
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 December 2020

by S Poole BA(Hons) DipArch MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 08 January 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/M1595/D/20/3261213

Ashford Manor, 6 Nutberry Close, Grays, Essex RM16 2PN

- 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 Alvin Ashford-Quaye against the decision of Thurrock Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20/00490/HHA, dated 2 May 2020, was refused by notice dated 24 July 2020.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a single storey rear extension with three roof lights
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:

- (i) whether the proposal would be inappropriate development for the purposes of section 13 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) and development plan policy;
- (ii) the effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt; and
- (iii) if the proposal 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

Whether the proposal would be inappropriate development

3. Paragraph 145 of the Framework states that the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt is inappropriate. A number of exceptions to this are identified including proposals comprising 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. Similarly, Policy PMD6 of the Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development (2015) (CSPMD) states that the extension of a building must not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.

4. The appeal property already includes an almost full-width 2-storey rear addition. The proposal would comprise a full-width single-storey extension that would wrap-around the earlier addition. Cumulatively the existing and proposed extension would result in a significant increase in the footprint, floor area and bulk of the property by comparison to the original building.
5. For these reasons I conclude that the proposal would result in disproportionate additions to the appeal property over and above the size of the original building. The proposal is therefore contrary to paragraph 145 of the Framework. For these reasons it would be inappropriate development that is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt. I attribute substantial weight to this.

Openness of the Green Belt

6. Paragraph 133 of the Framework states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open and that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.
7. The proposal would, due to its volume and bulk, reduce, and therefore cause harm to, the openness of the Green Belt. It therefore also conflicts with the Framework in this respect, a matter to which I also attribute substantial weight.

Other considerations

8. I turn now to consider whether there are any considerations sufficient to clearly outweigh the harm identified above in respect of inappropriateness and openness. Very special circumstances to justify inappropriate development will not exist unless the harm is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
9. I note the appellant's personal circumstances including the need to work from home and accommodate family members and recognise that the proposal may improve the energy efficiency of the property. I also note that neighbours have not objected to the proposal and it would be an addition rather than a stand-alone structure and would be constructed of materials to match the existing.
10. The appellant has referred to a large extension at the rear of 2 Nutberry Close, although no information has been provided on when this was granted planning permission. As each planning application needs to be considered on its individual merits and against current planning policy, I attach limited weight to this extension and for the same reasons to other nearby rear additions.

Green Belt balancing exercise

11. The other considerations do not amount to matters that clearly outweigh the substantial harm to the Green Belt which I have identified in respect of the proposal's inappropriateness and effect on openness. Very special circumstances to justify inappropriate development do not therefore exist. The proposal is therefore contrary to the Framework and CSPMD Policies CSPP4 and PMD6. For the reasons set out above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should fail.

S Poole INSPECTOR