
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 December 2020

by Benjamin Clarke BA (Hons.) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: Tuesday, 12 January 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/M1595/D/20/3256625

The Willows, Kirkham Road, Horndon on the Hill SS17 8QE

- 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 Lewis against the decision of Thurrock Borough Council.
 - The application Ref: 20/00345/HHA, dated 18 March 2020, was refused by notice dated 6 May 2020.
 - The development proposed is a single-storey rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - whether the proposal is inappropriate development for the purposes of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and development plan policy;
 - The effect of the development upon the openness of the Green Belt; and
 - if the development is inappropriate, whether the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, would be clearly outweighed by other considerations, so as to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development.

Reasons

Whether inappropriate development

3. The appeal site consists of a detached bungalow located within the Metropolitan Green Belt. The dwelling contains rooms within the roof and has a garden. The garden also contains some outbuildings.
4. Paragraph 145 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) regards the erection of new buildings within the Green Belt as generally being inappropriate. There are some exceptions to this, which include the erection of a proportionately sized extension to an existing dwelling. This approach is broadly consistent with the requirements of Policy PMD6 of the Core Strategy.
5. A proportionate extension is not defined within the Framework, but Policy PMD6 suggests that it is two reasonably sized rooms, or an equivalent amount. The policy, nor the preamble to which I have been provided, include a

definition of a reasonably sized room. I have therefore assessed the proposed development in respect of the form and layout of the existing dwelling.

6. The proposed extension would encompass the entire width of the dwelling and would provide an enlarged living room and bedroom. In addition, the development would include a dressing room.
7. The existing dwelling is of a modest size and this proposed increase in the size of the dwelling would provide two enlarged spacious rooms, in addition to a new dressing room. By reason of the contrast in size with the existing dwelling and room sizes currently within it, this would exceed the provisions of a reasonably sized room, or an equivalent amount, as outlined within Policy PMD6.
8. Therefore, notwithstanding whether en-suites should be included within the assessment of a reasonable addition to the dwelling, the proposed development would represent a disproportionate addition to the building owing to it resulting in a substantially greater form and massing when compared to the sizes of the original dwelling.
9. This would conflict the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. Amongst other functions, the Green Belt is intended to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.
10. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would represent an inappropriate development within the Green Belt. The development, in this regard, would conflict with Policies CSSP4 and PMD6 of the Thurrock Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development (2015) (the Core Strategy); and the Framework. These, amongst other matters, seek to ensure that the purpose and function of the Green Belt; and that extensions are not disproportionate additions to buildings.

Effect on openness

11. The dwelling is set back from the highway edge, with garden space to both sides between the dwelling and the side boundaries.
12. In consequence, the increase in built form would be readily apparent from Kirkham Road owing to the to the availability of views of the side elevations of the proposed extension that would project into the rear garden of the property.
13. This arrangement would erode the physical character of openness arising from the increase in built form. In addition, the increase in built form, would by reason of the lack of screening also erode the spatial quality of openness that is an intrinsic feature of the Green Belt. These factors would occur irrespective of the separation distance between the location of the proposed development and the site's boundaries.
14. My attention has been drawn to two other residential developments within the wider area. I do not have the full information regarding their planning circumstances, which lessens the weight that I can attribute to them. However, I note that these developments are generally of a different character, design and layout.
15. In addition, these other developments are surrounded by greater amounts of landscaping than the appeal site and are separated from the appeal site by

areas of open space. In consequence, they do not have the same effect on openness as the appeal proposal would have. Therefore, the presence of developments elsewhere do not allow me to disregard my previous concerns.

16. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would have an adverse effect upon openness. The development, in this regard, would conflict with Policies CSSP4 and PMD6 of the Core Strategy; and the Framework. These, amongst other matters, seek to ensure that new developments maintain the open character of the Green Belt.

Other considerations

17. The proposed development would result in an enlarged dwelling, which would be of some benefit to the future occupiers, however, this is limited owing to the scale of the proposed development. In addition, the construction process is likely to generate some economic benefits. However, these are also limited due to the nature of the proposal and would also be somewhat localised in impact. In consequence, I can only give each of these matters a limited amount of weight.

Other Matter

18. My attention has been drawn to a previous approval of planning permission at the property. I have not been provided with the full information regarding the planning circumstances of this approval, which lessens the amount of weight that I can attribute to it. Nonetheless, the evidence is indicative that the extant approval is for a smaller extension. In result, the effects of this development would be less than the scheme before me. In consequence, the presence of this approval does not allow me to forego my previous conclusions.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

19. The Framework indicates that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Substantial weight should be given to this harm. Very special circumstances will not exist unless the harm to the Green Belt is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
20. As explained above, I give only limited weight to each of the considerations cited in support of the proposal and accordingly I do not find that these amount to the special circumstances necessary to justify the development.
21. In consequence, and for the preceding reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Benjamin Clarke

INSPECTOR