

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 January 2017

by J A B Gresty MA MRICS

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

Decision date:

Appeal Ref: APP/M1595/D/16/3164323
Silverside, Vange Park Road, Vange SS16 5LA

- 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 David Richardson against the decision of Thurrock Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/00926/HHA, dated 30 June 2016, was refused by notice dated 7 September 2016.
 - The development proposed is side/rear extension and dormer roof extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues in this case are:
 - Whether the proposal constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt,
 - Its effect on the openness of the Green Belt,
 - The effect of the proposed extension on the character and appearance of the area, and
 - If it would be inappropriate development, whether the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm to the Green Belt, is clearly outweighed by other considerations, so as to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a detached bungalow situated in the Green Belt. The appeal proposal is for extension of the bungalow. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that a local planning authority should regard construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. This is subject to exceptions listed in the Framework which include extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. In keeping with the Framework, Policy PMD6 of the Thurrock Local Development Framework Core Strategy and
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Policies for Management of Development (CS&PMD), adopted January 2015, indicates that planning permission in the Green Belt will only be given where it meets the requirements of the Framework and, with regards to extensions of buildings in the Green Belt, they should not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building which in the case of residential buildings should be no larger than two reasonably sized rooms or any equivalent.

4. The original bungalow was built before 1948 and had a floor area of about 40 square metres. The bungalow was extended in about the 1950s and, taking into account the size of these extensions, now has a floor area of about 75 square metre. The Council indicates that, to comply with CS&PMD Policy PMD6, the maximum permitted floor area would be about 95 square metres. The proposed development would result in a dwelling with a floor area of over 150 square metres, nearly four times the size of the original dwelling and about double the size of the existing dwelling.
3. Whilst the proposed extended dwelling would be of similar overall size to the neighbouring bungalow on Vange Park Road, the size of the extensions would exceed the two room limit set by CS&PMD Policy PMD6 and I conclude that a near quadrupling of the size of the original building would be a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building. Accordingly the proposed development would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt as defined by the Framework.

Openness

5. The Framework confirms that inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt. The essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence. Although the appeal site is enclosed by tall hedging and fencing and the extended dwelling would not be prominent in the landscape, as a consequence of the cumulative size and bulk of the proposed extensions, the development would inevitably lead to a reduction in the openness of the Green Belt which would represent harm to one of the Green Belt's essential characteristics.

Character and Appearance

6. The appeal property is situated in a good sized plot on a strip of land between Vange Park Road and the A13 trunk road. There are several houses and a large area of semi-industrial land on this part of Vange Park Road. Overall, whilst outside the body of a substantial settlement, the local area has a mixed, semi-urban character and appearance.
7. There is a variety of size and style of dwelling in the local area and the extended bungalow would be of similar size, character and appearance to the neighbouring dwelling. Because of its location, the proposed dormer extension would not be prominent in the landscape and the size of the extended dwelling would be in proportion to the size of the plot. Overall the character and appearance of the extended dwelling would be in keeping with the character and appearance of this part of Vange Park Road.

Other Matters

8. The bungalow is in a very run down condition and requires extensive work to bring it up to a modern standard of accommodation. The rooms of the original bungalow are small and the bungalow's layout, including a small bathroom and wc next to the kitchen, does not appear convenient. Overall, it is difficult to see that the existing building could be readily adapted for family use without substantial alteration. The proposed development scheme would result in a much larger dwelling with a good standard of accommodation which would be suitable for family use. In this respect the proposed development would contribute to an improvement in the housing stock available in the district and meet the personal requirements of the appellant.
9. The appellant refers to Appeal Ref: APP/A5720/A/13/2198350. This appeal concerned a proposal for an extension of an outbuilding to form a residential annexe in the London Borough of Ealing. The main issues considered at the appeal did not relate to the Green Belt and I find the appeal decision has little bearing on the main issues of this appeal. Accordingly, I attach little weight to Appeal Ref: APP/A5720/A/13/2198350 in considering this appeal.

Very Special Circumstances

10. Inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. The proposed development would be inappropriate and it would reduce the openness of the Green Belt.
11. The appeal proposal would provide a good level of accommodation for the appellant and result in a significant improvement in the condition and practicality of the property. Further, the appearance and size of the extended dwelling would be in keeping with the pattern of development in the locality. However, it has not been demonstrated that the proposed extension of the bungalow to form a three bedroom dwelling with accommodation on the first floor is the only practical option for this property or for the appellant. Also, the absence of harm that the development would do to the character and appearance of this part of Vange Park Road does not outweigh the harm the proposed development would do to the essential characteristics of the Green Belt or the failure of the development to accord with CS&PMD Policy PMD6. Therefore, I conclude that evidence has not been presented to demonstrate that very special circumstances exist to clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt.

Conclusion

12. On balance and for the above reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

J A B Gresty

INSPECTOR