
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 September 2020

by N Holdsworth MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 October 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/M3645/D/20/3252649

Quarry Farm, West Park Road, Newchapel, RH7 6HT

- 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 Miss Rosie Langbridge against the decision of Tandridge District Council.
 - The application Ref TA/2019/1893, dated 28 October 2019, was refused by notice dated 30 April 2020
 - The development proposed was originally described as single storey rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The proposal was originally described as an extension to an existing building. The appellant appears to regard the structure as a house. However, there is no planning permission or certificate of lawful use confirming this position. The Council maintain that it has not been demonstrated that the residential use of the building is lawful, and this is reflected in its first reason for refusal. It notes that the building is taxed as a commercial building and appears to have been described as a store in previous planning reports relating to Quarry Farm. The appellant has not provided any significant further evidence in their grounds of appeal, to dispute these points.
3. On Inspection, the host building forms part of a complex of stable buildings that appear to be used for equestrian purposes. Accordingly, for the purposes of this decision I regard the existing planning use of the host building as a store associated with equestrian development. As such, and notwithstanding the original description of development and that found on the Council's decision notice, the proposed development would involve the change of use of the premises to a residential use, as well as the extension. This is the basis on which I have dealt with the appeal.
4. Concerns are raised about the accuracy of the red line plan, but the plans depict the proposal in adequate detail to enable a decision to be made.

Main Issues

5. The site is located in the Green Belt, so the main issues are:

- i) Whether the proposal is inappropriate development within the Green Belt having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and any relevant development plan policies;
- ii) The effect on the openness of the Green Belt;
- iii) The effect on the character and appearance of the area;
- iv) Whether or not sufficient parking is provided on the site for the proposed residential use; and
- v) If the development is inappropriate, whether the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations so as to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development.

Reasons

Whether Inappropriate Development

6. Policy DP10 and DP13 of the Tandridge Local Plan Part 2: Detailed Policies (2014) (Local Plan) reflect policy on development in the Green Belt as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), which has been updated in the period since the policies were published. This makes clear that the fundamental aim of planning policy in relation to such areas is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.
7. Paragraph 145 and 146 of the Framework set out exceptions to Inappropriate development. The proposal would not comprise a building for agriculture or forestry, and nor would it comprise the provision of facilities for sport and recreation. On the evidence before me it does not fall within a village or provide affordable housing in the terms set out by the Framework. None of these exceptions to inappropriate development are relevant.
8. Paragraph 145 c) of the Framework permits the extension or alteration of a building provided it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. However, in this case the works involve a material change of use in addition to the extension of the building, so this exception does not apply.
9. The exception set out in paragraph 145 g) is of potential relevance. This allows for the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land. The existing building, shed and stable block are examples of previous development, so in principle would meet this criteria. However, the resultant development must not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development.
10. In physical terms, the extension would replace two buildings. However, there would be no significant increase in terms of built footprint across this part of the site. It would be a single storey structure of similar overall bulk, consolidating the existing buildings. In this respect, the impact on the openness of the Green Belt would be negligible.
11. However, the new building would also have a significant area of open land around it, as shown within the site plan. Little information is provided on this

area and how it would be used, but it is reasonable to assume it would comprise external amenity space, ie a garden. Such domestic areas typically amass a range of landscaping features and domestic paraphernalia, over the course of time. This has a bulk, which is likely to be greater than would be the case were the site to remain in equestrian use.

12. Consequently, there would be an adverse effect on the openness of the Green Belt, through the likely creation of a residential garden in this area. This would be greater than the existing development on the site. For this reason the proposal does not meet the exception to inappropriate development, set out in paragraph 145 g) of the Framework.
13. There are no other relevant exceptions that would justify the proposal. It follows that the proposal amounts to inappropriate development in the Green Belt. It conflicts with policies DP10 and DP13 of the Local Plan, which seek to prevent such development.

Openness of the Green Belt

14. I have considered the effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt in my reasoning above. There would be an adverse effect on the openness of the Green Belt through the likely creation of a residential garden around the proposed extended building, and the potential bulk associated with it. I attach moderate weight to the harm that would arise, in consequence.

Character and Appearance

15. The Council state in the second reason for refusal that the proposal would appear cramped and overdeveloped and would fail to reflect the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area. On Inspection, the site forms part of a complex of equestrian development. It is surrounded by irregularly shaped fields, interspersed with trees and hedges. The prevailing character and appearance of the surrounding area can be described as rural.
16. The existing equestrian use complements this setting, as it facilitates activities typically associated with the countryside. The partial replacement of the existing equestrian development with a new residential unit that could be occupied independently of the equestrian development would lead to the encroachment of residential development into the countryside. It would have an urbanising effect on its wider surroundings, detracting from the prevailing rural character and appearance of the area.
17. In other respects, the building would be sympathetic in scale and appearance to the surrounding stable buildings. Were permission to be granted, conditions could be used to ensure appropriate materials are used in the construction of the extension. It would be of an appropriate size given the function it would serve and could have an area of garden around it. The proposal would not, in this respect, appear cramped or overdeveloped. However, this does not overcome the unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the area due to the encroachment of residential development into the countryside.
18. The proposal therefore conflicts with policy DP7 of the Local Plan, along with CSP18 and CSP21 of the Tandridge District Core Strategy (2008) (Core Strategy) which require, amongst other things, that development respects the distinctive character and appearance of the area in which it is located, as well as conserving landscape character. There would be unacceptable harm to the

character and appearance of the area, and I attach significant weight to the harm that would arise, in consequence.

Parking

19. It is suggested that parking would be provided, but there is no assigned parking for the proposed building shown on the proposed plans. In this rural area, future occupants would be very likely to use a car to access services and facilities. The wider site leads on to a busy road and the evidence before me does not demonstrate that there are available on-street parking spaces which would meet the needs of this development.
20. This level of parking would be below the standards set out in the Tandridge Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document (2012). Policy DP7 of the Local Plan requires that development proposals maintain existing off-street parking spaces where they are necessary to serve existing buildings or uses, and that parking arrangements associated with new development do not cause harm to amenity or highway safety. It has not been demonstrated that these objectives would be achieved here and the proposal therefore conflicts with this policy. It also conflicts with policy DP5 of the Local Plan and CSP12 of the Core Strategy, which share similar objectives in relation to parking and highway safety. The proposal would fail to provide sufficient parking, and I attach moderate weight to the harm that would arise, in consequence.

Other Considerations and the Green Belt Balance

21. The proposal would provide an additional dwelling with a good standard of living accommodation. This is a benefit of the proposal that attracts a moderate amount of weight in its favour.
22. However, the Framework indicates that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. In addition, I have also found that there would be harm to the openness of the Green Belt, harm to the character and appearance of the area, and that the proposal would fail to provide sufficient parking. On this occasion, the substantial weight to be given to Green Belt harm, and the other harm identified, is not clearly outweighed by other considerations sufficient to demonstrate very special circumstances.

Conclusion

23. The proposal conflicts with the development plan and there are no other considerations that outweigh this finding. The appeal should be dismissed.

Neil Holdsworth

INSPECTOR