



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 19 October 2021

by Mr M Brooker DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26 October 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/P2935/W/21/3281303

The Gin Gan, B6524 Whalton To Morpeth Common Road, Whalton, NE61 3YH

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a failure to give notice within the prescribed period of a decision on an application for planning permission
 - The appeal is made by Mr Dan Walker against Northumberland County Council.
 - The application Ref 21/00834/FUL, is dated 3 March 2021.
 - The development proposed is a stone clad side extension with pitched roof to form new open plan kitchen, dining and master with part mezzanine above kitchen.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed and planning permission for a stone clad side extension with pitched roof to form new open plan kitchen, dining and master with part mezzanine above kitchen is refused.

Preliminary Matters

2. Following the submission of the appeal against a failure to give notice within the prescribed period, the Council have clarified the position they would have taken had they determined the application. I have had regard to these submissions, in so far as they provide clarity in terms of the reasons why the Council would have refused planning permission had it done so. The main issues below are therefore informed by the Council's submissions.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - i. 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.
 - ii. The effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt
 - iii. The effect of the proposal on the Character and appearance of the area.
 - iv. 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

4. The Framework identifies that 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. It goes on to state that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.
5. The Framework states that the construction of new buildings should be regarded as inappropriate development in the Green Belt, subject to a number of exceptions¹. Relevant to the appeal scheme is c) 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.
6. Saved Policy C17 of the Castle Morpeth District Local Plan (CMDLP) echoes the guidance set out in the Framework, seeking to restrict development in the Green Belt other than for a limited number of exceptions including "c) limited extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings...".
7. What development is disproportionate, or in the case of Saved Policy C17 limited, is not defined locally or nationally.
8. The submitted plans show that the extension would be set over 1.5 storeys, incorporating a mezzanine floor. The appellant's Design and Access Statement details that the proposed extension would have a footprint of 100m² and that the existing property has a footprint of 128m². Therefore, it is clear that the appeals scheme is of a substantial size in itself and in proportion to the existing property.
9. While the appellant asserts that the appeal scheme complies with the Framework, it is clear that on the basis of the evidence before me that as a result of the size and scale of the extension in relation to the existing building, the appeal scheme is a disproportionate addition to the dwelling over and above the size of the original building and is not therefore limited.
10. Therefore, for the reasons detailed above I find that the proposal would result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building and is therefore inappropriate development in the Green Belt contrary to Saved Policy C17 of the CMDLP and the provisions of the Framework.

Openness

11. Openness is an essential characteristic of the Green Belt and openness has a spatial aspect as well as a visual aspect.
12. The appeal site and proposed extension is situated within a small cluster of rural buildings outside of the nearby village. The existing property, large barn like building to the rear and the neighbouring stone-built property create an effective screen to views to the wider area.
13. Furthermore, while the extensions are shown on the submitted plans as being a disproportionate addition to the dwelling, it is nonetheless still domestic in scale and appearance and small in the context of the surrounding landscape and scale of the Green Belt.
14. In that the bulk of the building would be increased substantially by additional built development, the proposal would reduce the openness of the Green Belt

¹ Paragraph 149, National Planning Policy Framework

and while the loss of openness would be minimal, the Framework nonetheless indicates that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt.

15. I therefore find that the appeal scheme would harm the openness of the Green Belt contrary to guidance set out in the Framework.

Character and Appearance

16. The appeal site forms part of small cluster of buildings located outside of the nearby village. The built form of this cluster generally consists of agricultural and former agricultural buildings, the latter being established stone-built properties converted to residential use which generally maintain the character and scale of their former agricultural use.
17. The appeal property, currently consists of a Gin Gan type structure with a conical roof and a larger linear structure providing the bulk of the living accommodation.
18. The appellant details that the appeals scheme has been designed to appear subordinate to the existing property while sharing many design characteristics. I note that the extension is 1.5 storeys high and therefore set below that of the main accommodation of the existing appeal property. Furthermore, the submitted plans show that the proposed extension would be constructed of materials that would be in keeping with the existing and neighbouring properties albeit with some modern design influence.
19. Nonetheless, as a result of the considerable scale of the proposed extension in proportion to the existing property, the appeal scheme would fundamentally change the character of the property, harming the character and appearance of both the appeal property and the surrounding area.
20. Thus, the appeal scheme is contrary to Saved Policy H22 of the CMDLP that, amongst other matters, seeks that new development reflects the style and character of the existing property.

Other Considerations

21. In support of the appeal the appellant has referred to the need to provide extra accommodation to best meet the demands of a larger family wishing to remain in the local area supporting local services. Furthermore. Reference has been made to other extensions in the wider area, with the appellant suggesting that these examples set a precedent for the appeal scheme. Though I have not been provided with all the details of these schemes, the policies and circumstances that applied at the time that they were granted planning permission.
22. In these circumstances I give some weight to the precedent set by these developments and the continued support to local services by a growing family that would be accommodated within the appeal scheme.

Conclusions

23. The proposed development would be inappropriate development, in addition there would be a minimal loss of openness, and the Framework establishes that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt. I have also

found harm to the character and appearance of both the appeal property and the surrounding area.

24. On the other hand, the appeal scheme shares some similarities to other extensions in the wider area and would provide accommodation for a growing family. However, these other considerations do not clearly outweigh the totality of harm which is the test that they have to meet. Consequently, very special circumstances do not exist.
25. For the reasons given the overall conclusion is therefore that the appeal should fail.

Mr M Brooker

INSPECTOR