



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/19/3228838

3 Church View, Robert Road, Hedgerley, SL2 3YB

- 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 and Mrs Lahert against the decision of South Bucks District Council.
 - The application Ref PL/18/4578/FA, dated 3 December 2018, was refused by notice dated 20 February 2019.
 - The development proposed is a part two storey, part single storey side / rear 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. However, both parties agree that the proposal would result in an increase in floorspace, over and above that of the original property, of more than 50% and I take this into account in considering the appeal before me.

Main Issues

3. 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;
 - 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

4. The appeal property is a semi-detached two storey dwelling located in a prominent position at the corner of Robert Road and Gregory Road. It is within a residential area in the Green Belt, characterised by the presence of largely two storey detached, semi-detached and terraced dwellings, set back from the road behind grass verges, front gardens and/or parking areas and with long gardens to the rear.
5. Whilst I noted during my site visit that a number of dwellings in the area have been extended and/or altered, these changes generally appear to be in keeping with host properties and their surroundings. The presence of gardens, verges and gaps between properties, with views through to spaces and trees beyond, provides for an attractive sense of openness and spaciousness.
6. The proposal would include a two storey side extension with a tall Dutch hipped roof, the ridge of which would only be set down very slightly from that of the host property. This would appear in contrast to an existing two storey extension to the attached property, No 4 Robert Road, which has a roof set well down from that of the host property.
7. As noted above, the totality of the development proposed would increase the volume of the original building by more than 50%. 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.
8. The Council considers the proposal to be disproportionate and notes in this regard that guidance for Local Plan¹ Policy GB10 states that extensions which would increase a dwelling's floor space by more than half will not be regarded as small scale.
9. In considering the proposal, I am mindful that, relative to the original size of the dwelling, it would be of a considerable scale. Furthermore, I find that it would result in the creation of a large, bulky and dominant addition, in the form of the proposed roof. The awkward appearance of this would be emphasised as a result of it failing to harmonise with the extension to the adjoining property, No 4 Robert Road. I find that these are factors that would result in the proposal appearing disproportionate.
10. Taking all of the above into account, I find that the proposal would comprise a disproportionate addition over and above the original size of the property. Whilst the appellants, in support of their case, refer to other developments elsewhere, my concern lies with the disproportionate nature of the proposal before me and I find that the identified impacts that would arise are not something that would be reduced or mitigated by the presence of other developments elsewhere.
11. 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

¹ South Bucks District Local Plan (Adopted March 1999. Consolidated September 2007 and February 2011).

development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

Openness and character and appearance

12. Openness is an essential characteristic of the Green Belt. The proposed development would add significant built volume to the appeal property. It would do so in a manner which would not only fill an existing space to the side and rear of the house and thus inevitably reduce the openness of the Green Belt, but in a way which would introduce a large, bulky and dominant addition. This would result in the proposal drawing attention to itself and I find that this would increase the impact of the loss of openness arising.

13. Further to the above, in extending to the side in the way that it would, the proposal would serve to close a notable gap, that contributes to the open and spacious qualities of the area, between the side of No 2 Robert Road – which extends close to the boundary with the appeal property at a significant height due to the presence of a bulky side extension – and No 3.

Other considerations

14. I have identified harm to the Green Belt and whilst I note the existence of other developments elsewhere, this does not amount 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

15. 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 considerable weight. There are no very special circumstances that outweigh the totality of the harm arising.

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

N McGurk

INSPECTOR