
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 December 2020

by Penelope Metcalfe BA(Hons) MSc DipUP DipDBE MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 December 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/M5450/D/20/3258635

16 Brookshill Avenue, Harrow, HA3 6RZ

- 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 Kamlesh Gohil against the decision of Harrow Council.
 - The application Ref P/1337/20, dated 6 April 2020, was refused by notice dated 10 June 2020.
 - The development proposed is single storey side and rear with front porch extension and creating additional parking space.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issues

2. I consider that the main issues in this case are a) whether the proposal constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt, b) its effect on the openness of the Green Belt and on the character and appearance of the area, and c) if it is inappropriate development, 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

Inappropriate development

3. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) sets out several categories of new buildings which are not inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Policy 7.16 of the London Plan (2016) (the *London Plan*), policy G2 of the Draft London Plan (2019) – Intend to Publish (the *Draft London Plan*), Core Policy CS1.F of the Harrow Core Strategy (2012) (the *Core Strategy*) and policy DM16 of the Harrow Development Management Policies Local Plan (the *Local Plan*) all seek to protect the Green Belt from inappropriate development.
4. The categories in the Framework include the extension or alteration of an existing building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.
5. The appeal site is a two storey semi detached house located at a crossroads in Brookshill Avenue, and is one of a number of similar houses along the street. It has an existing two storey rear extension and a detached garage. It is

within the Green Belt. There was evidence of uncompleted works at the rear of the house at the time of my visit.

6. Neither the Framework nor the Council's policies specify what constitutes disproportionate additions, but it is clear that it is the accumulation of additions to the original building which is important, rather than individual ones. The Council indicates that as a 'rule-of-thumb', an increase of approximately 20-30% over the footprint, floorspace and volume of the original house is generally acceptable.
7. On the basis of the information before me, it appears that the footprint and volume of the original house have been significantly increased by the addition of a two storey extension and a garage. The proposal would involve the demolition of the garage and the erection of a single storey extension along the full length of the side and across the width of the house at the rear. The cumulative total of the proposal and the previous additions to the building would amount to an increase in volume of approximately 141% in the footprint over the original. I consider that this would amount to a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building.
8. I therefore conclude that the proposal is inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Such development is, by definition, harmful and is contrary to the guidance in the Framework and local plan policies. The resultant harm should be given substantial weight in determining the appeal.

Openness

9. The Framework states that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence. The appeal site is in an established residential area with a clear pattern of development. The proposed increase in footprint and volume, albeit limited to a single storey, would result in some loss of spatial openness. The extension would be at least partially visible from public viewpoints. The proposal would conflict with the fundamental aim of keeping land permanently open. However, while this would reduce the openness of the site, it would not extend beyond the boundary of the existing urban form. Any harm to the purpose of the Green Belt of checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas would be very limited.
10. I conclude that the proposal would cause limited harm to the openness of the Green Belt. Paragraph 144 of the Framework states that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt. It would be contrary to policies 7.16 of the London Plan, G2 of the Draft London Plan, DM16 of the Local Plan and CS1.F of the Core Strategy.

Character and appearance

11. The Council has raised no objection to the alterations to the front porch. Although the enlargement proposed would differ from the porches in the similar properties along the street, I consider that it would remain subservient to the main elevation of the house and would not harm the character and appearance of the house itself or the wider street scene.
12. The front garden of the property is mainly covered in hard surfacing. The proposed hardstanding indicated on the submitted plans appears to regularise this situation. I find this acceptable, particularly as many of the other properties along the street have large areas of hardstanding to the front.

13. The proposed side and rear extension would result in a substantial additional element running the full depth and width of the existing house. I consider that the large expanse of wraparound flat roof proposed would not be characteristic of the immediate area and the extension as a whole would appear disproportionate in scale in relation to the existing house, particularly due to its prominent position on the junction.
14. I conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the existing house and the wider street scene. It would be contrary to policies 7.4B, and 7.6B of the London Plan, CS1.B of the Core Strategy and DM1 of the Local Plan, and paragraph 6.11 of the Supplementary Planning Document *Residential Design* (the SPD), which require development proposals to be of a high standard of design.

Very special circumstances

15. Paragraph 143 of the Framework states that inappropriate development in the Green Belt should not be approved except in very special circumstances. These 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.
16. The appellant argues that the scale, siting and appearance of the proposed extension, together with an opportunity to improve the soft landscaping, would render the proposal acceptable and, taken together, would amount to very special circumstances.

Conclusions

17. I have found that the proposal amounts to inappropriate development, that it would cause limited harm to the openness of the area and that it would harm the character and appearance of the area. The harm caused by the inappropriateness of the development carries substantial weight, as does the harm to the openness of the Green Belt and the character and appearance of the area. I have found that the scale and appearance of the proposal are unacceptable and therefore the appellant's argument in this respect does not amount to very special circumstances sufficient to outweigh the harm.
18. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that there are no considerations sufficient to clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt. There are, therefore, no very special circumstances to justify the development. It conflicts with policies 7.16, 7.4B, and 7.6B of the London Plan, G2 of the Draft London Plan, DM1 and DM16 of the Local Plan and CS1.B and CS1.F of the Core Strategy, the SPD and the Framework and the appeal is dismissed.

PAG Metcalfe

INSPECTOR