



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 April 2017

by Philip Willmer BSc Dip Arch RIBA

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

Decision date: 12 May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/J1915/D/17/3169037

6E Broad Green Wood, Bayford, Hertfordshire, SG13 8PS.

- 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 and Mrs J and J Bambra against the decision of East Hertfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 3/16/2612/HH, dated 23 November 2016, was refused by notice dated 17 January 2017.
 - The development proposed is for a two-storey side extension and porch.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matters

2. I shall be mindful of the emerging local plan in my deliberations. However, as this has yet to complete its examination process I can only give limited weight to the emerging policies to which I have been referred.

Main Issues

3. I consider the main issues in this case are:
 - a) whether the proposal constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt;
 - b) the effect of the proposal on the architectural integrity of the host property, the character and appearance of the area and openness of the Green Belt; and
 - c) if the development is inappropriate development in the Green Belt, 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

4. The property the subject of this appeal, 6E Broad Green Wood, is one half of a semi-detached house located on a small residential estate of similar semi-detached houses in the Metropolitan Green Belt. The houses are located around a village green style amenity area.
5. The appellants propose the construction of a two-storey side extension and porch. The proposed addition would be similar in design to extensions to a number of other dwellings in the development.

Whether the proposal is inappropriate development in the Green Belt

6. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) advises at paragraph 89 that the construction of new buildings should be regarded as inappropriate in the Green Belt. However, one of the six exceptions given to this is the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.
7. I understand from the Council's evidence, and this is not contradicted by the appellants, that the original dwelling, including an outbuilding to the side of the dwelling, had a floor area of some 119.4 square metres. It goes on to advise that the proposed extension would represent a 62% increase in floor area.
8. From the evidence I note that planning permission (Ref: 3/16/0441/HH) was granted on the 28 April 2016 for a similar extension to that proposed here, albeit that, according to the appellants' evidence, it represented a smaller increase in floorspace to that now proposed of about 3.6% less.
9. On balance, and while having regard to the permitted extension, the planning permission for which is still extant, I consider that in this case an increase in floor area of 62% would, alone in itself, not result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building.
10. However, the Framework refers to 'size'. Consequently in addition to floorspace it is the overall size increase of the building in terms of volume and external dimensions that need to be taken into account. In my judgement, because of its height and overall three dimensional form, the appeal proposal would increase the amount of built development on the site over that previously approved, which, would result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building.
11. I therefore conclude in respect of the first main issue that the proposal is inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Architectural integrity, the character and appearance of the area and the openness of the Green Belt

12. The proposed extension would be narrower than that allowed by the extant permission. However, it would project about 1.5 metres in front of the main façade of the original dwelling and extend partially across that façade to form a new porch addition. Although set just below the ridgeline of the main house, the ridge of the proposed extension would be considerably higher than that approved and thereby overall would not appear as such a well balanced subservient addition. It would thereby detract from the architectural integrity of the host building. In addition, despite the number of similar extensions to neighbouring properties at Broad Green Wood, I consider that the extension as designed would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area.
13. The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts of which the essential characteristics are their openness and their permanence. Despite the extension having been designed to be slightly narrower than the approved addition, because of its height, overall three dimensional form, and the building's location on the edge of the development at Broad Green Wood, it would, in a small but nevertheless material way, impact on the openness of the Green Belt.
14. I therefore conclude, in respect of the second main issue, that by reason of the host building's location, height of the extension and its overall mass, the proposal would,

while detracting from the host building and the character and appearance of the area, also have a harmful impact on the Green Belt's openness and the purposes of the Green Belt as set out in the Framework.

15. The proposal would therefore not accord with Policies GBC1 and ENV5 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007 as they reflect the guidance in the Framework in respect of the protection of the openness of the Green Belt, the quality of development and its setting.

Other considerations

16. I have found that in terms of its height and overall three dimensional form, the proposal would increase the amount of built development which in turn would result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building and therefore would be an inappropriate form of development. I therefore give no weight to the identified limited percentage increase in floor area in the Green Belt balance.
17. I agree that a lean-to roof over the proposed porch may well be more attractive than a flat roof. I accept that the ridgeline of the extension would be set below that of the main house. However, overall I do not find that the proposed extension, when compared to that previously approved, would result in such a well-balanced subservient addition. I therefore give no weight to the appellants' contention that the visual changes between the approved and proposed scheme designs should attract weight in the overall balance.
18. In reaching my conclusion I have been mindful of similar extensions to neighbouring dwellings. However, having regard to my concerns about the design of the proposal before me, the existence of similar extensions nearby is not an appropriate justification for permitting one here as designed. I therefore give this consideration limited weight.
19. The proposal is inappropriate development, which by definition is harmful to the Green Belt, and the Framework requires substantial weight to be attached to that harm. I have also found harm to the openness of the Green Belt, the character of the host property and the character and appearance of the area. For the appeal to succeed the combined weight of the other considerations must clearly outweigh the totality of the harm arising. Having taken account of the other considerations and found that they do not clearly outweigh the totality of the harm that would be caused, I consider that very special circumstances to justify the development do not exist.

Conclusion

20. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the proposal is not in accordance with the development plan, when read as a whole, and that the appeal should not be allowed.

Philip Willmer

INSPECTOR