
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 May 2017

by J C Clarke BSc(Hons) BTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 9 June 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/F2360/D/17/3171097

Lynwood, Pine Avenue, Little Hoole PR4 5LB

- 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 Lee Tomlinson against the decision of South Ribble Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 07/2016/0948/HOH, dated 20 October 2016, was refused by notice dated 21 December 2016.
 - The development proposed is a two storey side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - (a) Whether or not the proposed development would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt;
 - (b) The effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt;
 - (c) The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area; and
 - (d) If the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, whether the harm by reason 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 the development.

Reasons

Inappropriate development

3. The site is within an area designated as Green Belt as referred to in the South Ribble Local Plan (SRLP) 2015. Paragraph 89 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the 'Framework') establishes that the erection of buildings in the Green Belt is, subject to specified exceptions set out in its 6 bullet points, inappropriate.
 4. Under bullet point 3 of paragraph 89, the extension or alteration of an existing building is not inappropriate provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. The 'original building' is defined in annex 2 of the Framework as a building '*...as it existed on 1 July 1948 or, if constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was built originally*'.
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5. The Framework does not quantify what is meant by a 'disproportionate addition'. However, the Central Lancashire Rural Development Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 2012 states that an extension to a dwelling in the Green Belt which would cause an increase of over 50% of the volume of the original building will be considered inappropriate. Whilst the SPD only has the status of guidance it is material to my decision.
6. The proposed extension would measure about 6.4 by 3.8 metres and have a height of just over 4.7 metres to its eaves. Whilst it would replace an existing conservatory this is much smaller and did not, according to the planning history provided by the Council, form part of the original dwellinghouse. Furthermore, an existing first floor and gable extension, for which planning permission was granted in 1996, appears to have already increased the volume of the original dwelling by about 48%. The appeal proposal would increase the size of the house further and, in combination with the earlier addition, would lead to a total increase of about 78% over the volume of the original dwelling¹.
7. Although the extension would all be within the curtilage of the house and on land which is developed these points do not affect whether the proposal would be a disproportionate addition to the house. Whilst I understand that the site has not been used for farming for many years, and it does not include any farmland within it at present, this does not mean that Green Belt policies do not apply.
8. I conclude that, in conjunction with the existing extension, the proposal would result in a disproportionate increase in the size of the original building and thereby fall outside the scope of bullet point 3 of paragraph 89. It would also fall outside the other exceptions set out in paragraph 89 and constitute inappropriate development as defined in the Framework and in policy G1 of the SRLP. Paragraph 87 of the Framework establishes that inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

Openness

9. Paragraph 79 of the Framework establishes that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. As already stated, the proposal would replace, but be substantially larger than, an existing conservatory. Whilst the effects of the proposal on openness would not be easily seen from some directions, openness effects are not solely determined by the degree of visibility of a proposal.
10. I conclude that the proposal would cause moderate harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

Character and appearance

11. The appeal dwelling includes one of a pair of semi-detached houses. Whilst it has been extended to one side, the pair as a whole retains a sense of integrity in its overall design.
12. The proposed extension would constitute a further addition to the side of the appeal dwelling. However, it would be built in materials to match the existing

¹ The figures of 48% and 78% referred to in this paragraph are set out in the Council officer report on the application and have not been refuted by the appellant.

building and the design of its hipped roof would broadly reflect the roof of the existing building, albeit at a smaller scale and set back from the frontage of the house.

13. I conclude that the proposal would have a neutral effect on the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area. It would not conflict with policy G17 of the SRLP.

Other considerations

14. The proposed extension would, by enabling the provision of a new family room and en-suite facilities, enable the appellant to upgrade the property and improve its facilities for his family. I also note that the potential for locating en-suite facilities in different parts of the property is likely to be affected by the location of drains. However, whilst the benefits of providing such facilities would be material they would not be unusual.
15. Although the appellant has stated that the proposal would improve the carbon footprint of the dwelling, the extent to which this would be so is unclear and the proposal is unlikely to offer the only means by which this could be achieved. The fact that no objections have been received from any neighbouring residents does not mitigate the harm that I have identified.

Conclusion

16. Against the proposal, I have found that it would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt. I have also identified that the proposal would cause moderate harm to the openness of the Green Belt. Paragraph 88 of the Framework requires that substantial weight be given to any harm to the Green Belt.
17. I have found that the proposal would have a neutral effect on the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area. However, whilst I have identified some other considerations which weigh in support of the proposal, for reasons which I have set out these carry only limited weight. Consequently, I find that the other considerations in this case would not, considered cumulatively, clearly outweigh the harm that I have identified. Therefore, the very special circumstances needed to justify the development do not exist. The proposal would also not accord with the development plan or amount to sustainable development in the terms of the Framework.
18. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Jonathan Clarke

INSPECTOR