



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 August 2020

by David Prentis BA BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19th August 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/M3645/D/20/3252405

1 Springfield Cottages, The Platt, Dormansland, Lingfield RH7 6QY

- 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 Chris Brown against the decision of Tandridge District Council.
 - The application Ref TA/2020/377, dated 25 February 2020, was refused by notice dated 22 April 2020.
 - The development proposed is erection of first floor rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of a first floor rear extension at 1 Springfield Cottages, The Platt, Dormansland, Lingfield RH7 6QY in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref TA/2020/377, dated 25 February 2020, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 2020-05-01; 2020-05-02; 2020-05-08
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Main issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposal would amount to inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Reasons

3. The appeal property forms part of a semi-detached pair, at Nos 1 and 2 Springfield Cottages, which stand in generous plots within the Green Belt. Nearby dwellings are located in plots of varying shapes and sizes, accessed by a narrow drive, such that there is no established street frontage and no regularity to the pattern of development. The effects of topography, vegetation and the informal layout of the area are such that Nos 1 and 2 are not widely visible, other than from their own and each other's gardens and from a small number of neighbouring properties.

4. The development plan includes the Tandridge Local Plan – Part 2: Detailed Policies (TLP2). Policy DP10 states that planning permission for inappropriate development in the Green Belt will normally be refused. Policy DP13 states that new buildings will be inappropriate unless one of a number of exceptions applies. For residential dwellings such as this, an extension should not result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building as it existed at 31 December 1968. These policies are generally consistent with the Green Belt policies of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).
5. The Council accepts that the proposed extension would itself be small, having a volume of just 9m³. The Council's concern is with the cumulative increase since 1968 which is calculated to be 156m³ (or 64%). The supporting text to Policy DP13 notes that the Framework does not provide any guidance as to what may be regarded as a '*disproportionate*' addition. It explains that the approach in Tandridge will be to judge each proposal on its individual merits, having regard to matters such as the size of the original building, the bulk, height, mass and prominence of the extension and the impact of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt.
6. I have sought to follow that approach in my assessment. I appreciate that, as a purely mathematical calculation, a 64% increase in volume looks like a fairly substantial increase. However, TLP2 does not promote a purely mathematical approach. The original building was a very modest structure such that any viable 2 storey side extension would have been likely to generate a significant percentage increase in volume. This is borne out by the extensions to date which, although adding just 3.4m to the width of the property, resulted in a 61% increase in volume.
7. The proposal would not extend beyond either the existing rear elevation or the existing flank elevation. It would be seen in the context of the existing semi-detached pair. No 2 also has a two storey side extension and the proposal would approximately balance the pair. The proposed extension would have a negligible impact on the perceived bulk, height and mass of the host property and on the openness of the Green Belt.
8. Turning to the cumulative bulk, height and mass of the existing and proposed extensions, I note that the width of the combined extensions would be less than the width of the existing dwelling. The new ridge of the extensions would still be below that of the original house. The combined extensions would therefore be subservient to the original dwelling. They would not be prominent in the locality. All things considered, in my view they would not result in a disproportionate addition and would not result in material harm to the openness of the Green Belt. Consequently, they would not represent inappropriate development and would accord with TLP2 Policies DP10 and DP13.
9. The Council has not identified any harm in relation to design, appearance or the effect on neighbouring properties. I agree with that assessment and note that no objections have been received from any party.
10. The Council has suggested conditions which I have considered in the light of Planning Practice Guidance. A condition requiring development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans is necessary to create certainty for all parties. A condition requiring external materials to match the existing is necessary in the interests of the character and appearance of the area.

11. In conclusion, the proposal would accord with the development plan. I have not identified any factors which indicate that the appeal should be determined other than in accordance with the plan. The appeal should therefore be allowed.

David Prentis

Inspector