

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 February 2017

by Les Greenwood MRTPI

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

Decision date: 10 March 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3615/D/16/3165269

Deepdene, Sutton Place, Abinger Hammer, Dorking RH5 6RN

- 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 K Scotson against the decision of Guildford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/P/01984 was refused by notice dated 25 November 2016.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a detached double garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issues

2. The main issues are:
 - i) whether the proposal constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt;
 - ii) its effects on the openness of the Green Belt and on the purposes of including land within the Green Belt;
 - iii) its effects on the visual amenity of the Green Belt, the landscape and the character and appearance of the local area; and
 - iv) if it is inappropriate development, whether the harm 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

Whether inappropriate development in the Green Belt

3. Deepdene is a detached house sitting in a large plot on the edge of a low density, wooded residential enclave, located within the countryside and the Green Belt. Work is nearing completion on a 2 storey side extension. The proposal is to build a detached timber double garage to the front of the house.
 4. Paragraph 87 of the National Planning Policy Framework advises that inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 89 explains that construction of new buildings should be regarded as inappropriate in the Green Belt, except for listed exceptions. These include (amongst other
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things) extensions to buildings provided that they do not result in *disproportionate additions* over and above the size of the original building. The Framework does not provide any guidance about the scale of increase that should be considered disproportionate and makes no specific allowance for detached outbuildings.

5. Policy H9 of the Guildford Borough Local Plan 2003 (LP) similarly sets out a presumption against extensions that would result in disproportionate additions taking into account the size of the original dwelling. LP Policy RE2 allows for limited extensions to dwellings in accordance with Policy H9. The text to Policy H9 advises that detached outbuildings will be considered as extensions and states no maximum size, leaving this to be assessed on a case by case basis.
6. I am satisfied that this garage, though detached, would be a normal domestic adjunct that can be considered as an extension for the purposes of Green Belt policy. Although it would be a modestly sized building and low in height, the garage needs to be considered as a cumulative increase together with the extension currently under construction. The Council advises that the overall increase in floorspace would be 54.7% compared to the original house. The garage would be a significant part of this, representing a 15.7% increase in floorspace above the size of the original house if taken on its own. These figures are not disputed by the appellant.
7. I am mindful that the volume of the garage would be not be particularly great due to its low height. It would nevertheless have a sizeable floorspace and would not be an insignificant addition to a house that is already being extended substantially. The result would be a cumulative increase in floorspace of more than half, which I find on balance to be a disproportionate addition to the building. The proposal therefore constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt, in conflict with LP Policies H9 and RE2 and the Framework. It is harmful to the Green Belt by definition and I give this harm substantial weight in accordance with paragraphs 87 and 88 of the Framework.

Openness and Green Belt purposes

8. The area to the front of the house is open to views from this shared private road, through the line of trees along the site frontage. The garage would be a significantly sized structure and clearly visible. This would cause some limited harm to the openness of the Green Belt. On the other hand, it would not materially conflict with any of the purposes of including land within the Green Belt as set out at paragraph 80 of the Framework, including the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment, due to its location within a developed area.
9. I find that limited harm would be caused to the openness of the Green Belt, which is a minor factor weighing against the proposal.

Visual amenity, landscape, character and appearance

10. Deepdene is also within an area of countryside designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and an Area of Great Landscape Value. The proposed garage would use natural materials and would, in itself, be reasonably sized for this large plot. It is well designed to fit into this leafy, semi-rural residential area. Although it would be seen to the front of the

house, this would not be out of character as there are other garages in similar positions locally.

11. Like the Council, I find that the proposal would not harm the visual amenity of the Green Belt, the local landscape or the character and appearance of the local area. This is, however, a neutral factor only.

Very special circumstances

12. The appellant refers to a need for adequate parking of vehicles. There appears to be plenty of room within the site for parking, however, and I see no overriding need for garaging.
13. I conclude that the factors set out in favour of the proposal are not sufficient to clearly outweigh the harm due to inappropriateness and the harm to the openness of the Green Belt. Accordingly, the very special circumstances necessary to justify inappropriate development in the Green Belt do not exist in this case and the proposal conflicts with the above-mentioned policies.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons set out above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should not succeed.

Les Greenwood

INSPECTOR