



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 December 2021

by F Wilkinson BSc (Hons), MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 January 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/R4408/W/21/3281156

Land off Royd Moor Road, Thurlstone, Sheffield S36 9RY

- 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 and Mrs L Barden against the decision of Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 2021/0571, dated 16 April 2021, was refused by notice dated 30 July 2021.
 - The development proposed is described on the application form as 'full application for 1no dwelling following demolition of existing stables and associated structures'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to relevant development plan policies and the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), including the effect on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land within it; and
 - if the proposed development is inappropriate development, whether 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 proposal.

Reasons

Inappropriate Development, Openness and Green Belt Purposes

3. The appeal site is located in the countryside to the north east of Thurlstone. It consists of a timber stable block and areas of hardstanding. Lying outside of the site boundary to the west is an outdoor menage. The proposed development would involve the demolition of the existing timber stable block and the erection of a detached single storey stone built dwelling with tile roof. A turning area, parking provision for two cars and garden area are also proposed.
4. Paragraph 147 of the Framework sets out that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. The Framework states that the construction of new buildings should be regarded as inappropriate in the Green Belt. A number of

exceptions to this are listed. Exceptions include the limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development. There is no dispute between the main parties that the site is previously developed land.

5. Policy GB1 of the Barnsley Local Plan, adopted 2019 (the Local Plan) seeks to protect the Green Belt from inappropriate development in accordance with national planning policy.
6. The site is relatively prominent in the area, particularly when viewed from the higher ground to the west and when travelling along Royd Moor Road. The stable block can be seen from this road and in views from the surrounding area. However, it sits relatively unobtrusively in the landscape given its low height and relatively limited scale.
7. The proposed dwelling would generate vehicle movements associated with day to day living such as for employment, access to services and facilities, leisure activities and healthcare. The appellant has provided information on the trips associated with the stable block. An element of visual intrusion relating to vehicles at the site will already be occurring. Whilst the proposed dwelling would result in some visual intrusion associated with vehicles and car parking, this would not necessarily have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than that associated with the stables.
8. The proposed dwelling would be of a modest scale and would be sited in a similar location to the stable block. The submitted plans indicate that its volume would be 16% less than the stable block, with the appellant's appeal statement indicating 20%. Irrespective of the figure, the proposed dwelling would have a lesser volume than the stable block. However, the assessment of impact on openness, in both a spatial and visual sense, is about more than a straightforward calculation of volume or footprint.
9. Whilst the overall volume of the proposed dwelling would be less, its ridge line would be higher, resulting in a greater overall mass. Furthermore, the design elements for a dwelling, including the use of extensive glazing and the chimney breast, the illumination that would occur, and the domestic paraphernalia and activities that would be associated with its use as a dwelling would have something of an encroaching urbanising effect that would be markedly at odds with the site as it is at present, and with the open and undeveloped rural character of the wider area. The use of timber for the dwelling rather than stone would not adequately mitigate this, nor would boundary planting.
10. My attention has been drawn to an appeal decision and a number of Council decisions concerning dwellings granted permission in the Green Belt that the appellant considers raise similar issues to the current appeal scheme. The appeal decision¹ involved a site associated with a riding school and related buildings. Another example relates to two Council decisions² on the same site involving a development with less volume than the static caravan and outbuildings to be replaced, but it was also considered to result in a more open site as it would consolidate development in one area. In the other case³, there

¹ Appeal reference APP/Z4718/W/20/3251182

² Application references 2019/1452 and 2020/0334

³ Application reference 2020/1132

was a reduction in footprint but also a reduction in massing and scale. In addition, this site was nestled between dwellings and was considered to be a fairly suburban site. I cannot therefore draw any direct comparisons with the appeal scheme that would weigh in its favour.

11. The massing of the proposed development together with the design details and other elements set out above that are characteristic of the use of a building as a dwelling would result in a more prominent development that would diminish the openness of the Green Belt in both visual and spatial terms.
12. Overall, therefore, the proposal would result in a development that would have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing one. It would be inappropriate development. In line with paragraph 147 of the Framework, the proposed development would be inherently harmful to the Green Belt. Whilst the harm to openness would be moderate, I give this substantial weight, in line with paragraph 148 of the Framework.
13. For similar reasons, the proposed development would result in some limited encroachment into the countryside, in conflict with this Green Belt purpose.

Other Considerations

14. The proposed development would be within 2km of a range of services and facilities, with a number in Thurlstone being less than 1km away, including access to bus services which provide an hourly service to nearby towns. It would be theoretically possible for future occupiers to walk or cycle to Thurlstone, which is not far in distance terms. However, Royd Moor Road is narrow, unlit and has no footpath and so the available routes would potentially feel physically isolated and unsafe for pedestrians or cyclists dependent on the time of day. Some journeys to and from the site would therefore be made by car. Despite the limited number of trips generated by one dwelling, the proposal would fail to minimise the need to travel by car. However, paragraph 105 of the Framework recognises that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary from urban to rural areas. Therefore, a higher proportion of journeys by car may reasonably be expected within such a rural location. Notwithstanding this conclusion, I give this matter limited weight as dwellings should be located so that they provide a genuine choice of transport modes to services and facilities.
15. The traffic generated by the proposed development could be accommodated within the highway network without giving rise to an unacceptable effect on highway safety. The appellant highlights a number of Local Plan policies that it is considered the appeal scheme complies with. However, a lack of harm is a neutral factor in any balance. The appellant considers that the proposed development would accord with the design objectives in chapter 12 of the Framework. Whilst this may be the case, I give it limited weight as good design that respects the character of the area should generally be expected.
16. The scheme would have certain benefits. It would make a contribution to housing provision, would create employment during construction and the additional residents would support local shops, businesses and community facilities. However, given that the proposed development is for one dwelling, these benefits would be limited and as such have limited weight. The passing place proposed to the east of the site entrance would provide a moderate

benefit to users of Royd Moor Road given the single lane nature of the road in this location.

Other Matters

17. I note the comments made about the post submission correspondence. However, in determining this appeal, I am only able to have regard to the planning merits of the case.

Conclusion

18. The proposed development would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt by virtue of its effect on openness, which is by definition harmful. Very special circumstances will not exist unless the harm to the Green Belt and any other harm is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
19. I have had regard to the other considerations. However, I find that these do not clearly outweigh the harm that I have identified. Consequently, the very special circumstances necessary to justify the proposed development do not exist. The proposed development would therefore conflict with Policy GB1 of the Local Plan and the requirements of chapter 13 of the Framework which have been summarised above.
20. The proposed development would conflict with the development plan taken as a whole as well as the Framework. There are no material considerations worthy of sufficient weight that would indicate a decision otherwise than in accordance with it. The appeal should therefore be dismissed.

F Wilkinson

INSPECTOR