

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 January 2017

by Christa Masters MA (hons) MRTPI

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

Decision date: 25th January 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/W1905/D/16/3162790

Oak House Farm, Newgatestreet Road, Goffs Oak EN7 5RU

- 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 Barclay against the decision of Broxbourne Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 07/16/0797/HF, dated 26 June 2016, was refused by notice dated 22 August 2016.
 - The development proposed is 2 storey extension in the form of infill linking the existing house and the existing double garage to provide annex accommodation to meet extended family needs.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The officers report refers to unauthorised development on the site including a timber framed link and timber framed side extension. These do not form part of this application and are consequently not matters for my deliberations.

Main Issues

3. The appeal site lies within the Green Belt. The main issues are therefore:
 - Whether the proposal would be inappropriate development for the purposes of development plan policy and the National Planning Policy Framework;
 - The effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt;
 - The effect on the character and appearance of the area;
 - If the development would be inappropriate, whether the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations, as to amount to very special circumstances necessary to justify it.

Reasons

Whether inappropriate development?

4. The appeal property comprises a detached residential dwelling located on a narrow plot set on a busy main road. The Framework identifies that new buildings within the Green Belt are inappropriate unless, amongst other things,
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it involves the extension of a building. This is provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.

5. Policy GBC11 of the Broxbourne Local Plan Second Review (LP) 2005 is a 3 part policy which relates to the extension and alteration of existing dwellings in the Green Belt. The policy advises, amongst other things, that extensions will not be permitted if they would result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the dwelling as originally built.
6. The Framework does not give any guidance as to what might be considered a disproportionate addition. I have no information regarding the floor area of the original dwelling. I also have no information regarding the floorspace of the proposed extension. The grounds of appeal refer to a two storey and single storey side extension and detached garage which was granted planning permission in 2010 and has subsequently been built. However, the plan provided only shows the proposed elevations and not the original dwelling.
7. In my estimations and based on the limited information before me, the proposal would result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the dwelling as originally built. As a result, it would result in development which would be inappropriate and thus harmful to the Green Belt. For these reasons, I therefore conclude the proposal would be contrary to policy GBC11 of the LP outlined above. Furthermore, the proposal would conflict with paragraphs 88 and 89 of the Framework.

Effect on Openness

8. The Framework makes it clear that one of the essential characteristics of Green Belt is their openness. The proposed extension would be a two storey structure located on the flank elevation of the property which fronts Newgatestreet road. It would be a large bulky structure which would significantly increase the bulk and scale of the property and would as a result, cause material harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

Effect on the character and appearance of the area

9. The location of the proposed extension would be highly visible along Newgatestreet road. As a result of the scale and massing of the proposed extension set within this narrow plot, there can be no doubt that the proposal would present a prominent addition to the property. It would in my view present a dominant feature to the host property, which would result in material harm to the street scene. The flank elevation of the property is particularly visible from the road given the fact that the site has open fields to the south.
10. My attention has been drawn to the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) 2004, updated 2013. The guidance notes in relation to front extensions, two storey front extensions can have a dramatic impact upon the street scene and should be avoided. The guidance goes on to note that exceptions may occur where the street has a varied building line or where properties are set in extensive building grounds and there is no strong visual relationship between the property to be extended and its immediate neighbours. In the case of the appeal proposal, the building line of the street is not in my view so varied to warrant an exception to this guidance. Furthermore, the site is not set in extensive grounds. Neither of the exceptions would therefore be applicable in the case of the appeal proposal before me.

11. I therefore conclude the proposal would result in material harm to the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore conflict with policies H6, HD13 and HD14 of the LP. In particular, Part (II) of policy H6 advises that that proposed extensions should be compatible with the parent building and its wider setting in terms of scale, design and external appearance. Policy HD13 sets out a number of broad design principles. Policy HD14 identifies that development proposals should specify how the development reflects and relates to local character and the context of the surrounding area. Proposals should as a minimum, maintain the existing character of the area.

Other Considerations

12. The appellant has provided detailed personal information regarding the intended occupiers of the extension, and the justification for the extension which has been described as being needed to accommodate the growing family. These considerations are acknowledged and I have apportioned a modest portion of weight to them.
13. The Council have also raised concerns that the proposal would result in the creation of an additional independent dwelling on the site. The appellant has provided detailed information explaining how the proposal would be ancillary accommodation to the main dwelling. On balance, I can see no reason to disagree with the appellant on this matter and I have attached no weight to this issue.

Conclusions

14. The proposed development would be inappropriate development and the Framework establishes that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt. In addition there would be a loss of openness as a result of the appeal proposal. The proposal would also result in material harm to the character and appearance of the area.
15. I have taken the above matters into account and have considered all the issues put forward in support of the proposal. However, I do not find that there are any issues either collectively or individually which would clearly outweigh the harm that would be caused to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, loss of openness as well as the harm to the character and appearance of the area. Consequently, no very special circumstances exist to justify allowing the development.
16. For these reasons, I conclude the appeal should be dismissed.

C Masters

INSPECTOR