
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 July 2017

by Mr Kim Bennett BSc DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 02 August 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3615/D/17/3175807

Cheyme Cottage, Manor House Lane, Bookham KT23 4EJ

- 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 Mrs Kelly Cromie against the decision of Guildford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 17/P/00435, dated 23 February 2017, was refused by notice dated 11 April 2017.
 - The development proposed is a part demolition of the rear extension and construction of a two storey rear extension with pitched roof and dormers. Replacement of the sub-standard flat roofs to the property with hipped pitched roofs, with roof tiling to match existing main roof.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are: Whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt; the effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt; if the proposal would be 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

3. The appeal property comprises a substantial two storey detached house located on the western side of Manor House Lane and close to its junction with the A246. It has two large single storey flat roofed extensions to either side as well as a single storey rear extension and two storey rear projection. The property is one of a number of large detached houses on the western side of the lane, all of which are different designs and set in mature landscaped gardens. The character of the lane itself is rural, with trees along its eastern side and open fields beyond. The site lies within the Green Belt.
4. The Council's approach towards extensions to residential properties in the Green Belt, is set out in saved Policies RE2 and H9 of its Local Plan 2003. Policy RE2 allows for limited extensions of existing dwellings provided they are in accordance with Policy H9. Policy H9 provides further amplification by stating

that there will be a presumption against extensions to dwellings which result in disproportionate additions, taking into account the size of the original dwelling. Both Policies are generally consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which also refers in paragraph 89 to extensions being regarded as acceptable in policy terms provided they do not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.

5. Although precise measurements differ slightly, it is common ground between the main parties that the property has been significantly extended from its original size, and the appellant suggests that amounts to a 112% increase in floor space from the original. The appellant also advises that the proposed extensions would only add a small addition to that figure to make a total increase of 115.8% over the original foot print of the property.
6. However, as the Council points out and the policies make clear, it is the original size of the house which is the starting point, rather than its currently extended state. Additionally, I agree with the Council that it is important to consider three dimensional impact as well as just floor area. In that respect, and despite the part removal of existing extensions, the proposed extension across the full width of the property and at two storey level, together with the impact of the proposed two large pitched roofs over the existing side extensions, would significantly add to the overall bulk and impact of the property, even as currently extended. In my view a combination of the above issues and cumulative impact of all existing and proposed extensions would amount to a disproportionate addition over the original dwelling and therefore inappropriate development as a result. In that regard, the Framework makes it clear that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

Effect on openness

7. The property is clearly visible from Manor House Lane and from that direction, the addition of the hipped roofs would significantly add to the massing of the property and close down the gap that presently exists between Cheyme Cottage and the neighbouring house known as 'Strumhoe. Additionally, as the appellant's own photographs show and which I confirmed at my site visit, the property is also visible from the A246 where the impact of the new roof on the property's southern side, and to some extent the flank of the rear extension, would also be visible. The cumulative effect would therefore lead to some further loss of openness which I attach moderate weight to.

Other considerations

8. The Framework makes it clear that very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm, by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. In that respect, I acknowledge that the hipped roofs to either side extension would improve the appearance of the existing property, a fact that the Council also recognised when assessing a previous proposal ¹ in 2012 and to which the appellant has drawn my attention to. However in that instance the Council also referred to the wider conflict with Green Belt policy and that situation remains in this case given the cumulative

¹ Application reference 12/P/00267

increase in size and visual impact that would occur were this proposal to go ahead. I also note that the revised design was the subject of discussions with officers before the current application was submitted. However, such advice can only ever be on a 'without prejudice' basis pending the formal consideration of an application. Finally, whilst I appreciate the desire to increase the number of bedrooms in the property, there is no evidence before me that the existing accommodation is sub-standard in any way in terms of basic facilities, and as with the design issues, I attach greater weight to the overall conflict with Green Belt policy that would result.

Overall balance and conclusion

9. The proposed extension would amount to inappropriate development which the Framework makes clear is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. In addition there would also be harm arising from the loss of existing openness as a result of the increased visual impact of the extensions. In my view, the other considerations raised, do not clearly outweigh the totality of harm, which is necessary for the development to be acceptable. Consequently the very special circumstances needed to justify the proposal do not exist.
10. Accordingly, for the reasons and conflict with Development Plan policies and the Framework as referred to above, the appeal is dismissed.

Kim Bennett

INSPECTOR