



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 February 2021

by G Roberts BA (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 March 2021.

Appeal Ref: APP/T0355/D/20/3263453

211 Coppermill Road, Wraysbury, Staines, TW19 5NW

- 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 Mannie Bhui against the decision of the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead.
 - The application Ref 20/02132, dated 19 August 2020, was refused by notice dated 12 October 2020.
 - The development proposed is single storey extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. I have adopted the description of the proposed development on the decision notice as this more accurately describes the proposal.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - (a) Whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019) (Framework) and development plan policy;
 - (b) The effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt; and
 - (c) 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

Inappropriate development in Green Belt

4. The appeal site comprises a two storey dwelling with a small garden area/parking to the front, and a large garden at the rear. There is a single storey garage set back into the rear garden, as well as a large single storey outbuilding towards the rear boundary of the garden. The appeal site fronts onto Coppermill Road a linear development of bungalows and two storey dwellings.

5. Paragraph 145 of the Framework states that the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt is inappropriate development unless it falls within one of the exceptions listed a) to g) (inclusive). Exception c) confirms that an extension or alteration of an existing building is not inappropriate development provided *"it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original dwelling"*.
6. Saved Policy GB4 of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Plan (June 2003) (Local Plan) states that extensions to existing buildings will only be approved where it would not cause a disproportionate addition over and above the original dwelling. The supporting text at paragraphs 2.1.26 and 2.1.27 further state that whilst floorspace will be a factor, percentage increases are not the sole determining factor and that bulk and scale, and impact on the openness and the purposes of the Green Belt will all be considered. Whilst Policy GB4 of the Local Plan pre-dates the Framework, I am satisfied that, insofar as it relates to extensions, it is broadly consistent with the Framework.
7. Both Policy GB4 and paragraph 2.1.26 of the Local Plan state that the principal consideration is the size of the new extension relative to the original dwelling. Paragraph 145 c) of the Framework also refers to the original dwelling, defined in the Glossary in Annex 2, as the building as it existed on the 1 July 1948 or, if constructed after the 1 July 1948, as it was built originally. As a consequence, even a small extension could, therefore, represent a disproportionate addition if the original dwelling has previously been extended.
8. The Council indicate that planning permission was granted in April 1999 to extend the original building (ref. 99/77868/FULL), which was subsequently implemented. The Council calculate that the total increase in floorspace, of the existing and proposed extensions, compared to the original building, would be around 260%. The Appellant has not challenged these figures. The analysis required by paragraph 145 c) of the Framework is whether the additions are disproportionate in relation to the 'size' of the original dwelling. The proposed increase in volume, scale and floorspace, of the existing and proposed extensions, are, therefore, relevant to that assessment.
9. Based on these factors, when taken together, the sum total and size of the existing and proposed extensions would, in my judgement, be disproportionate to the original dwelling. This finding is reflected by the cumulative increase in floorspace, volume and scale that results from the existing and proposed extensions compared to the original dwelling, and increase which would, in my judgement, be significant.
10. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposed extension, when taken in combination with the existing extension, would be disproportionate to the original dwelling and represent inappropriate development in the Green Belt, which Paragraph 143 of the Framework states is harmful by definition and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Accordingly, it would fail to accord with Policy GB4 of the Local Plan or paragraph 145 c) of the Framework.

Openness

11. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open and its essential characteristics are therefore its permanence and openness. The impact on openness has a spatial as well as

a visual aspect. In my judgement, the size, volume and floorspace of the appeal proposal, combined with the existing extension, would fail, in visual and spatial terms, to preserve the openness of the Green Belt. The Framework advises at Paragraph 133 that openness is an essential characteristic of Green Belts, and the appeal proposal would therefore cause harm in this regard.

Other Considerations

12. The appellant has highlighted a number of considerations. Firstly, that the appeal site forms part of a ribbon of development. Whilst that is the case, ribbon development is a common feature of Green Belt locations and reflects historic patterns of development. Secondly, that the new extension would be of a high quality design. That is a standard planning policy requirement that all proposals for new development should seek to achieve. Thirdly, that the proposed extension would not result in an increase in the built footprint as it would replace existing decking. The latter does not constitute useable floorspace and, as I have found above, it is principally the sum total of the volume, size and scale of the existing and proposed extensions that would be disproportionate to the original building. For these reasons, I have not accorded any weight to these considerations.
13. The fourth consideration relates to the personal circumstances of the Appellant. The Appellant submits that the proposed extension would provide specialist accommodation for their disabled daughter, as well as providing improvements for an older relative and for his wife's illness. The proposed extension would open up the ground floor and allow the daughter to have a bedroom and ensuite on the ground floor, rather than having to navigate the stairs, thus allowing her to remain in the family home. Whilst I sympathise with the Appellant's personal circumstances, the existing ground floor layout plan shows that there is already a bedroom/reception room and a separate shower room on this floor. This remains on the proposed ground floor layout plan, which shows that the new extension would be used to enlarge and combine the existing kitchen and dining room. Whilst the latter would provide more internal space, there is no new ground floor bedroom and ensuite shown on the proposed plan. For the above reasons and based on the evidence that is before me, I have, therefore, only accorded limited weight to this consideration.

Overall Balance and Conclusion

14. The appeal proposal, when taken together with the existing extension to the original building, constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt and would reduce the openness in this location. The Framework states that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt. I find that the other considerations in this case do not clearly outweigh the harm I have identified. Consequently, the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development do not exist. The proposed development would be contrary to Policies GB1, GB2 and GB4 of the Local Plan and with the guidance in the Framework relating to Green Belts.
15. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

G Roberts

INSPECTOR