
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 June 2021 by A J Sutton BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

by R C Kirby BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 July 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/R0335/D/21/3269209

The White House, Crouch Lane, Winklefield, Windsor, SL4 4TN

- 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 and Mrs D Tanner against the decision of Bracknell Forest Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20/01039/FUL, dated 24 November 2020, was refused by notice dated 8 February 2021.
 - The development proposed is part single-storey and part two-storey side extension with basement.
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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.

Preliminary Matters

3. Planning Permission¹ for a dwelling within the redline boundary of this proposal lapsed subsequent to the Council's decision and submission of the appeal. Both parties were consulted on the implications of this matter and their responses have informed this recommendation.

Main Issues

4. The proposed development would be a large two storey extension. Both parties agree that it would comprise a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building. On the basis of the evidence before me I have no reason to find differently in this regard. Accordingly, the proposal would comprise inappropriate development in the Green Belt for the purposes of Policy GB1 of the Bracknell Forest Borough Local Plan (LP) and the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework).
5. The main issues are therefore the effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt; and 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 required to justify the proposal.

¹ Ref 17/00213/FUL

Reasons for Recommendation

6. The Framework states the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. It requires, when considering any planning application, that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt.
7. Policy GB1 of the LP and Policy CS9 of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (CS) whilst pre-dating the current iteration of the Framework, generally reflect its Green Belt policies.

Openness

8. The appeal dwelling is a much-extended detached property located outside the settlement of Winklefield. It is bound to the front by a high fence. The topography of the area is flat and generally open countryside. Buildings close to the property are generally limited to single storey outbuildings associated with agricultural or equestrian uses.
9. The proposed development would comprise a two-storey side extension and would create a basement for a pool, sauna and seating area served by a lightwell to the front of the property. The proposal would extend the length of the front elevation of the existing dwelling by 9 m. A large proportion of the substantial extension, with an expansive hipped roof form, would be visible above the front boundary. It would fill a large space which would erode the existing sense of openness in the immediate area of the appeal property. Moreover, the proposed two storey central projecting front bay window would accentuate the bulk of the large form. As a result of its scale the development would be highly visible in the surrounding area, particularly from Crouch Lane. It would lead to a significant spatial change in the existing open texture of the Green Belt in this area.
10. Consequently, I conclude that the proposal would result in a loss of openness to the Green Belt. Whilst the effect would be localised given the scale of development harm to the openness of the Green Belt would occur, a matter to which I attach substantial weight in reaching this recommendation.

Other Considerations

11. Very special circumstances to justify inappropriate development will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
12. I have had regard for the extant Prior Approval² for two large extensions which allows substantial enlargement of the appeal dwelling. This would provide the enhanced living conditions to accommodate the appellants extended family in the eventuality that this appeal was dismissed, and therefore there is a strong possibility that this development would be implemented.
13. The approved extensions are slightly smaller than the proposed development in terms of floor area but greater in volume, when excluding the proposed basement on both counts. The approved flat roof, single storey forms, would flank the existing dwelling. The development would result in some visual and

² Ref 20/00306/PAH

spatial change at both sides of the property and a small loss of openness in the immediate area. However, this scheme was allowed under permitted development rights, and not subject to policies of the development plan or the Framework as is the case for proposals requiring planning permission. That aside, the approved extensions would be some 3 m lower than the proposed development and of a simple form. They would not be substantially higher than other single storey buildings in this area. As such they would result in a less spatial and visual change and would in this respect have a less harmful effect on the openness of the Green Belt than the proposal before me.

14. Moreover whilst noting the appellants' preference to construct the appeal proposal rather than the permitted extensions, there is no mechanism before me to ensure that in the eventuality that this proposal was allowed that the approved extension at the east of the existing dwelling would not be built as well. The Prior Approval could not be revoked by condition. Therefore, I give the matter of this fallback scheme limited weight.
15. There is no dispute that the planning permission for a new dwelling which would replace outbuildings to the west of the appeal dwelling has now lapsed. Whilst noting the appellants' desire to reapply for this in the event that the appeal is not successful, I have no evidence before me that such a planning application has been submitted. Therefore, this matter carries very limited weight in my consideration of this proposal.
16. The Council raises no issue with regards the effect of the proposal on character and appearance of the area. This assessment differs from that required in respect to openness in the context of Green Belt. I observe nothing which would lead me to dispute the Council's conclusion on this matter. Good quality of design is to be expected in all development. This is also the case in respect to absence of harm to neighbours' living conditions and suitability with regards highways and parking. As such these are neutral factors in this appeal.
17. The improvement of living accommodation would be of personal benefit, to which I attach minimal weight.
18. At most I give limited weight to the other considerations advanced by the appellants which needs to be weighed against the substantial weight that I must give to the harm that would be caused to the Green Belt. Consequently, these other considerations do not, either individually, or cumulatively, clearly outweigh the substantial harm to the Green Belt in terms of inappropriateness and loss of openness. As a result, the very special circumstances that are required to permit the development do not exist.

Conclusion

19. I have found that this proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt and would lead to a loss of openness to the Green Belt in the immediate area, to which I attach substantial weight. The considerations advanced by the appellants at most carry limited weight in this case. Therefore, the harm to the Green Belt would not be outweighed by other considerations. As a result, the very special circumstances that are necessary to justify the development do not exist. The proposal therefore would conflict with Policies GB1 of the LP, CS9 of the CS and the Framework. There are no other considerations which outweigh this finding.

Recommendation

20. For the reasons given above, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

A J Sutton

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

21. I have considered all the submitted evidence and agree that the appeal should be dismissed.

R C Kirby

INSPECTOR