

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 April 2017

by J D Westbrook BSc(Hons) MSc MRTPI

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

Decision date: 27 April 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/N1920/D/16/3168069

1 Watling Street, Elstree, Borehamwood, WD6 3EG

- 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 Ms Patricia Deegan against the decision of Hertsmere Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/1758/HSE, dated 7 September 2016, was refused by notice dated 16 November 2016.
 - The development proposed is the construction of a single-storey side extension.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issues in this case are:
 - Whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework and any relevant development plan policies, and
 - The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area along the southern part of Watling Street.

Reasons

3. No 1 is a semi-detached house situated on the eastern side of Watling Street, just to the north of its junction with Elstree Hill North and Allum Lane. Along with No 2, it forms the first of some eleven pairs of semi-detached houses of similar design that extend in linear fashion northwards into open countryside to the west of Borehamwood. It is located within Green Belt.
 4. The proposed extension would take the form of a single-storey, flat roofed side extension, around 3 metres wide by 6 metres deep. It would be set back a small amount from the front elevation of the house and would extend to a point level with the rear elevation. There is an existing small single-storey extension with a mono-pitch roof to the rear of the house.
-

Green Belt

5. The Council contends that, by virtue of the inaccurate drawings, the overall dimensions of the existing extension along with those of the proposed extension cannot be determined from the plans. I accept that the 1:500 site plan is somewhat unclear and sketchy, but the floor plan and elevations at 1:100 are clear and relate to the accompanying scale line on the drawing (Ref: 16/243/2). From the plans and from visual inspection on site, I have no reason to suppose that the distances between the side elevation of the house and the side boundary, are not as set down by the appellant. Moreover, the officer's report indicates that the dimensions of the proposed extension are 3.2 metres by 6.5 metres by 3 metres, and this appears to concur with the dimensions on the plans.
6. Policy SADM26 of the Council's recently adopted Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan (SADM), indicates that in judging the scale of development in the Green Belt, the Council will make a comparison between the existing and proposed development having regard to, amongst other things, the proposed change in floor space; the proposed change in the volume of development; and the proposed changes to the site coverage of building and hardstanding.
7. The existing rear extension would appear to be approximately 2 metres by 4.5 metres on plan, with an average height of around 3 metres. On this basis, and using the planning officer's own figures for the size of the proposed extension, the existing and proposed extensions would have a combined overall floorspace of some 30 sq metres. The original house would appear to have a footprint in the order of some 40 sq metres, giving a floorspace over two floors of around 80 sq metres. Although these are only approximate figures, it is clear that the proposed extension would result in total additions to the floorspace over that of the original house of significantly less than 50%.
8. The overall volume of the extensions, existing and proposed, would be in the order of 90 cu metres, whereas the overall volume of the original house would appear to be something in excess of 200 cu metres, meaning a total addition resulting from the extensions once again much less than 50%.
9. Finally, the site is wide and has a long rear garden. The proposed extension would have minimal impact on the site coverage of buildings on the plot.
10. On the basis of the above, I do not consider, in this case, that the proposed extension would result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. In the light of policy guidance in paragraph 89 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), I therefore find that the proposal would not represent inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Character and appearance

11. All of the houses in the row to the north of the appeal property have hipped roofs, and all are of similar design. A small number have two-storey side extensions, and the adjoining No 2 Watling Street has a wrap-around, single-storey, rear and side extension. All, however, would appear to have hipped roofs to reflect the context and appearance of the original dwelling. By way of contrast, the proposed extension at No 1 would have a flat roof and this would

appear out of character with both the host property itself and with the rest of the row of houses of which it forms a part.

12. On this basis, the proposed extension would fail to represent a high quality design that would reinforce local distinctiveness. It would, therefore, conflict with guidance on design in the NPPF, and also with Policy SADM30 of the SADM, which indicates that in order to achieve a high quality of design, a development should respect the visual amenity of the area. Finally, it would not comply with guidance on the design of roofs on side extensions, as set out in the Council's Supplementary Planning Document: Guidelines for Residential Extensions and Alterations.

Conclusion

13. In conclusion, I find that the proposed extension would not represent inappropriate development in the Green Belt. However, by virtue of its design, I find that it would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area around the southern part of Watling Street. Accordingly, I dismiss the appeal.

J D Westbrook

INSPECTOR