
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 July 2021

by John D Allan BA(Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date:

Appeal Ref: APP/M1595/D/20/3263279

Oak Cottage, Oxford Road, Horndon-on-the-Hill, SS17 8PX

- 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 Mrs Layla Martin against the decision of Thurrock Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20/00444/HHA, dated 2 April 2020, was refused by notice dated 11 September 2020.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a two-storey rear extension and internal alterations.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of a two-storey rear extension and internal alterations at Oak Cottage, Oxford Road, Horndon-on-the-Hill, SS17 8PX in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 20/00444/HHA, dated 2 April 2020, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Drg Nos 1/7, 2/7, 3/7, 4/7, 5/7, 6/7 and 7/7.
 - 3) 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.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are: -
 - Whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and any relevant development plan policies; and
 - The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of Oak Cottage and the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a detached, chalet style dwelling located behind frontage development facing Oxford Road and on the fringes of a principally residential area backing onto open countryside. It lies within the Green Belt. The proposal would add a two-storey extension to the rear of the existing dwelling.

Whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt

4. Paragraph 143 of the Framework states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 145 states, amongst other things, that the extension of an existing building is not inappropriate provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.
5. Policy PMD6 of the Council's Core Strategy and Policies for Management of Development (as amended) January 2015 (CSPMD) deals with development in the Green Belt and is consistent with the Framework, adding that in the case of residential extensions a disproportionate addition means no larger than two reasonably sized rooms or any equivalent amount. Paragraph 4.3.4 of the CSPMD states where an extension in the Green Belt is considered acceptable, it should be proportionate in size to the original dwelling and that they will be limited in size to the floor area of two reasonably sized rooms of the original dwelling.
6. According to figures within the officer's report, the Council gives the floorspace of the original building as 120sqm. They have calculated, based on taking an average size for the existing rooms, that the proposal would be 9sqm above what they consider to be the addition of two reasonable sized rooms. However, I have not been directed either within the development plan or within any adopted Supplementary Planning Documents to any clear methodology or guiding principles for a mathematical calculation to determine what may constitute two reasonably sized rooms. As such, I take the Council's figure as a guide rather than any strict upper limit.
7. In this case the ground floor extension would enlarge existing kitchen and living room areas, allowing for a small new study to be created within the existing building, and at first floor one bedroom would be enlarged and internal reconfiguration of the space would enable an additional bedroom to be created along with added en-suite facilities. In terms of functional living space, the dwelling would not, to my mind, be enlarged to any excessive degree. I do not agree with the Council's assertion that the resulting building would be unduly spacious compared with the existing. In my opinion the additional floorspace would meet the test of being the equivalent amount of two reasonably sized rooms. Furthermore, taking the 9sqm figure given by the Council for exceeding their calculated limit, I am not persuaded that removing this amount of floor space from the proposal would have any significant impact upon the scale or bulk of the additions.
8. As a two-storey addition to a chalet bungalow, the rear extension could be perceived as large. However, the extended footprint of the building, to a depth of 5m, is proportionate to the depth of the original dwelling. The building's

envelope would only be extended in one direction. The first floor and roof would undeniably add bulk, but the resulting building would be no taller than the existing and, when seen in the round, having considered floorspace, external dimensions, and appearance, I am satisfied that the size of the original building would not be disproportionately enlarged. For this reason, I find that the proposal would not amount to inappropriate development within the Green Belt. Implicit within this conclusion is that the proposal would not be harmful to the openness of the Green Belt. There would therefore be no conflict with CSPMD Policy PMD6 or with the Framework in this regard.

Character and Appearance

9. For reasons already amplified above, I am satisfied that the proposal would not add any unreasonable scale or bulk to the existing dwelling.
10. The shape of the building to the rear would be completely remodelled. However, two-storey gables are not alien features in the locality and I do not share the Council's view that the rear extension would somehow look incongruous or at odds with the existing dwelling. It is not unusual for a chalet-style dwelling to have a full two-storey height to the rear and in my assessment the extension would appear as an integrated addition. Also given the use of matching materials and detailing, I find overall that the proposal would reasonably respect the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and wider area. As such, I can find no conflict with the aims and objectives of the Council's *Residential Alterations & Extensions SPD July 2017*, or with CSPMD Policies PMD2 and CSTP22 insofar as they relate to the quality of design within the local context. Neither do I find conflict with the Framework's objectives for achieving well-designed places.

Conditions

11. A condition specifying the relevant plans is necessary as this provides certainty. In the interests of maintaining the character and appearance of the area a condition is required to control the external materials to be used.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given, I conclude that the proposal would not amount to inappropriate development in the Green Belt and neither would it harm the character or appearance of the appeal property or the surrounding area. Therefore, and in the absence of any other conflict with the development plan, the appeal is allowed.

John D Allan

INSPECTOR