



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 May 2020 by S Watson BA (Hons) MSc

Decision by R C Kirby BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

An Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 June 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/P1805/D/20/3244295

66 Barkers Lane, Wythall B47 6BU

- 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 Sally Roberts against the decision of Bromsgrove District Council.
 - The application Ref 19/00875/FUL, dated 28 June 2019, was refused by notice dated 24 September 2019.
 - The development proposed is extension to first floor bedroom and formation of new gable end to roof. Extending front dormer window. Internal works to first floor layout.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

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

Main Issues

3. The appeal site is located within the West Midlands Green Belt. Accordingly, the main issues in this case are:
 - Whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, having regard to the revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and any relevant development plan policies;
 - The effect on the openness of the Green Belt; and,
 - Whether the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations and if so whether this would amount to the very special circumstances required to justify the proposal.

Reasons for the Recommendation

Whether Inappropriate Development

4. Paragraph 143 of the Framework establishes that inappropriate development is by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 144 states that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt and very special circumstances

will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

5. Subject to a number of exceptions, the Framework makes it clear that the construction of new buildings should be regarded as inappropriate in the Green Belt. The listed exceptions are set out in Paragraph 145 of the Framework and include 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'.
6. From the information available to me it appears that there have been a number of extensions and alterations to the host dwelling, including single-storey side and rear extensions, a hip-to-gable roof conversion and dormer windows. Although the appellant refers to some of the extensions being built shortly after 1945, it appears they meant 1948 as her case states this development was "after the cut off date". As such the extensions do not form part of the original dwelling and instead must be included with the proposal as part of my assessment of the increase in size of the original building. The proposal before me would include the enlargement of the roof by way of a hip to gable conversion, and the enlargement of an existing front facing dormer.
7. Policy BDP4 of the Bromsgrove District Plan (BDP) provides limits to extensions within the Green Belt, allowing extensions up to either 40% over the original building or a total floor space of 140m². I note, from the Council's statement, that the dwelling has already breached the 40% increase limit, as well as the floor area set out in this policy. I also note that the appellant is silent on this matter.
8. Given that the host dwelling has already been extended beyond the thresholds set by BDP Policy BDP4, the original dwelling has already been disproportionality extended in terms of this policy. Although the proposal would not result in additional floorspace, it would increase the volume of the dwelling. Taken with the other extensions, it would further exceed the percentage increase threshold set out within BDP Policy BDP4, which makes clear in its explanatory text that any proposed extensions above the identified thresholds will be viewed as inappropriate development.
9. In light of the above I find that the proposal before me would comprise a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building and would result in inappropriate development in the Green Belt, in conflict with Policy BDP4 of the BDP which seeks, amongst other matters to control new buildings in the Green Belt. The proposal would also conflict with Paragraph 145 of the Framework, which covers Green Belts and development within them.

Openness

10. In this instance the cumulative effect of the existing and proposed extensions would clearly be experienced both visually and spatially. Although I note that due to the size of the proposal before me, this impact would be limited, a loss of openness would result. However, even a limited adverse effect on openness would contribute to the overall harm to the Green Belt. This matter carries substantial weight.

Other Considerations

11. I note the appellant's desire to provide an additional bedroom to accommodate her growing family. Whilst I have no doubt that the additional accommodation would be of benefit to the appellant and her family, it is likely that the development is permanent and would remain long after the current personal circumstances cease to exist. Likewise, while I note the intention to provide further insulation as a result of the development, I am not convinced that the development is necessary for the energy efficiency of the building to be improved. I am therefore only able to attach moderate weight to these matters as a result.
12. It has been put forward that the proposal would not adversely impact neighbouring occupiers, that they are happy with the proposal and that there is support for the proposal from the Local Planning Committee, including its Chair. However, the lack of harm to neighbouring occupiers is not a benefit and therefore can only be given a neutral weighting. Likewise, although the possible support is noted, the decision of the Council was to refuse the planning application, and I can only attach this matter very limited weighting. Furthermore, although I note that other properties on the street may have had extensions, I am not aware of the specific circumstances of these cases or whether they are directly comparable to the proposal before me. In any event, each application and appeal is determined on its merits. I therefore attach this matter very limited weight.
13. The appellant has also suggested that the proposal would improve the appearance of the dwelling and the street scene. From the site visit I found that the existing roof causes the building to appear unbalanced and be incongruous with the street scene. The proposal, by matching the gable on the other end of the building, would result in the roof being more symmetrical and therefore balancing the property. The more coherent design would as such be in keeping with the street scene. I find that this improvement to the character and appearance of the building and street scene carries moderate weight in favour of the proposal.

Green Belt Conclusion

14. The proposal would amount to inappropriate development in the Green Belt, and further harm to the Green Belt would be caused as a result of the loss of openness. These matters carry substantial weight. At most, moderate weight has been given to the considerations cited in support of the proposal. I conclude that taken together, they do not clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt. Consequently, the very special circumstances necessary to justify inappropriate development in the Green Belt do not exist. The proposal conflicts with the Green Belt aims of Policy BDP4 of the BDP and the Framework.

Recommendation

15. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

S Watson

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

16. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and concur that the appeal should be dismissed.

RC Kirby

INSPECTOR