

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 July 2019

by N McGurk BSc (Hons) MCD MBA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23rd July 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/N0410/D/19/3228642

The Bungalow, Wrexham Street, Stoke Poges, SL3 6PA

- 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 Sati Khaira against the decision of South Bucks District Council.
 - The application Ref PL/19/0209/FA, dated 21 January 2019, was refused by notice dated 26 March 2019.
 - The development proposed is a second floor side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. There is disagreement between the Council and the appellant in respect of the proposed percentage increase in the volume of the appeal property that would arise as a result of the proposed development.
3. However, the appellant, in support of her case, states that an increase in floorspace of 60% compared to the original dwelling has already been permitted and that "the 50% threshold has already been passed." Consequently, the proposal would necessarily result in an increase in floorspace of greater than 50% compared to the original dwelling.
4. A planning application¹ for a first floor side extension was refused in 2018.
5. The application form refers to the development proposed as a second floor side extension. The decision notice refers to a first floor side extension. I note that the proposal would comprise development at first floor level.

Main Issues

6. The appeal site is within the Green Belt and the main issues are:
 - whether the proposal would be inappropriate development for the purposes of the National Planning Policy Framework (Section 13: Protecting Green Belt land) and development plan policy;

¹ Reference: PL/18/3919/FA.

- the effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt and on the character and appearance of the area;
- if the development is inappropriate, 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 the proposal would be inappropriate development

7. The appeal property is a large detached single storey dwelling with rooms at roof level located in a residential area in the Green Belt. The property has a garden area to three sides and has three smaller outbuildings. It is largely surrounded by the rear gardens of other dwellings and that of the local pub.
8. This provides for a notably green and spacious environment, attributes which are complemented by the presence of numerous glimpses from the appeal property through to the nearby countryside. However, trees at the boundary between the pub and the appeal property are located in very close proximity to the appeal property, reducing the sense of openness and spaciousness at this point.
9. I noted during my site visit that a number of dwellings in the area have been extended and/or altered and that these changes tend to appear in keeping with host properties and their surroundings.
10. During my site visit I observed that The Bungalow, due largely to its overall scale and location, is visible from the rear of a number of properties, but that outbuildings within the appeal site generally appear as modest constructions in keeping with the surrounding garden environment.
11. The proposal would involve the extension of The Bungalow to create additional living space above the ground floor. This would add volume at roof level in a manner designed to be in keeping with the host property.
12. As noted above, the totality of the development proposed would result in an increase over and above the volume of the original building of more than 60%.
13. Paragraph 145 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) requires the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt to be considered as inappropriate, with a number of exceptions, one of which is the extension of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.
14. The Council considers the proposal to be disproportionate and notes in this regard that guidance for Local Plan² Policy GB10 states that extensions which would increase a dwelling's floor space by more than half will not be regarded as small scale.
15. In considering the proposal, I am mindful that, relative to the original size of the dwelling, the resultant building would be of considerable scale. Furthermore,

² South Bucks District Local Plan (Adopted March 1999. Consolidated September 2007 and February 2011).

I find that it would result in a building with a large, bulky and dominant roof. This would appear prominently within an area of Green Belt largely characterised by its open and spacious qualities and would add to a sense of the the proposal appearing disproportionate.

16. Thus, I find that the proposal would comprise a disproportionate addition over and above the original size of the property. Whilst it is proposed to reduce the size of one of the outbuildings by an equivalent volume to the proposed development, I find that the impact would not be comparable. As noted above, the outbuildings are modest and do not draw attention to themselves. By way of contrast, the proposal would add bulk and volume to a large building at roof level.

17. Taking all of the above into account, I find that the proposal would comprise inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Paragraph 143 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

Openness and character and appearance

18. Openness is an essential characteristic of the Green Belt. The proposed development would add built volume to the appeal property. It would do so in a manner which would fill an existing space to the side of The Bungalow and this would inevitably reduce the openness of the Green Belt.

19. The proposal would be located within the immediate proximity of the trees referred to above and I find that this would result in an awkward, "cramped" appearance, adding to its impact on respect of openness.

20. I note that, notwithstanding its comments in relation to the proposal's impacts on the openness of the Green Belt, the Council is satisfied that the proposal would not result in harm to the character and appearance of the area.

Other considerations

21. For the reasons given above, the proposed reduction in the size of an outbuilding is not something that amounts to a very special circumstance in favour of the development proposed. There are no very special circumstances that weigh in favour of the proposal.

Conclusion

22. The proposal would comprise inappropriate development, which is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt. Whilst there would be minimal harm to local character, there would be harm to openness and this is a factor to which I afford some weight. There are no very special circumstances that outweigh the totality of the harm arising.

23. For the reasons given above, the appeal does not succeed.

N McGurk

INSPECTOR