
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 June 2019

by K Winnard LL.B (Hons) Solicitor

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23rd July 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/P3040/D/19/3227143

Canterbury House, Barton Lane, Thrumpton NG11 0AU

- 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 O'Grady against the decision of Rushcliffe Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 19/00347/FUL, dated 9 February 2019, was refused by notice dated 8 April 2019.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing garage, erection of 2-storey front extension (new entrance hall, landing and sitting area) and 2-storey side extension (new garage, gym and annex).
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues in this appeal are as follows:
 - Whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework') and any relevant development plan policies;
 - The effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt;
 - Whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Thrumpton Conservation Area;
 - Whether any harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, be clearly outweighed by other considerations so as to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development.

Reasons

Inappropriate development

3. The Framework states that the construction of new buildings is inappropriate development within the Green Belt unless the development falls within one of a number of specified exceptions. These include the extension or alteration of a building provided it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. Canterbury House is one of two

dwellings formed from a barn conversion, and which was extended at the time of its conversion. The Framework requires that assessment of whether an addition is disproportionate is made with reference to the original building, in this case the building as it existed on 1 July 1948. The appellant's own calculations (which are disputed by the Council) show the percentage increase in volume of both the previous and proposed extensions fall below what is stated to be a commonly accepted threshold of 50%. However, the Framework does not specify percentage increases or specific extension sizes where an extension might be considered disproportionate. Even if I were to accept the calculations put forward by the appellant, which are in any event not insignificant in themselves, the proposed 2 two storey extensions would be considerably sizeable and notable. In my view, their scale would amount to disproportionate additions to the original building. As such the proposed development would amount to inappropriate development within the Green Belt which is by definition harmful.

4. The proposal would also conflict with Saved Policies EN14 and EN19 of the Rushcliffe Borough Non Statutory Replacement Local Plan (Local Plan). Notwithstanding that the Saved Policies pre-date the Framework, these policies aim to restrict inappropriate development within the Green Belt in line with National Planning Policy. Whilst the Policy allows for limited extensions within the Green Belt, for the reasons outlined above, I do not consider that the proposed scheme would represent a limited extension.

Openness

5. The essential characteristics of the Green Belt are their openness and permanence. Whilst the proposal involves the demolition of a conservatory and the demolition and replacement of the existing garage, there would nonetheless be an increase in the level of built development in this location. The proposed scheme would result in a more sizeable building exacerbated by the height of both the extensions, one above the roof line and the other higher than the current garage. As such the proposed development would have an adverse effect on the openness of the Green Belt. As a consequence of this, there would inevitably be a reduction in the openness of the Green Belt in this location, which would represent harm to one of the Green Belt's essential characteristics as outlined in the Framework.
6. There is a visual aspect to openness. Canterbury House itself is well screened with high hedges, save for a limited area adjacent to the surrounding fields and only distant views can be seen of the appeal site from Thrumpton itself. The proposed two storey side extension would be visible from the surrounding fields. As such, whilst views of the proposal would be limited, it would nonetheless result in a loss of openness to the Green Belt, contrary to national and local policy to protect it.

Conservation area

7. The Thrumpton Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2010) (Appraisal) describes Barton Lane as traditional properties but dominated by complexes of agricultural buildings. The Appraisal requires extensions to respect the key characteristics of the original building, including size, mass, materials and proportions together with the contextual character and setting of the CA. Thrumpton has a linear plan with buildings facing two main routes, the

first of which is grouped around the junction of Barton Lane, and in parallel with the A453. Here there are a mixture of residential and agricultural buildings. Its significance in this location reflects the agricultural and rural heritage of Thrumpton, and its development over time.

8. I acknowledge that the appellant has sought to introduce contemporary features into what is now a residential, rather than an agricultural, building. I also appreciate that gable entrances and cart sheds are characteristics of agricultural buildings and that features such as dormer windows have been avoided and a large door removed. Nonetheless, whilst Canterbury House is itself an extension of the original building, its linear low level form reflects a strong agricultural heritage. The addition of a front extension, interrupting the roof line by a sizeable front glazed gable would not reflect its simple form and would be at odds with the prevailing character of Canterbury House and the complex as a whole. Unlike cart sheds in an agricultural complex, the side extension would not be subservient to the building due to its size and bulk. It would fill in the current gap between Canterbury House and the garage, increasing the level of the built development at this side of the appeal site and creating a partial courtyard effect to the detriment of the setting of this former agricultural complex.
9. The building whilst already extended, maintains characteristics of the original farm complex and is a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the CA. This contribution would be diminished by the appeal proposal. Overall, I consider that the proposed scheme would result in less than substantial harm due to the size of the proposal relative to that of the CA. I return to this matter in my conclusion, below.

Other considerations /public benefits

10. I acknowledge that the proposal would provide enlarged living facilities at Canterbury House and provide enhanced facilities to enable the appellant to further his career as a professional athlete. However, these would be largely private benefits.

Other matter

11. I note also the appellant's reference to the Council's handling of the application but this is not a matter before me nor does it alter my findings.

Conclusion

12. The proposal would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt and would reduce openness in this location. The Framework states that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt. In addition, the proposal would fail to preserve the character and appearance of the Thrumpton Conservation Area. Even when taken together, the other considerations/ public benefits in this case would not clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt or outweigh the harm to the conservation area. Consequently, the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development do not exist. The development would therefore be contrary to Saved Policies EN2, EN14, and EN19 of the Local Plan, and guidance contained in the Framework relating to Green Belts and designated heritage assets.

13. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

K Winnard

INSPECTOR