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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 February 2017

**by Andrew Owen BA(Hons) MA MRTPI**

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

**Decision date: 17 February 2017**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/J3720/D/16/3162302**

**Brensham, Norton Lea, Norton Lindsey CV35 8JX**

- 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 Mrs Rachel Jenkins against the decision of Stratford on Avon District Council.
  - The application Ref 16/02292/FUL, dated 8 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 5 September 2016.
  - The development proposed is addition of double garage to front of property, and single storey rear extension under 3 metres with internal reconfiguration.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
  - whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt for the purposes of the National Planning Policy Framework (the 'Framework') and development plan policy;
  - the effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt;
  - the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area;
  - if the development would be inappropriate, whether the harm to the Green Belt by way of inappropriateness and any other harm, would be clearly outweighed by other considerations so as to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify it.

### Reasons

3. The site is within the Green Belt. Paragraph 89 of the Framework is clear that the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt is inappropriate. However, it adds that an exception to this is the extension of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.
  4. Policy CS.10 of the Stratford on Avon District Core Strategy (the 'Core Strategy') identifies that small scale extensions or alterations to a building are not inappropriate in principle. The explanatory text states that proposals will be considered on a case by case basis to assess if they are small scale. This
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policy is generally consistent with the Framework and I can therefore give it significant weight.

5. It is not disputed by the parties that the proposed flat roofed single storey rear extension is small scale and I have no reason to come to a different view, particularly as it would, to some extent, replace an existing conservatory.
6. The front extension would accommodate a double garage with a bedroom above. The existing dwelling is 'L' shaped with a short part projecting forward of the main face of the house towards the road. The development would extend further forward from this forward-most part of the existing house by almost six metres. This would result in this part of the house jutting out a significant distance from of the main face of the dwelling, almost to the back edge of the pavement.
7. Though the extension would be smaller and not quite as tall as the main house, its eaves would be comparable with the cill level of the first floor windows in the main house, and with the provision of a gable end roof and roof lights in the roof slope, it would appear as a large two storey addition.
8. As a result of the combination of its protrusion forward of the main house and its height, I consider the extension would not appear small scale in relation to the size of the existing house. Therefore the front extension would be inappropriate development which is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt.

#### *Openness*

9. Openness is an essential characteristic of the Green Belt as set out in paragraph 79 of the Framework and can comprise spatial and visual aspects. The front extension would introduce built form into a part of the plot which is currently undeveloped. As such this would inevitably affect the spatial openness of the site.
10. Norton Lea is a small cul-de-sac which accommodates a few detached properties. Aside from the tall trees on the boundary between the appeal site and Tregoze, the character of the immediate vicinity is generally of a spacious open plan street with detached dwellings sitting comfortably on wide plots.
11. Whilst the trees on the boundary with Tregoze would screen views of the front extension from positions west along Norton Lea, when seen from directly in front of the site and from the other properties at the end of the cul-de-sac, the extension would appear very prominent due to its size and position very close to the front of the site. This would reduce the open plan nature of the road, and therefore the extension would have a visual impact on openness.
12. These impacts on openness weigh against the development, and are in addition to the inappropriateness of the proposal in principle.

#### *Character and Appearance*

13. The front extension would be lower than the main house and smaller than it. However, for the reasons given above, it would nonetheless appear as a large and prominent addition. As such I do not consider its scale would appear appropriate to the host property. Moreover, as set out above, it would significantly detract from the open character and appearance of the street scene.

14. The front extension would be finished in red brick which is extensively used in the neighbouring houses, and at the existing house on the site, and therefore the materials to be used in this extension would not appear inharmonious.
15. However, notwithstanding the materials, the large scale and prominent position of the front extension would mean it would detract from the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the immediate area. Consequently the development would fail to accord with Policy CS.20 of the Core Strategy which, among other criteria, requires development to be of an appropriate scale, and to preserve and enhance the character of the locality.

*Other considerations*

16. I accept there is a large extension at Edgefield but this is not as close to the road as the proposal and, because of its position at the end of the cul-de-sac, does not disrupt the open character of the street. Furthermore that extension is not as tall as the proposal and incorporates a hipped roof and so appears more modest than the proposed front extension. Likewise the garages at the other properties in the road generally sit alongside the host dwellings and none appear as prominent as that proposed would. As such I give minimal weight to these considerations.
17. Whilst I understand the desire of the appellant to improve the living accommodation, I have little evidence to suggest that the current accommodation is particularly inadequate such that I should give any more than limited weight to this consideration.
18. Similarly although I recognise the need to improve the energy efficiency of the dwelling, I have no evidence to suggest that the front extension that would achieve this. Therefore this carries little weight in my consideration.

**Planning Balance and Overall Conclusion**

19. The Framework advises that the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts and that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt. I consider that the development would cause harm to the Green Belt by way of inappropriateness and to its openness, and would harm the character and appearance of the area. Balanced against that are the other considerations identified above. For the reasons given, I conclude that they do not clearly outweigh the totality of the harm and therefore there are no very special circumstances to justify the proposal. As such, the development would conflict with Policy CS.10 of the Core Strategy which aims to protect the Green Belt from inappropriate development.
20. For the reasons given above, and taking account of all other considerations, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

*Andrew Owen*

INSPECTOR