



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 26 August 2021

by Rory MacLeod BA (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 September 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/R3650/D/21/3269347

The Lake Barn, 6 Warren Lane, Hambledon, Surrey GU8 4AS

- 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 Neil Garrett against the decision of Waverley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref WA/2020/2020, dated 11 December 2020, was refused by notice dated 12 February 2021.
 - The development proposed is single storey extension to the rear.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was updated in July 2021. Whilst appeal submissions have referred to the 2019 version of the Framework, I have noted changes made to the content and paragraph numbers in preparing this Decision.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - (a) whether the proposal would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt, and
 - (b) if it is 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 the development.

Reasons

Whether inappropriate development

4. The Lake Barn is a detached bungalow with a double garage, a recent conversion of a barn following a grant of planning permission in 2017. It is the last in a short row of dwellings accessed from Vann Lane. Land levels fall across an extensive garden area to the rear and southern side. The site abuts open countryside and is within the Metropolitan Green Belt.
5. The proposal is to provide an extension to the southern side about 8m by 6m in area with a matching pitched roof to provide an en-suite bedroom and a living room. The plans also show decking and a pergola to the rear eastern side.

6. Paragraph 149 of the Framework states subject to exceptions that the construction of new buildings should be regarded as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exception (c) relates to *"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"*.
7. Policy RE2 of the Waverley Borough Local Plan Part 1 Strategic Policies and Sites (2018) seeks to protect the Green Belt from inappropriate development in accordance with the Framework. It is therefore consistent with the Framework and attracts significant weight. Saved Policy RD2 of the Local Plan (2002) relates to extensions of dwellings in the countryside and similarly requires extensions to not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original dwelling. Its supporting text states as a guideline, a proposal which individually or cumulatively increases the floorspace of the original dwelling by more than 40% will be unlikely to satisfy the policy.
8. The test for whether an enlargement would be *"disproportionate"* does not relate to openness in the Green Belt but requires a quantitative assessment. The extension would have a floor area of about 47 sqm. The Council contend that there would be a percentage increase of 71.4% based upon an original floor area of 126.9 sqm. The appellant asserts the extension would not exceed 40% of an original area of 176.56 sqm for the barn and garage.
9. The Framework is clear that the issue of proportionality relates to *"size"* and not just floor area. Massing and volume are also relevant in addition to the 40% floor area guideline. The size of the original building has been increased by an extension linking to the garage. A conversion of part of the garage to a utility room would not have increased the size of the original barn and garage. Whereas the link extension is modest in size and unobtrusive between the buildings, the proposed extension would be large, protruding some 6m to the south of the dwelling into an open area.
10. The proposal includes not only the extension but also an area of raised decking over falling land levels and a large pergola. Whilst the pergola would be open sided, its mass and that of the raised decking would also add to the overall size of the resultant building.
11. It is my judgement that the proposal in combination with the previous extension would result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building. It would therefore amount to inappropriate development.

Other considerations

12. Paragraph 147 to the Framework comments, *"Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances"*. Paragraph 148 states, *"Very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations"*.
13. The appellants point out that the extension would follow the design ethos of the original conversion and would be unobtrusive from Warren Lane. Planning policies require all developments to have a sympathetic design and to respect the character of an area. But the proposal would nonetheless result in substantial additions in the Green Belt.

14. It is also stressed that the need for the extension is very much a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and the unanticipated requirement to facilitate homeworking, whilst maintaining a comfortable family home. Although I can sympathise with the appellants' circumstances, these are not unusual. It has not been demonstrated that an enlargement of the size proposed is necessary.

Conclusion

15. The proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Paragraph 148 to the Framework affirms that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. Only limited weight can be attributed to the considerations advanced by the appellants. Other considerations amounting to the "very *special circumstances*" necessary to justify the development therefore do not exist. The proposal would be contrary to Policies RE2 and RD2 and to the provisions of the Framework taken as a whole.
16. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Rory MacLeod

INSPECTOR