



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 July 2021

by C Coyne BA (Hons) DipTP DipERM MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 July 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/Z4718/D/21/327415

White Reaps Farm, Slaithwaite Road, Meltham, Holmfirth HD7 5TY

- 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 Alan Inkster against the decision of Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 2020/62/92196/W, dated 10 July 2020, was refused by notice dated 11 January 2021.
 - The development proposed is described on the application form as 'Single storey side (infill) extension with First Floor Side Extension'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for erection of ground and first floor extensions at White Reaps Farm, Slaithwaite Road, Meltham, Holmfirth HD7 5TY in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 2020/62/92196/W, dated 10 July 2020, and the plans submitted with it, 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 development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Existing Site Location Plan Drawing No. 0452(OS)01; Proposed Ground Floor Plan Drawing No. 0452(PL)01; Proposed First Floor Plan Drawing No. 0452(PL)02; Proposed Roof Plan Drawing No. 0452(PL)03; Proposed Elevation Drawing No. 0452(PL)04.
 - 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.

Procedural Matters

2. On the 20 July 2021 a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published. Apart from changes to paragraph numbering and one minor amendment, no major changes have been made to the Framework in relation to national Green Belt policy. As a result, given the nature of the refusal reason, the main issues and the Development Plan policy upon which the refusal reason is based, on this occasion I consider that the publication of the revised Framework does not directly alter the assessment of this appeal. The relevant updated paragraph numbers have been used in my reasoning below.
3. The Council have described the development as 'erection of ground and first floor extensions'. I note that the appellant has also utilised this description on their appeal form. I consider that this revision provides an accurate description of the proposal and I have therefore determined the appeal on this basis.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are:

- whether the proposed development would represent inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the Framework and any relevant Development Plan policies; and
- the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the original building.

Reasons

5. The appeal property is a two-storey detached dwelling with a traditional stone exterior material finish located within the open countryside and the Green Belt.

Whether inappropriate development

6. National Planning Policy attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.
7. The Framework states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. The construction of new buildings is regarded as inappropriate in the Green Belt save for several specified exceptions as set out under paragraph 149. One such exception is 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. The Framework does not specify what might be a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building.
8. Policy LP57 of the adopted Kirklees Local Plan Strategy and Policies Development Plan Document (KLP) specifies the criteria for extensions to existing buildings in the Green Belt in order for them to be acceptable including that the original building remains the dominant element both in terms of size and overall appearance. However, this goes beyond what is set out in the Framework. Consequently, I consider Policy LP57 to be not entirely consistent with the Framework and therefore I afford this policy moderate weight.
9. According to the evidence before me, the original building was constructed in circa 1870 and has been extended several times: in 1955, a single storey side extension; in 2003, a part two-storey side and single storey front extension at the other end of the building; in 2007, an extension of the principal elevation across ground and first floor levels; and in 2015, a single storey front extension.
10. In addition, the appellant's evidence states the footprint of the original building would be approximately 207 square metres (sqm). They go on to point out that the various extensions increased this by approximately 44.5 sqm representing an increase of around 21.5%. The proposal would partially replace the existing single storey side extension with a new two-storey one and would according to the appellant's statement have a footprint of approximately 31.7 sqm increasing the footprint by a further 15% when compared to the original building. Consequently, they estimate that the total increase in the footprint of the original building to be approximately 36.5%.
11. In relation to the volume of the proposed and previous extensions in comparison to that of the original building no figures have been provided by either of the main parties.

12. I note that in their officer report the Council estimated that the two-storey side extension approved in 2003 was equivalent in length to about two-fifths of the original two-storey part of the building meaning that it represented a significant increase in volume. However, this was not two-fifths of the entire length of the whole of the original building. As a result, this does not necessarily mean that it was a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building as evidenced by the fact that this previous extension was approved.
13. Furthermore, given that the proposal would be smaller than the 2003 extension it would likely be less than two-fifths of the length of the two-storey part of the original building. Consequently, based on the evidence before me, the proposal and other previous extensions would represent something like less than half of the length of the whole of the original building.
14. Consequently, based on the submitted plans and from what I observed on my site visit, and taking into account the partial replacement of the existing single storey side extension, I consider that the estimated 36.5% increase in footprint would translate into a relatively modest increase in terms of volume. As a result, the proposal would not represent a disproportionate addition when cumulatively considered alongside the previous extensions.
15. Accordingly, I conclude that the proposed development would not amount to a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building, and that therefore it would not represent inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Character and Appearance

16. The proposal would use materials to match the existing building. In addition, it would not extend past the side building line of the existing single storey extension. Furthermore, given my findings above, the proposal would not be a disproportionate addition to the original building and as such would not lead to its front elevation appearing imbalanced or give the impression that the original building was no longer a visual feature. Indeed, given their designs and material finishes the proposal and previous extensions are sympathetic additions to the property which complement the original building's design and architectural style.
17. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would not materially harm the character and appearance of the original building. It would therefore accord with policy LP57 of the KLP.

Conditions

18. In addition to the standard implementation condition, I have imposed a necessary condition to define the plans with which the scheme should accord in the interest of precision. I have also imposed a condition requiring that the proposal's external materials match those of the main dwelling in the interests of the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion

19. For the reasons given above the proposal would not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt and would also not materially harm the character and appearance of the area. As a result, it would accord with the Development Plan and the Framework when read as a whole and I therefore conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

C Coyne INSPECTOR