



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 August 2020 by Andreea Spataru BA (Hons) MA

Decision by K Taylor BSc (Hons) PGDip MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 September 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/P3040/D/20/3250895

Willwell Cottage, Wilford Road, Ruddington NG11 6NA

- 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 Ms Mandeep Hampson against the decision of Rushcliffe Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 19/02859/FUL, dated 10 December 2019, was refused by notice dated 7 February 2020.
 - The development proposed is a double story side extension, balcony with external staircase, porch, alterations to existing roof and internal alterations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken 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 main issues are:
 - whether the proposed development would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt for the purposes of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and the development plan policy;
 - the effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt;
 - the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling; and
 - if the development would be inappropriate, whether the harm to the Green Belt by way of inappropriateness and any other harm, would be clearly outweighed by other considerations so as to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify it.

Reasons for the Recommendation

Whether inappropriate development in the Green Belt

4. The appeal site comprises a detached dwelling located on the western side of Wilford Road, within the Green Belt. The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. Paragraphs 145 and
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146 of the Framework set out the forms of development that are not considered inappropriate within the Green Belt. These include the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building.

5. What constitutes a disproportionate addition is not defined within the Framework nor within Policy 21 of the Rushcliffe Local Plan Part 2: Land and Planning Policies (LPP2). An assessment of whether the proposed extensions would be 'disproportionate' in the context of paragraph 145 is therefore a matter of planning judgement which goes beyond purely mathematical calculations.
6. The proposal includes a two-storey side extension, which would have a substantial footprint and would significantly exceed the height of the existing dwelling. In addition, a balcony to the rear, which would extend across the full width of the proposed extension and along part of the existing rear elevation, with an external staircase to the side is proposed along with a porch to the front and alterations to the existing roof. The planning history of the site outlined within the planning officer report indicates that the original dwelling has already been extended. The proposed alterations would significantly increase the bulk and massing of the existing dwelling. As such, the proposal would represent a significant increase in both the external dimensions of the building and in the apparent volume of the dwelling.
7. Consequently, comparing the existing dwelling to the dwelling that would result if the proposal were to go ahead, the outcome would be disproportionate. It would therefore be inappropriate development, which according to paragraph 143 of the Framework is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt.

Openness

8. The Framework indicates that openness is an essential characteristic of the Green Belt. The development would significantly increase the scale and mass of the dwelling. As a result, in spatial terms, the openness of the Green Belt would be reduced.
9. Whilst I accept that the extension would not be unduly visible to the public, this does not mean that it would not affect the openness of the Green Belt. Although in isolation the loss of openness would be limited, nonetheless, there would be a degree of harm arising from this, in addition to that arising from the inappropriate nature of the development.

Character and appearance

10. Policy 10 of the Rushcliffe Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy (CS) and Policy 1 of the LPP2 require new developments to respect and be sympathetic to the character and appearance of the host property in terms of, amongst other things, scale, height and massing.
11. The appeal property is a dormer bungalow with a hipped roof incorporating two dormer windows to the rear, a single storey gabled extension to the side/front and a single storey mono-pitched extension to the rear. The proposal would represent a substantial addition to the property. The two-storey extension, which would have an extensive sideways projection and extend above the ridgeline of the host dwelling, would appear bulky and disproportionate in terms of its scale and height. Furthermore, the proposed balcony, external

staircase and porch, would also add to the massing of the two-storey extension. Accordingly, the proposal would not reflect or compliment the scale, height and massing of the host dwelling. Rather, it would dominate the property and would thereby detract from its form and character.

12. Accordingly, I conclude that through a combination of its scale, massing and height the proposal would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling. Therefore, the development would be contrary to Policy 10 of the CS and Policy 1 of the LPP2.

Other considerations

13. The Framework states that very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
14. The appeal property has been previously affected by flooding several times. I have taken into account the photographic evidence provided by the appellant. It is argued that this has caused severe damp and damage to internal walls. I note that the appellant is seeking to modernise and reinforce the building to be compatible to future environmental threats, whilst increasing the living area for their family members. Whilst I understand that it might not be feasible for the appellant to replace the existing dwelling with a new structure, I am unconvinced that the appellant's objectives cannot be achieved by a less intrusive proposal. Consequently, this limits the weight I can give this matter in support of the proposal.
15. The Council has raised no objection to the development on the basis of its effect on the living conditions of the occupiers of the neighbouring properties with regard to outlook. Given the position of the existing dwelling in relation to neighbouring properties and the siting of the proposed development in relation to the host dwelling, I have no reason to disagree. However, this is a neutral matter rather than one that carries weight in favour of the scheme.
16. The appellant has referred to larger developments on Green Belt land that would cause greater harm than the appeal proposal. Notwithstanding this, I have no details of such developments before me, and in any event, I have considered the proposal based on its own merits and circumstances.

Whether very special circumstances necessary to justify the proposal exist

17. To conclude, the appeal proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, which would, by definition, be harmful to the Green Belt. It would also cause limited harm to the openness of the Green Belt and would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the host property. The Framework requires that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt and that '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.
18. Despite having regard to all the other considerations put before me, I consider that taken together, the factors cited in its favour do not clearly outweigh the harm the scheme would cause. Consequently, very special circumstances do not exist, and the proposal would conflict with the Framework and Policies 1 and 21 of the LPP2 and Policy 10 of the CS.

Conclusion

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

Andreea Spataru

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

20. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

K Taylor

INSPECTOR