

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 October 2017

by Les Greenwood MRTPI

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

Decision date: 23 October 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/M1595/D/17/3179988

Hollywood, Southend Road, Corringham SS17 9ET

- 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 Chris Sullivan against the decision of Thurrock Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 17/00177/HHA was refused by notice dated 15 May 2017.
 - The development proposed is a single storey rear extension with a lean-to roof over and a part first floor rear extension with a hipped roof over.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issues

2. The main issues are:
 - ii) whether the proposal constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt;
 - iii) its effect on the openness of the Green Belt and on the character and appearance of the local area; and
 - iv) if it is inappropriate development, whether the harm by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm would be clearly outweighed by other considerations, amounting to the very special circumstances required to justify the proposal.

Reasons

Inappropriate development in the Green Belt?

3. Hollywood is a 3 bedroom semi-detached house located in a ribbon of development along Southend Road, in the countryside and in the Green Belt. It has a lean-to single storey kitchen extension at the back plus a conservatory extension beyond that. The proposal would partly replace and partly extend these existing elements at ground and first floor levels.
4. Paragraph 87 of the National Planning Policy Framework advises that inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 89 explains that construction of new buildings should be regarded as inappropriate in the Green Belt, except for listed exceptions. These include extensions to

buildings provided that they do not result in *disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building*. This wording is repeated in Policy PMD6 of the Council's Core Strategy and Policies for Management of Development Focussed Review (CS), adopted in 2015. As these policies relate to cumulative increases to the original building, the key here is the scale of overall increase.

5. The Framework does not provide guidance on the scale of extensions that would be considered disproportionate. CS Policy PMD6 defines this to mean *no larger than 2 reasonably sized rooms or any equivalent amount*.
6. The Council's approach is to divide the original habitable floorspace by the number of habitable rooms to get an average original room size and then multiply this by 2 to get a guideline figure for a reasonable increase in floorspace. On the basis of this computation, the Council finds that the proposed extension would be more than twice the size that it would allow. This formula is not, however, set out in the policy. The original house at Hollywood had quite small rooms and I consider that the addition of *2 further reasonably sized rooms* should not necessarily be constrained by this factor.
7. On a more even-handed interpretation, I find that the proposed ground floor would amount to about 2 reasonably sized rooms and the first floor would add sufficient space to be equivalent to about 1 more room. Although this means that the proposal would not be grossly out of scale, it would still be somewhat larger than is allowed for in adopted development plan policy.
8. I conclude that the proposal would amount to a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building. It therefore constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt, conflicts with CS Policy PMD6 and the Framework and is by definition harmful to the Green Belt. I give this harm substantial weight in determining this appeal, in accordance with paragraphs 87 and 88 of the Framework.

Openness, character and appearance

9. Although the proposed extension would be within a row of houses, would not be visible from the street and its bulk would be minimised by its hipped roof form and low heights, it would nevertheless result in a minor reduction in the general openness of the Green Belt. This slight harm adds a little further weight to the balance against the proposal.
10. The extension would be well designed and discreetly positioned, so would cause no harm to the character and appearance of the area. On the other hand, I see no significant enhancement either so this issue is neutral.

Other considerations and very special circumstances

11. I recognise the reasonable wish of the appellant to improve his home. I note that some neighbouring properties are larger and some have been significantly extended. I have no information regarding the timing of or reasons for any other planning approvals though. Having taken the site context into account, I find that these factors are not sufficient to clearly outweigh the harm due to inappropriateness and the harm to the openness of the Green Belt. I conclude that the very special circumstances necessary to justify inappropriate

development in the Green Belt do not exist in this case, so that the proposal conflicts with the above-mentioned policies.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons set out above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should not succeed.

Les Greenwood

INSPECTOR