.
4. It is located within the Green Belt, where policy HS5 of the Chorley Local Plan, 2015, (LP) requires that house extensions should not result in a disproportionate increase in the volume of the original dwelling; increases of up to 50% (volume) are not considered disproportionate. The Council's Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) Rural Development, 2012 sets out the same limit for residential extensions. These are in general accordance with the Government policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), which sets out that the Government attaches great importance to

Green Belts. At paragraph 89 it sets out that extensions to dwellings in the Green Belt should not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.

5. A small single storey lean-to store is attached to the side of the original house; the status of this is unclear, but whether or not original to the building it is so small as to have little bearing in this appeal. The planning history submissions show that the house has previously been extended at the rear, with a two storey shallow pitched gabled projection that covers a little under half the width of the original rear façade and by a single storey flat roofed extension of the same depth that covers the remainder of the rear façade and ground floor. This appears to have been authorised in 1974. These extensions are a little over half the depth of the original house. There is an additional hipped roof uPVC conservatory attached to almost the full width of the flat roofed extension. Together the extensions and the conservatory, form a volume equivalent to a little more than 50% of the original farmhouse already. As such the original farmhouse has already been extended by around the limit set by the Council's policy for residential extensions in the Green Belt.
6. The proposed extension above the flat roofed one would add further to these existing extensions. The proposed orangery would also be deeper than the existing one, adding further to its volume. According to LP policy HS5 the proposal would thus, be a disproportionate extension to the size of the original dwelling and would amount to inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The fundamental aim of the Framework policy on Green Belts is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. The objective of national and local policy for the Green Belt is unequivocal and seeks to limit the amount of extensions to the original building so that they are not cumulatively disproportionate.
7. I conclude that the proposed extension would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, which is by definition harmful to the Green Belt.
8. As inappropriate development the proposed extensions would by definition encroach into the openness of the Green Belt to a limited degree and contribute to urban sprawl by a very small amount, causing harm to it. The site is relatively secluded and not easily visible from public vantage points. Thus the proposal would have little tangible effect on the character and appearance of the Green Belt or the surrounding countryside. As it would be built within the existing large curtilage of the dwelling, it would not materially encroach into the countryside. It would also have little effect on the other purposes of the Green Belt. However, the neutral effect on these purposes does not weigh positively in its favour.
9. At paragraph 87 the Framework establishes that inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Turning to the other considerations raised; these mainly relate to the appearance of the proposal. The appellant considers that proposed extensions would not cause any obtrusiveness within the green belt, would improve the appearance of the property and so enhance the rear of the house. However, while the existing conservatory may be a little dated, the proposed one would be very similar in appearance, if larger and with masonry corner piers. It would be little more in keeping with the half-timbered

character of the original house. The first floor extension proposed would wholly obscure the only remaining part of the original rear façade of the farmhouse and would introduce two further low pitched gables creating a rather 'saw-toothed' or concertina roof appearance at the rear. Accordingly, neither of these considerations attracts any weight in favour of the proposal.

The overall balance

10. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. In this case, the inappropriate nature of the development, as well as its limited impact on openness, both attract substantial weight against the proposal.
11. The considerations put forward in favour of the proposal would not be sufficient to clearly outweigh the harm identified. Having considered the case as a whole I conclude that the very special circumstances necessary to justify the grant of planning permission do not exist in this case. The proposal would fail to accord with development plan and national policy relating to the Green Belt and the appeal should be dismissed.

Wenda Fabian

Inspector