



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 October 2019 by Elizabeth Davies BSc (Hons) PIEMA

Decision by Andrew Owen BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 04 November 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/D3640/D/19/3232658

Goldbridge, Philpot Lane, Chobham, Woking GU24 8HE

- 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 G Fenning & Ms B Brough against the decision of Surrey Heath Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 19/0193, dated 6 March 2019, was refused by notice dated 7 June 2019.
 - The development proposed is a single storey side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issue

3. The main issues in the appeal are:
 - Whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF);
 - The effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt; and
 - If the development would be inappropriate, 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 for the Recommendation

Whether it would be inappropriate development

4. Paragraph 145 of the NPPF states that new buildings are inappropriate in the Green Belt unless they fall within the given list of exceptions. One exception is the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.
5. The appellant states the proposal would increase the floor area by 9.7m² resulting in a percentage uplift of just over 6% above the current dwelling. However, the exception in the NPPF relates to additions to the original building.

The calculations provided by the Council identify that the floorspace created by the proposed side extension, when added to previous extensions on the appeal property, would result in the floorspace and volume of the original dwelling being increased by 70.7% and 115.3% respectively. I consider that this uplift represents a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building and therefore the proposed extension would be inappropriate development. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt.

Openness

6. The NPPF states that “the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence”. Openness can be determined by visual and spatial aspects.
7. The appeal property is set back from Philpot Lane, accessed by a shared driveway, and only glimpsed views of the front of the property are available from the public highway. The proposed extension is located on the west side of the property and any views from the Lane to the north would be screened by the existing property. There is a high boundary wall separating the appeal property from Little Goldbridge Farm to the west which would prevent any views of the proposed extension from that direction. To the south, there is a boundary wall and mature hedge screening views. There would therefore be no views of the proposed extension from public land or neighbouring properties and hence no visual impact on openness.
8. In terms of spatial aspects, the proposed development would introduce built form into a part of the site which is currently undeveloped and as such would inevitably affect the spatial openness of the site.
9. Whilst I have not found that any visual impact will occur, there would be a spatial impact and so, overall, the extension would have a harmful effect, albeit to a limited degree, on openness. This harmful impact on openness, and the inappropriateness of the proposal in principle, both carry substantial weight.

Other Considerations

10. The NPPF states ‘very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the development, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
11. The Council and the appellant both agree that the proposed extension will be in keeping with the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the Council conclude that there will be no impact on the occupiers of neighbouring properties or flood risk. The lack of harm in these respect carries neutral weight.
12. The appellant refers to the building of a replacement dwelling (Fairbourne Manor) on Philpot Lane and raises concerns that the Council took a different approach when deciding this application. However, a replacement dwelling is not directly comparable to the proposed extension and is assessed against

different criteria. In any case, I have not been provided with any details of that development so can give little consideration to it.

13. A previous planning permission (14/0547) relating to an extension at the appeal property, included a condition removing permitted development rights for extensions and buildings or enclosures. The appellant suggests that if permitted development rights were still intact a much larger extension could be built. Nonetheless, as permitted development rights have been removed then this is not a feasible fall back position.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

14. The NPPF advises that the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts and that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt. It is considered the development would cause harm to the Green Belt by way of inappropriateness and to openness. Balanced against that are the other considerations identified above. I conclude that they do not clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and therefore there are no very special circumstances to justify the proposal.
15. Therefore the proposed development would be contrary to the NPPF which seeks to prevent inappropriate development in the Green Belt and to maintain its essential characteristics, including its openness.
16. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Elizabeth Davies

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

17. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

Andrew Owen

INSPECTOR