



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 August 2017

by Andrew Owen BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 22 August 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Q4625/W/17/3173963

11 Coventry Road, Solihull B26 3QS

- 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 M Ali against the decision of Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref PL/2016/03036/PPFL, dated 2 December 2016, was refused by notice dated 2 February 2017.
 - The development proposed is erection of two-storey outbuilding to provide ancillary gymnasium and sauna facility to existing hotel (Use Class C1).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the harm to the Green Belt by way 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 it.

Reasons

3. Paragraph 89 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the 'Framework') is clear that the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt is inappropriate. It is not disputed between the parties that the proposal would have a greater impact on openness than the existing development on site and it is therefore inappropriate. I concur with this position.
4. Paragraphs 87 and 88 of the Framework say that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt. They add that development should not be approved unless the harm to the Green Belt, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. Also Policy P17 of the Solihull Local Plan states that the Council will not permit inappropriate development in the Green Belt, except in very special circumstances. This reflects the Framework and so I can give it significant weight.
5. With respect to other considerations, I have considered the suggestion that the impact on openness would be partly alleviated by landscaping which currently comprises a number of tall trees to the west and south of the site which would assist in screening the proposal from long distance views, and which could be

supplemented. However I consider the building would remain to be visible from positions along Coventry Road, Old Damson Lane and from some nearby properties. Moreover, despite its flat sedum roof, due to its height and scale, it would appear prominently from these viewpoints. Also although the building would not project as far south as some neighbouring development, it would nonetheless be significantly detached from the other buildings on the site. As such I do not consider the adverse effect on openness would be mitigated and I therefore give little weight to these matters.

6. I note that the appeal site is included with a larger area of land which is identified as a proposed employment site in the Draft Solihull Local Plan. However the plan is at an early stage and is yet to be examined. Accordingly although I can give the Draft Solihull Local Plan, as currently published, some weight, it is very limited. Consequently, I can give only limited weight to the inclusion of the appeal site within the employment allocation.
7. The appellant refers to the economic benefits of the development including the provision of high quality hotel accommodation to support the expansion of Birmingham International Airport and nearby employment uses, increased tax revenue, and the creation of a wide range of jobs. However these appear to relate to the operation of the hotel, not specifically the development subject of this appeal. Although I saw at my site visit that the hotel is under renovation, it has not been demonstrated that the proposal is integral to the restoration or future enjoyment of the hotel. In fact, the proposal would generate one full time and one part time job. This would be of limited benefit to the local economy, and the jobs created by the construction of the building would be temporary. As such I give these economic matters minimal weight.
8. Only brief details of proposed landscaping are provided. So whilst there may be a benefit to biodiversity, I give it only little positive weight.
9. The planning application referred to by the appellant¹ for the land south of the site appears to be for a substantially different form of development. Notwithstanding this I have only minimal details of that proposal so can give it very little weight.

Planning Balance and Overall Conclusion

10. The development causes significant harm to the Green Belt by way of its inappropriateness and, as advised by the Framework, substantial weight should be given to this harm. Balanced against that are the other considerations identified above. I conclude that the weight of the other considerations does not clearly outweigh the harm and therefore there are no very special circumstances to justify the proposal. Consequently, the development conflicts with Policy P17 and the Framework which both aim to protect the Green Belt from inappropriate development.
11. Therefore, for the reasons given above, and taking account of all other considerations, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Andrew Owen

INSPECTOR

¹ Application No PL/2016/03131/PPFL