



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 April 2021

by Lynne Evans BA MA MRTPI MRICS

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 April 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/R3650/D/20/3263490

1 Little Tangley Cottage, Wonersh Common, Wonersh GU5 0PY

- 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 F Bottomley against the decision of Waverley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref: WA/2020/0475 dated 28 February 2020, was refused by notice dated 6 October 2020.
 - The development proposed is erection of rear extensions to ground and first floors.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for rear extensions to ground and first floors at 1 Little Tangley Cottage, Wonersh Common, Wonersh GU5 0PY in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref: WA/2020/0475 dated 28 February 2020, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.
 - 3) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 2001-00-001 P1; 2001-00-002 P1; 2001-00-003 P1; 2001-00-004 P1; 2001-00-005 P1; 2001-00-102 P1; 2001-00-103 P1; 2001-00-104 P1.
 - 4) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in strict accordance with the recommendations set out within Sections 6.6 to 7.3 of the Bat Emergence / Re-Entry Surveys and Mitigation Report by Darwin Ecology, dated August 2020.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of development on the application forms included that the extensions would match the semi-detached neighbour. Whilst I have taken account of this in my consideration of the proposal, it is not necessary to record this additional detail in the description of development.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this appeal is whether the proposed development would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework and any relevant development plan policies.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a semi-detached residential dwelling, fronting onto Little Tangley which leads off the B2128 at Wonersh Common. The site lies within the Green Belt and within an Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV). The property has been previously extended and the current proposals seek, amongst other alterations, to extend at first floor level over the existing kitchen to extend the depth of the first floor under a gable ended dual pitch roof and to infill a rear covered area to extend the existing living room.
5. The National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) sets out the government's planning policies to secure sustainable development. Paragraph 133 sets out the great importance that the Government attaches to Green Belts and that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. Paragraph 143 confirms that *inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances*. Paragraph 145 sets out that the construction of new buildings is inappropriate except for a limited number of exceptions including the extension or alteration of a building providing that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. The Framework does not define further the term 'disproportionate'.
6. The Council has referred to Policy RE2 of its Local Plan (Part 1) 2018 which confirms that the Green Belt will be protected from inappropriate development in accordance with the Framework. Although not included as part of the reason for refusal, it has also referenced Policy RD2 of its Local Plan 2002 which addresses the extension of dwellings in the countryside, both within and beyond the Green Belt. This sets out three criteria which includes whether the proposal would result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the dwelling; in assessing whether the proposed extension would be disproportionate the policy indicates that account will be taken of the relative increase in floorspace together with the form bulk and height of the proposal in comparison with the original dwelling. The supporting text sets a date of 31 December 1968 to define the original dwelling and that as a guideline, any proposal which cumulatively increases the floorspace of the original dwelling by more than 40% is likely to be considered disproportionate, although account will also be taken of other factors.
7. The Council has assessed that taking account of previous extensions, the additional extensions now proposed would result in a cumulative increase of some 63% over the floor space of the original dwelling. This has not been disputed by the Appellant. In terms of 'size' as referenced in the Framework, floorspace is one dimension and it is, in my view, also necessary to consider volume and external footprint changes, although I have been provided with no mathematical calculations in these regards. The supporting text to Policy RD2 of the Local Plan 2002 also indicates that the Council will have regard to other factors, including form bulk and height, the overall scale of development on the site and effect on rural character.

8. The proposed extension to the living room would add a rear elevation to infill an existing covered area within a courtyard and would result in very limited effect on the footprint, bulk, scale and volume of the building. The proposed first floor extension would not extend the footprint of the building but would increase the volume at first floor level and roof level, by extending out the existing first floor gable and roof over the existing kitchen, by just over 2m. The limited additional depth would in my view have very limited impact on the overall scale and bulk of development on the site.
9. I have taken note of the increase in floorspace, but given their modest forms, I do not consider that the proposals, taking all of the individual elements together, and taking account of the other additions already undertaken, would be a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the 'original' property. The proposals would not, in my view, harm the openness of the Green Belt. Taking these factors together and in the particular circumstances of this case, it is my conclusion that the proposed development would not be inappropriate development for the purposes of the Framework and development plan policy. There is therefore no need for the development to be justified by special circumstances.

Other Considerations

10. The Council has not raised any other objections to the proposals. I agree that the modest extensions would be well designed to respect the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and its semi-detached neighbour. Given their small size within a generous plot, they would have no material impact on the rural nature of the surrounding area and the AGLV. I am also satisfied that there would be no effect on the amenities of the neighbours given the scale and nature of the proposals.

Conditions and Conclusion

11. The Council has proposed a number of conditions in the event of planning permission being granted. I agree that the materials should match the existing materials to protect the character and appearance of the existing building and the local rural area. I also agree that a condition should be imposed to require the recommendations of the Mitigation and Enhancement measures of the Ecology Report to be followed in order to protect biodiversity interests and protected species. A condition should be imposed to list the approved plans for the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.
12. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, including in representations, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

L J Evans

INSPECTOR