



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 September 2020

by H Porter BA(Hons) MSc Dip IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24 September 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/T0355/D/20/3246675

18 Coppermill Road, Wraysbury, Staines TW19 5NT

- 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 Linda Webb against the decision of Council of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.
 - The application Ref 19/03224, dated 19 November 2019, was refused by notice dated 27 January 2020.
 - The development is retrospective household planning application for the extension work at rear to the dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issues are:
 - Whether the development is inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to national policy and relevant development plan policy;
 - The effect on the openness of the Green Belt;
 - If inappropriate development, whether the harm by reason of inappropriateness, is clearly outweighed by other considerations, so as to amount to the very special circumstances required to justify it.

Reasons

Whether inappropriate development

3. The National Planning Policy Framework, revised February 2019 (the Framework) states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. The construction of new buildings should be regarded as inappropriate development in the Green Belt, subject to a number of exceptions that are set out under paragraph 145 of the Framework. One cited exception, and that of most relevance in this case, is 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.

4. Although pre-dating the adoption of the Framework, Policy GB4 of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Plan (LP) is consistent with it insofar as it also seeks to avoid disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.
5. The appeal dwelling is a mid-to-late 20th century detached former chalet-bungalow, which has been incidentally extended since the time of its construction. It is not a matter in dispute that the appeal property has benefitted from a variety of extensions that now form the existing dwelling, which include dormers to the front and rear and a single-storey side and rear extension. The Officer Report includes calculations of the original building's footprint being approximately 125 metres squared; the total footprint of additions to the original dwelling, including the appeal extension, would be around 127 metres squared. The Council calculates the various extensions would represent an increase in floorspace of some 103% over and above the size of the original building.
6. Assessing disproportionality must take into account the first building and the building as proposed to be extended, together with those extensions constructed since it was first built. Neither the Framework nor Policy GB 4 provides a definition of 'disproportionate additions'. The explanatory text to GB 4 establishes that disproportionality can be assessed through, amongst other things, the size of the extensions relative to the original dwelling, the size of the plot, and the nature of the surrounding area; with floorspace being a guiding factor.
7. The original dwelling was evidently once modest in size, with limited living space at roof level; set forward within a good-sized garden plot and benefitting from gaps between it and neighbouring dwellings. The pre-existing drawings indicate that the original dwelling has been substantially extended to provide a garage, study, dining room and three bedrooms in the roof space. These additions amounted not only to a significant increase in floor space but have also added greatly to the overall size of living accommodation. The mass and bulk of the original dwelling have already been increased substantially, whilst the appeal scheme would extend the original building still further with a flat-roofed projection into the rear garden.
8. On the evidence before me, I concur with the Council and conclude that the appeal scheme would represent disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. Consequently, the development does not comply with the exceptions c) under paragraph 145 of the Framework; nor with Policy GB 4 of the LP. Consequently, the appeal scheme is inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Openness

9. Paragraph 133 of the Framework states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. Openness is an essential characteristic of the Green Belt and that openness is defined by an absence of buildings or other forms of development. Openness has a visual and spatial dimension.
10. The appeal site is located along a linear row of detached dwellings fronting Coppermill Road, a long residential street with a suburban character. Notwithstanding the presence of adjacent dwellings and associated

development within rear gardens in the vicinity of the appeal site, Green Belt openness is clearly evident in the surrounding area.

11. Although the loss of openness directly attributable to the appeal scheme would not be great in itself, it adds to the overall bulk and mass of the property and contributes to an additional built footprint and volume. This increases the urbanised nature of the appeal site. Therefore, though relatively slight and localised in its extent, the appeal scheme would fail to preserve the openness of the Green Belt. Therefore, the development fails to satisfy paragraph 133 of the Framework and Policy GB 2 of the LP insofar as they seek to maintain the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy, which includes keeping land permanently open and avoiding development that would have a greater impact on Green Belt openness.

Other considerations

12. I note that neighbouring dwellings have been substantially extended. However, I do not know whether these were subject to approval of planning permission and, if they were, the specific nature of the planning merits that were considered. I have no compelling evidence to indicate the sustainability credentials of the development. The additional extension has provided larger and improved living space for the appellant. Of itself, the appeal scheme would not detract from the character of the host dwelling or the surrounding area. However, matters of design and local character are not the same as those that apply under Green Belt policy, which sets a very high bar.
13. Consequently, these considerations, with all the other matters identified in the evidence either individually or collectively, do not clearly outweigh the identified harm to the Green Belt so as to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons outlined above, the appeal development is inappropriate development in the terms set out in the Framework and leads to a small loss of openness of the Green Belt. These harms are not outweighed by other considerations advanced by the appellant. Therefore, very special circumstances do not exist. On this basis, I conclude that the appeal is contrary to local and national Green Belt policies and should be dismissed.

H Porter

INSPECTOR