

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 February 2021 by Emma Worby BSc (Hons) MSc

Decision by R C Kirby BA (Hons) Dip TP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 March 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/B5480/D/20/3262075

West Park Lodge Farm, Broxhill Road, Havering-Atte-Bower, Romford RM4 1QJ

- 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 Peter Mitchell against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Havering.
 - The application Ref P0624.20, dated 7 May 2020, was refused by notice dated 7 August 2020.
 - The development proposed is a first floor extension to house and new access into site.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issues

3. The main issues in the appeal are:
 - Whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the revised National Planning Policy Framework (the 'Framework') and relevant development plan policies;
 - The effect on the openness of the Green Belt; and
 - Would the harm by reason of inappropriateness be clearly outweighed by other considerations. If so, would this amount to the very special circumstances required to justify the proposal.

Reasons for the Recommendation

Whether it would be inappropriate development

4. The appeal site, containing a two-storey detached dwelling with a single storey side projection, is located in a semi-rural area surrounded by a number of other residential properties and commercial sites and is within the Green Belt. The proposal includes a first floor extension above the current single storey section and a new access to the front of the site onto Broxhill Road.
5. Paragraph 145 of the Framework indicates that the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt are inappropriate subject to a number of exceptions. These exceptions 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 DC45 of the Havering Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (2008) (DPD) is broadly consistent with the Framework's approach stating that, in the Green Belt, extensions and alterations of existing dwellings will be allowed provided that the cubic capacity of the resultant building is not more than 50% greater than that of the original dwelling.

6. The glossary to the Framework identifies 'original building' as a building as it existed on 1 July 1948, or, if constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was built originally. It appears from the planning history, which is not disputed that planning permission was granted for the dwelling in 1988. Thus, this building is the original building for the purpose of Green Belt policy. Subsequent to the house and detached garage being constructed planning permission was granted for a single storey side extension, connecting the two.
7. The proposed extension would significantly increase the size of the dwelling, providing accommodation at first floor level above the single storey elements of the building. It would substantially increase the bulk and massing of the building. The proposed access, would also increase the level of built form on the site, covering some of the front grass verge with hardstanding, albeit with no increase in volume.
8. Neither party have provided figures of either the floor area increase or the volume of the proposal compared to the original building. However, although it is noted that the footprint of the dwelling would remain as at present, the cumulative impact of the existing extension along with the proposed extension would result in a much larger dwelling than the original, with a substantially greater level of first floor accommodation. Therefore, it is considered that the previous and proposed extensions would result in a dwelling which is disproportionate in size compared to the original building. It would therefore not fall under the exception in paragraph 145 of the Framework, relating to the extension or alteration of a building, and would be inappropriate development within the Green Belt.
9. Therefore, the proposed inappropriate development would be harmful to the Green Belt which, in accordance with paragraph 144 of the Framework, should be given substantial weight.

Openness

10. The proposed development would create an extended dwelling which would be substantially larger than the existing building. Although it would sit within the footprint of the current building and the surrounding site is spacious in nature, the proposal would have a significant spatial impact on the openness of the Green Belt due to the increase in its volume and the floorspace that the building would occupy. In addition, due to the position of the proposed extension to the side of the main dwelling and its location in close proximity to Broxhill Road, it would be highly visible from the public realm, which would not be sufficiently obscured by the surrounding trees and hedgerows, thereby eroding the visual openness of the site. Therefore, there would be both a spatial and visual effect on the openness of the Green Belt from the proposed extension.

11. The proposed access, which includes the replacement of a section of the front boundary wall with a gate and a small area of hardstanding across the grass verge, would be minimal. Therefore, in isolation, it would have a limited impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

Other Considerations

12. The appellant states that the extension would provide a quality living environment for future occupiers, allowing for future proofing and the potential inclusion of lifetime homes standards as well as an annexable section of the property. However, it has not been demonstrated why this is required or if this could be achieved without development of the scale proposed. Therefore, I attribute this matter limited weight.
13. The appellant's comments, that the proposal would respect the varied character of existing and neighbouring dwellings, are noted. This lack of harm, to the character and appearance of the area, is a neutral factor in this case as it would be expected of any well-designed development.

Green Belt Balance, Conclusion and Recommendation

14. I find that the other considerations in this case do not clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt as a result of the harm to openness and by virtue of its inappropriateness that I have identified. Consequently, the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development in the Green Belt do not exist. Therefore the development in the Green Belt would fail to accord with the aims of Policy DC45 of the DPD which generally seeks to protect the Green Belt, and the Green Belt objectives of the Framework.
15. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal is dismissed.

Emma Worby

APPEALS PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

16. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

RC Kirby

INSPECTOR