



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 August 2021

by Victor Callister BA(Hons) PGC(Oxon) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 September 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/N1920/D/20/3265140

The Cottage, Chase Farm, Stag Hill, Potters Bar EN6 5BW

- 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 Matthew Hayward against the decision of Hertsmere Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20/1527/HSE, dated 29 September 2020, was refused by notice dated 24 November 2020.
 - The development proposed is for a single storey extension and rendering the property
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The site is within the Green Belt and so the main issues are:
 - whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt for the purposes of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and local plan policy,
 - the effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt; and
 - if the proposal would be 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 it.

Reasons

Whether Inappropriate Development

3. Policy CS13 of the Hertsmere Core Strategy 2013 (the CS) states that development proposals, including those for previously developed buildings will be assessed in relation to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). The Framework states that the extension of an existing building is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt, provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions, over and above the size of the original building. There is no definition of 'disproportionate additions' in the Framework but mathematical calculations as to the size of any additions relative to the original, as well as their visual relationship, are relevant factors to be considered.

4. The appeal dwelling is a detached two storey house located just to the inside of the M25 orbital motorway in the Green Belt at Chase Farm, which is a property predominantly made up of light industrial units and parking areas. From the documents before me, the dwelling appears to have been in situ in 1948 and has been the subject of subsequent extensions, some replacing others in phases of alteration and extension.
5. The proposal involves a single storey side extension with a flat roof and shallow pitched central rooflight. The extension would project 4 Metres and would be the full 6.7 Metre length of the side wall of the appeal dwelling. The extension and existing house would be rendered to match.
6. The Council has calculated that, taking in to account the existing extensions to the original building, the proposal would increase the floorspace from that of the original dwelling by approximately 101.4% and the footprint by approximately 113.9%. These figures appear to be accurate from the evidence before me and are not disputed by the appellant.
7. An increase of the order proposed would significantly increase the size of the appeal dwelling, to the extent that it would be a disproportionate addition to the size of the original building.
8. I find for the reasons set out above, the proposal would involve a disproportionate addition over and above that of the original dwelling. I therefore conclude that this proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt which is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt.

Effect on Openness

9. Section 13 of the Framework makes it clear that an essential characteristic of Green Belts is their openness.
10. The proposed extension would result in an inappropriate development, due to the proposal being a disproportionate addition over and above that of the original dwelling. The additional volume of the extension would result in additional bulk and footprint, increasing the apparent volume and physical presence of the appeal dwelling as a structure.
11. This would not be particularly apparent in most close views of the appeal property, which does not appear from my site visit to be visible from the public realm. From where it is visible, the views of the appeal dwelling are generally long distance, where the appeal dwelling is viewed within the context either of open fields or the light industrial units and parking areas of Chase Farm. However, the proposal, by appearing as a larger dwelling, would add to the existing sprawl of built form in this area, reducing the local areas already compromised sense of openness and that of the Green Belt within which it sits.
12. Accordingly, the proposal would result in a reduction in openness compared to the existing situation and, therefore, moderate harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

Other Considerations

13. Whilst I agree with the appellant that the appeal dwelling is not particularly large and that the proposed extension would not be harmful to its character

and appearance or that of the local area visible from the public realm, lack of harm in this regard is a neutral factor in my considerations.

14. The appellant has stated that their reasons for proposing to extend the appeal dwelling relate to their family need for additional space and a requirement for a preferred layout. However, this would not constitute a public benefit and I can therefore only give this little weight for the purposes of my consideration of this appeal.

Very Special Circumstances

15. Policy CS13 of the CS, Policy SADM26 of the Hertsmere Site Allocations and Development Management Plan Strategy 2016 (the HSADMPS) and Paragraph 147 of the Framework, set out the general presumption against inappropriate development within the Green Belt. They state that such development should not be approved except in very special circumstances.
16. Paragraph 148 of the Framework further states that 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.
17. I have concluded that the proposal is inappropriate development that, by definition, would harm the Green Belt. Paragraph 148 of the Framework requires substantial weight to be given to any harm to the Green Belt. I have also found moderate harm to the openness of the Green Belt.
18. On the other hand, the other considerations I have already discussed are matters of limited weight in favour of the development. As such, the other considerations would not clearly outweigh the totality of harm that I have identified and therefore the very special circumstances necessary to justify the proposal do not exist. Consequently, the appeal scheme would conflict with Policy CS13 of the CS, Policy SADM26 of the HSADMPS and the Framework.

Conclusion

19. For the reasons given above, the proposed development would not accord with the Local Plan and the Framework, there are no other considerations which outweigh this finding. Accordingly, the appeal should not succeed.

Victor Callister

INSPECTOR