The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 June 2017

by Paul Jackson B Arch (Hons) RIBA

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

Decision date: 28 June 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/C3620/D/17/3172821
Partridge Cottage, Partridge Lane, Newdigate, RH5 5EA

- 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 Paul Keane against the decision of Mole Valley District Council.
- The application Ref MO/2016/2015/PLAH, dated 14 December 2016, was refused by notice dated 17 February 2017.
- The development proposed is a first floor side extension.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are as follows:
   - Whether the proposed extension constitutes inappropriate development in the Metropolitan Green Belt for the purposes of advice in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and development plan policy;
   - The effect of the proposed development on the openness of the Metropolitan Green Belt; and
   - 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

3. Partridge Cottage consists of a traditional detached double fronted 2 storey rendered cottage with a tile hung first floor, brick chimneys on each flank wall and a clay tile roof. A ground floor kitchen extension has been built on the west side of the cottage set back from the front elevation. A large garage/office lies further west of the building which has accommodation in the roof space. The proposed extension would add a first floor over the kitchen extension which would contain a bedroom, bathroom and dressing room.

4. Policy RUD7 of the Mole Valley District Local Plan of 2000 (LP) advises that in the countryside, proposals for the extension of dwellings will be permitted where they would not, amongst other things, result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original dwelling[1] or detract from the appearance and character of the existing dwelling or the rural character of the area. This is consistent with the advice on Green Belts in the NPPF which advises that extensions to buildings will be inappropriate in the Green Belt if

[1] In 1968

they result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building.

5. There is no set figure in policy indicating the increase in floor space that may be acceptable. In this case, the increase in floor space over the original building would be just under 82% including previous extensions. Floor space is one method which gives an indication of the size of a proposal. Importantly, the increase in the bulk of the extension would be particularly apparent because of its width at first floor level and the ridge of the roof being only a little lower than that of the modest host dwelling. The overall impression would be of a substantial dwelling of very significantly greater bulk and substantially increasing the amount of built form on the site. The extension would also fill much of the existing gap between the cottage and the garage/office, which presently allows views through to trees behind. The impact on openness would be particularly prominent and noticeable from Partridge Lane.

6. Moreover, whilst not mentioned in the reasons for refusal, but referred to in the Officer's report, the character and appearance of the existing cottage would also be harmed by the bulk of the extension, which would compete with it in visual terms. I conclude on the main issue that the development would be of substantial volume and bulk and would add significantly to the amount of built form. Together with previous extensions, it would be disproportionate. It would not comply with the aims of policy RUD7 of the LP. It would harm openness, conflicting with the Green Belt protection objectives of the NPPF.

7. The appellant refers to decisions on proposals in Beare Green and Holmbury St Mary where the percentage cumulative increases in floor area exceed that proposed at Partridge Cottage, but the exact circumstances of these schemes are not before me and each case needs to be judged on its own merits. The assessment of the size of a proposal and its effect on openness can depend on other factors apart from floor area, including design and volume. Nothing put forward alters the conclusions I have reached in respect of the appeal proposal.

8. No other considerations have been submitted that amount to special circumstances, let alone the very special circumstances that might justify the development. For the above reasons, the appeal should be dismissed.

Paul Jackson

INSPECTOR