
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 December 2019

by T J Burnham BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 8 January 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/J4423/D/19/3235506

Peas Bloom House, Sunny Bank Road, Sheffield S36 3ST

- 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 Marie Williams against the decision of Sheffield City Council.
 - The application Ref 19/01890/FUL, dated 21 May 2019, was refused by notice dated 25 July 2019.
 - The development proposed is retention of timber outbuilding.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. At the time of my site visit, the timber outbuilding was already in place. I am satisfied that it broadly accords with the submitted drawings and I am considering the appeal on that basis.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - i. whether the proposal is inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) (the Framework) and any relevant development plan policies;
 - ii. the effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt;
 - iii. the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area; and
 - iv. if the proposal is inappropriate development, 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

4. The proposal seeks the retention of an outbuilding which is finished in timber to the front of Peas Bloom House, which is a residential property situated in a rural location, set above Sunny Bank Road, within the Green Belt and an Area of High Landscape Value (AHLV).

Whether inappropriate development

5. The Framework at paragraph 145 establishes that the construction of new buildings within the Green Belt should be regarded as inappropriate unless they are a type of building identified under a list of exceptions. The outbuilding does not fall under this list of exceptions. Given that it is clearly separated from the dwelling and built on a different ground level, I do not consider that the outbuilding could be considered under sub paragraph c) as an extension to the existing building. The appellant accepts that the proposal is for an outbuilding as opposed to a house extension. The development is therefore inappropriate development within the Green Belt.
6. Insofar as is relevant to this appeal, Policies GE1, GE2 and GE6 of the Sheffield Unitary Development Plan (1998) (SUDP) seek to resist inappropriate development within the Green Belt and in this respect, they are broadly consistent with the Framework. The development therefore contravenes these policies.

Openness of the Green Belt

7. A 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. The assessment of openness requires a consideration of both spatial and visual aspects.
8. The outbuilding is of significant size and forms a notably lengthy building extending along a large section of the boundary of the site. The perception of the height of the building increases towards the south west elevation where the ground level falls away significantly beneath the existing decking structure. Part of the outbuilding can be seen in close views through gaps in the vegetation when looking up from Sunny Bank road as it passes beneath the site.
9. Consequently, there is a harmful loss of openness of the Green Belt. While the loss is small in the context of the Green Belt as a whole, the Framework is clear that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt. Insofar as is relevant to this appeal, Policies GE1, GE2 and GE6 of the SUDP also seek to maintain the openness of the Green Belt and in this respect, they are broadly consistent with the Framework. The development therefore conflicts with these policies.

Character and appearance of the area

10. Policy GE8 of the SUDP states that within the AHLV development must protect and if appropriate enhance the appearance and character of the area. The NPPF at paragraph 127 sub sections b) and c) require development to be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate landscaping and be appropriate to the surrounding built environment and landscape setting.
11. The building has a relatively simple design and sits distinctly separate from the stone-built dwelling on the site. Although stone is the predominant building material in the area, the odd timber outbuilding is not an uncommon feature. The timber finish to the building, combined with the slate roof results in a building that is acceptable in terms of materials and design such that it protects the appearance and character of the AHLV and the landscape setting.

12. Consequently, I conclude on this matter that the proposal does not conflict with Policy GE8 of the SUDP or paragraph 127 of the Framework which seek amongst other things that development avoids landscape harm, exhibits good architecture and is appropriate to the character of an area.

Other considerations

13. The building provides benefits for the applicants in terms of the enjoyment of their property for domestic purposes and it is provided with a degree of screening by reason of adjacent vegetation. I have also considered the development alongside the provisions of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015.

Conclusion

14. I have found that the development is inappropriate development within the Green Belt and is harmful to Green Belt openness. It therefore should not be approved except in very special circumstances. I must attach substantial weight to the harm to the Green Belt and as such, the harm I have identified is clearly not outweighed by the other considerations. Consequently, the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development do not exist.
15. For the reasons set out above, and having regard to all other matters, the appeal should be dismissed.

T J Burnham

INSPECTOR