



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 November 2019

by J E Jolly BA (Hons) MA MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 November 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/M3645/D/19/3235722 15 Cottenhams, Blindley Heath RH7 6JW

- 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 Steven Ward against the decision of Tandridge District Council.
 - The application Ref TA/2019/1048, dated 8 June 2019, was refused by notice dated 19 August 2019.
 - The development proposed is a two-storey North side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - whether the proposal would represent inappropriate development in the Green Belt or not and;
 - the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

Development in the Green Belt

3. The main parties agree that the appeal site is located in Blindley Heath which is a defined village in the Green Belt as set down in Policy DP12 of the Tandridge Local Plan Part 2: Detailed Policies 2014 (TLP). The Councils' Officer Report states that, development in the defined villages in the Green Belt will be permitted under DP12 of the TLP where the proposal comprises one of six forms of development; in this case Criterion 4 of this Policy, which says that extensions or alterations to existing buildings and the erection of new ancillary domestic buildings within the curtilage of a dwelling is acceptable.
4. This reflects the exception provided in Paragraph 149 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which says that the extension or alteration of a building is acceptable in the Green Belt provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.
5. Neither party therefore contends that the proposal would constitute an inappropriate form of development in the Green Belt. I see no reason to disagree. Therefore, the proposal would not be inappropriate development within the Green Belt in this location as defined by local and national policies.

Character and appearance

6. The appeal site is located in 'Cottenhams' which is a residential cul-de-sac adjacent open fields which is accessed off the A22 main road. The prevailing characteristic and rhythm of the street-scene is typified by short-terraces, with gaps between, facing each other across the highway, whether as flats, maisonettes or individual dwellings. This pattern of development provides a sense of spaciousness when combined with the fields behind.
7. No 15 Cottenhams, the host dwelling, is one of three post-war dwellings that completes a short terrace of three brick and tile properties. I noted at the time of my site visit that some ground works appear to have taken place in the location of the proposal. Nonetheless, for the avoidance of doubt, I have made my decision on the basis of the plans submitted.
8. The proposal is for a part single/part two storey side extension to the side of No 15 that would be of a similar design and style to the existing building. The relatively modest scale of the proposal is possible on the appeal site as evidenced by the submitted drawings. However, the close proximity of the proposal to the adjacent terrace would significantly narrow the gap between the short terraces that currently offers views to the fields beyond and avoids a continuous built up frontage. As such, the erosion of the gap is at odds with the prevailing street-scene and would result in a visually cramped development. Moreover, the reduction of the gap between the dwellings would create the appearance of a longer terrace which would be incongruous with the surrounding built environment and cause harm to the wider character and appearance of the area. I acknowledge the Appellant's comments regarding development that may or may not occur on the adjacent terrace, but this does not outweigh the harm I have identified. I also note that there are extended dwellings in the cul-de-sac. However, most of these are what appear to be single-storey porches and garages or, in the case of No 50 Cottenhams, a two-storey extension adjacent open parking space rather than a neighbouring terrace. Furthermore, whether this is an acceptable form of development or not, I understand it was permitted under a previous development plan. I have considered the proposed development in this case on the basis of its own planning merits.
9. Accordingly, the proposal would have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore be contrary to Policy DP7 of the TLP and Policy CSP18 of the Tandridge District Core Strategy 2008 which state amongst other things that development should respect the character and appearance of the area, and in the case of a residential extension, the proposal should not result in the creation of a terracing effect. For similar reasons, the proposal is contrary to Paragraph 127 of the National Planning Policy Framework which indicates that planning decisions should ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character including the surrounding built environment.

Conclusion

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

J E JOLLY

INSPECTOR