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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 October 2020

**by J Davis BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 09 November 2020**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/R3650/D/20/3250251**

**Thorngate, Ballsdown, Chiddingfold, Surrey, GU8 4XJ**

- 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 Nigel Forman against the decision of Waverley Borough Council.
  - The application Ref WA/2019/1877, dated 25 October 2019, was refused by notice dated 27 January 2020.
  - The development proposed was originally described as 'To build a small two storey extension to the front/side of the existing detached property'.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Main Issues

2. The main issues in this appeal area:
  - Whether the proposed development constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt,
  - Its effect on the openness of the Green Belt,
  - Would the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, be clearly outweighed by other considerations. If so, would this amount to the very special circumstances required to justify the proposal.

### Reasons

*Whether the proposed development constitutes inappropriate development*

3. The appeal concerns a two-storey detached house situated in a large plot within the Green Belt. The site is also within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and an Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV), a local landscape designation. The proposal is for a ground floor extension and a first floor extension to the property.
4. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that a local planning authority should regard construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. This is subject to the exceptions listed in the Framework which include 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. Policy RE2 of the Waverley Borough Local Plan Part 1: Strategic

Policies and Sites (2018) (LP Part 1) states that the Metropolitan Green Belt as shown on the Adopted Policies Map will continue to be protected against inappropriate development in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework. Saved Policy RD2 of the Waverley Borough Local Plan 2002 (LP) also states that extensions should not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original dwelling and is therefore generally in line with the provisions of the Framework.

5. According to the information provided by the Council, the original dwelling had a floor area of 112.86sqm and has already been extended by 139% with the resultant dwelling having a floor area of 270.45sqm. The Council state that the current proposal would add 26.657sqm of floor space, which would equate to a cumulative increase of 163.25%. Whilst the appellant does not dispute these figures, the case is made that the proposal would only add 4.5sqm of usable floor area on the ground floor, and 19.4sqm usable floor area at first floor level.
6. The Framework does not define what a disproportionate increase in size would be. However, supporting text to policy RD2 advises that as a guideline, a proposal which individually or cumulatively increases the floorspace of the original dwelling by more than 40% will be unlikely to comply with the policy. In line with the Framework and adopted Policy RD2 of the LP, it is necessary to consider whether the proposal would, when taken in combination with any previous additions to the original building, result in a disproportionate addition.
7. In my judgment the proposed extensions, in combination with previous extensions to the dwelling, would result in a significant increase in size in relation to the original dwelling. Moreover, the proposal would result in a significant increase in bulk and mass, particularly at first floor level.
8. The proposed extensions would therefore result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original dwelling. As such I conclude that the appeal proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The Framework confirms that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt.

### *Openness*

9. The essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence.
10. I acknowledge that the footprint of the dwelling would only be increased by a small amount and that the ground floor extension would effectively round off the corner of the dwelling. The first floor extension would measure 6.2 metres by 3.4 metres (externally). The existing dwelling is designed with two projecting elements to the front, including a two storey gable with a 'catslide' roof structure on one side. The remainder of the front elevation is designed with a low eaves height and a fairly steeply sloping roof that helps to reduce the bulk and mass of the dwelling overall.
11. The proposed extension would extend above an existing single storey flat roof part of the dwelling (to be extended at ground floor level) and would be level with the forward projecting gable element. The extension would have an eaves and ridge height that matches the existing hipped roof projection on the other side of the dwelling. Whilst I acknowledge the hipped roof design of the

extension, I nonetheless find that the resultant increase in height, bulk and mass of this part of the dwelling would be significant and would have the effect of reducing openness to the front and side of the dwelling. Whilst the extension would be seen in the context of the existing dwelling and its existing front projections, I nonetheless conclude that overall, the proposal would result in harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

12. Whilst I have noted the overall size of the plot and the screening that exists around it, I nonetheless conclude that the proposal would result in harm to the openness of the Green Belt. I assign moderate weight to this further harm to the Green Belt.

#### *Other considerations*

13. The appellant has drawn my attention to Policy RE2 of the LP Part 1 which confirms the removal of part of Chiddingfold from the Green Belt. However, the appeal site remains in the Green Belt within this adopted local plan. The policy also confirms that detailed adjustments to the Green Belt boundaries around Chiddingfold (among other places) will be made in Local Plan Part 2 (LP Part 2), with the boundaries to be defined following consultation with local communities. The appellant has also drawn my attention to the emerging LP Part 2, Appendix 2, which details amendments to the Green Belt inset for Chiddingfold, with Map 4 illustrating the areas which may be included. The appeal site is within this area. However, as the LP Part 2 is not at an advanced stage and may be subject to further change, I only attach limited weight to this consideration.
14. I note the appellants desire to increase number of the bedrooms in the dwelling to provide sustainable living space for his family. I recognise the benefits of the improved accommodation for the appellant and his family and I attach moderate weight to this consideration.
15. The appellant highlights the sustainability benefits of the proposal, including using locally sourced materials and incorporating the latest technology to reduce carbon emissions and to improve overall energy efficiency of the house. Whilst this would be a benefit of the proposal it is a matter which I afford limited weight.
16. I concur that the proposed extensions would be in keeping with the character and appearance of the appeal property. Furthermore, the proposal would not result in harm to the AONB and AGLV. However, this is a neutral factor which does not weigh for or against the proposal in the overall balance.

#### **Conclusion**

17. Inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt, and I have given substantial weight to this and moderate weight to the harm to openness I have identified. Taken together, the benefits of the proposal to the appellant's family, sustainability benefits and considerations relating to the emerging local plan are not sufficient to outweigh the harm the proposed development would do to the Green Belt by reason of its inappropriateness and the harm to openness. Therefore, I conclude that evidence has not been presented to demonstrate that very special circumstances exist to clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt. As such the proposal would conflict with

the National Planning Policy Framework as well as Policy RE2 of the Local Plan (Part 1) 2018 and retained Policy RD2 of the Local Plan 2002.

18. For the above reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

*J Davis*

INSPECTOR