



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: 18 June 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/J3720/D/20/3248019

Glebe Farm, Alne Hills, Great Alne B49 6JS

- 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 & Mrs Sherlock against the decision of Stratford on Avon District Council.
 - The application Ref 19/01294/FUL, dated 7 May 2019, was refused by notice dated 10 December 2019.
 - The development proposed is a first floor extension to provide required bedroom to family dwelling.
-

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; and,
 - The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling, surrounding area and Arden Special Landscape Area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

Whether Inappropriate Development

4. Policy CS.10 of the Stratford-on-Avon District Core Strategy (CS) seeks to limit development within the Green Belt, subject to a number of exceptions. Of relevance to the appeal before me is CS.10(b) which allows for "a small-scale extension or alteration of a building". In this regard I find that the new extension, when compared with the size of the existing dwelling would be modest in scale. It would be a small-scale extension to the building for the purposes of CS Policy CS.10.

5. The Framework also considers that an extension or alteration to a building is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt providing that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. In this respect the emphasis differs to that set out in CS Policy CS.10 because of the reference to 'original building'.
6. The Glossary to the Framework defines an 'original building' as "a building as it existing on 1 July 1948 or, if constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was originally built".
7. The appellant has provided an ordnance survey map extract which they state dates from 1941 which shows a horizontal building on the site with a rearward projection. A photograph dated 1949 shows the farmhouse with attached barn also. Whilst noting the Council's concern that the barn should not be included in the size of the original building, it is clear on the evidence before me, and having regard to Section 336 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) which defines 'building' only by its physical form, not its use, that the original building included the barn on the western side of the farmhouse. I have based my assessment of the proposal on this basis.
8. There is no dispute that the host dwelling has been altered over the years, by way of the demolition and replacement of parts of the original building, and the erection of further extensions. Although the appearance of the building has changed significantly over time, the overall size of it has increased by only a small amount when compared with the size of the original building, as demonstrated within the appellants' volume calculations.
9. In terms of the new extension, there is no definition within the Framework or CS as to what is considered 'disproportionate'. It is therefore a matter of planning judgement. The proposed extension would be above an existing single storey extension and taken with the existing extensions to the property, the appellants have calculated that the proposal would increase the volume of the original building by 28%. I consider that an increase in size as proposed would be modest, and taken with previous extensions and alterations would not be disproportionate to the size of the original building.
10. In light of the above, I conclude that the proposal would not comprise inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The proposal accords with CS Policy CS.10 and the Framework in terms of the type of building that is acceptable in the Green Belt. Given this finding and that openness is not a separate consideration for development that falls within Paragraph 145(c) of the Framework, it is not necessary to consider this matter separately.

Character and Appearance

11. The existing dwelling is a large L-shaped building, the main length of which is orientated east-west, with a two-storey projection to the south. Off the north side at the eastern end is a single-storey extension. From the evidence before me it appears that the core of the dwelling was the linear east-west section. I note that there are trees at the front of the site, but they do little to screen the dwelling.

12. From public views along the highway the existing building appears large and to somewhat stretch across the site. In contrast the single storey addition on the north side of the dwelling appears relatively small and forms a soft edge to the dwelling which helps to reduce its visual bulk along the side of the road.
13. However, the proposed first-floor extension would be above this existing addition, and in a prominent position that would be visible from Alne Hills. The new extension's height and bulk would be conspicuous and result in the building appearing to sprawl. Furthermore, the proposal, by way of its scale and prominence alongside the additional change in roof height would result in the building appearing confused, further harming the legibility of the core building. Moreover, the dwelling, including its existing fenestration, is largely simple and plain with most of the building's interest coming from its form and roof. The introduction of a Juliet balcony to the rear reaching up into the gable end, would be a jarring design feature which would further harm the character and appearance of the building.
14. Nevertheless, the proposal is relatively limited in scale and its visual impact would be limited to the immediate surroundings and road. Given this I find that the proposal would not result in harm to the wider area including the Arden Special Landscape Area.
15. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposal would be an incongruous feature which would harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling, contrary to Policies CS.9 and CS.20 of the CS which require development to be of a high-quality design, of an appropriate scale and sensitive to the existing built form.

Conclusion and Recommendation

16. For the reasons given above I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

S Watson

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

17. 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