
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 October 2016

by Tim Wood BA(Hons) BTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 8 November 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/N0410/W/16/3152663

2 Plough Lane, Stoke Poges, Slough, Bucks SL2 4JR

- 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 and Mrs Bernard and Beryl Norris against the decision of South Bucks District Council.
 - The application Ref 15/01718/FUL, dated 26 August 2015, was refused by notice dated 27 November 2015.
 - The development proposed is a proposed 2 bedroom bungalow within the residential area of No 2 Plough Lane.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effects of the proposal in relation to the Green Belt and the character of the area.

Reasons

3. Saved Policy GB3 of the South Bucks District Local Plan relates to residential infilling in Green Belt Settlements and states that, amongst other things, limited infilling will only be allowed where (a) the proposal would not detract from the open and undeveloped character of the Green Belt, (b) the scale, height, layout, form and design are acceptable and (c) other policies are complied with. Paragraph 86 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that, if it is necessary to prevent development in a village primarily because of the important contribution which the open character of the village makes to the openness of the Green Belt, the village should be included within the Green Belt; this is the case here.
 4. Paragraph 89 of the Framework states that the construction of new buildings should be regarded as inappropriate in the Green Belt, subject to a number of exceptions, which includes limited infilling in villages which is under policies set out in the local plan. Therefore, in the context of the Local Plan and the Framework, such proposals may be considered to not be inappropriate if they do not detract from the open character of the site and area.
 5. The appeal relates to the majority of the plot of No 2 Plough Lane, which forms its rear garden area, the long boundary of which is adjacent to Plough Lane. This part of Plough Lane and its extent to the west has an open character,
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adjacent to the open countryside and the houses here are within spacious and have mature gardens. The openness of the appeal site and the surroundings are important positive elements which contribute to the character of this area.

6. The proposal would take up much of the appeal site and would result in a much reduced garden for No 2. The proposed bungalow would be very prominent within the street-scene and, although only of single storey, due to its width and siting it would have a considerable presence. In this way I consider that the proposal would fail maintain the openness of the site and the Green Belt. As a result, the proposal would be contrary to Policy GB3 and to the Framework and would represent inappropriate development within the Green Belt.
7. From the submitted documents I am aware that the proposal represents a reduction in size when compared to a previously dismissed appeal scheme (Ref APP/N0410/W/14/3000534) but in my judgement the current proposal would fail to maintain the openness of the Green Belt, which is an important attribute of it. I attach substantial weight to the harm to the Green Belt in my determination of this appeal.
8. In the same way that the proposal would harm the openness of the Green Belt, I consider that the substantial reduction in openness and the prominence of the proposed bungalow in the street-scene would harm the general character of the area. Therefore, in this respect, the proposal is contrary to Policies EP3 and H9 of the Local Plan and Policy CP8 of the Core Strategy.

Balance and Conclusions

9. The appellants indicate that they would move into the proposed bungalow which would be more convenient for them and that family members would move into the existing house. I also recognise that the proposal would make a modest contribution to the supply of houses in the area. Whilst I fully understand the personal circumstances put forward, I afford less weight to them than to the overall planning merits of the proposal. In this case I find that there are no matters which clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and the other harm. Therefore the very special circumstances necessary to justify the proposal do not exist. As a consequence, the appeal is dismissed.

S T Wood

INSPECTOR