



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 February 2022

by Hannah Ellison BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 February 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/M0655/D/21/3282417

9 Wrights Green, Lumb Brook Road, Appleton, Warrington WA4 3HN

- 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 Mrs Alex Eyes against the decision of Warrington Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 2021/39701, dated 2 July 2021, was refused by notice dated 31 August 2021.
 - The development proposed is a hip to gable extension and loft conversion.
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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;
 - The effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt;
 - The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area; and
 - If found to be inappropriate development, whether the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations and if so, whether this amounts to the very special circumstances required to justify the proposal.

Reasons

Whether inappropriate development

3. The appeal property is a two storey end of terrace dwelling of similar appearance to the adjoining properties and those in the immediate locality. It has previously been extended to the rear at two storey level.
4. Policies CC 2 and CS 5 of the Warrington Borough Council Local Plan Core Strategy (July 2014) (the CS) state that proposals within the Green Belt will be approved where they accord with relevant national policy. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that new buildings should be regarded as inappropriate development in the Green Belt subject to a number of exceptions. 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, is one of these exceptions at paragraph 149 c).

5. Neither the CS or the Framework explain what a disproportionate addition means. However, the House Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (June 2021) (the SPD) notes that any extensions and additions that result in an increase in size of over 33% of the original building will be considered to be disproportionate. This measurement is based predominantly on floorspace and volume.
6. The proposed development, when considered cumulatively with the previous two storey rear extension, would result in a substantial increase to both floorspace and volume of the original property, far in excess of, and contrary to, the SPD's guideline of 33%. It would also considerably increase the proportions of the dwelling, including its bulk and massing. The proposal would therefore represent a sizeable increase to the original dwelling in a number of ways.
7. Accordingly, the proposal would result in a disproportionate addition to the original dwelling and would therefore constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Effect upon openness of the Green Belt

8. Paragraph 137 of the Framework advises that a 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.
9. The proposed extension would be readily apparent from public vantage points and would result in the introduction of built form into a space where currently there is none. However, the extension would be solely at roof level and would be read within the context of the existing dwelling and adjacent built form. It would therefore preserve the openness of the Green Belt and accord with Policies CC 2 and CS 5 of the CS and the Framework.

Character and appearance

10. The terrace which the appeal dwelling forms part of is largely symmetrical in appearance, with a continuous roof line that is hipped at either end. This roof design is characteristic of other terraces and pairs of properties in the immediate locality. The proposed hip to gable extension would erode the balanced appearance of the terrace, which would be readily apparent in the street scene and appear at odds with the roof forms in the area.
11. I note the example of a roof extension at a neighbouring property however, the resultant roof form does not reflect the predominant character of the area. Moreover, it is suggested that this example was built under permitted development rights therefore the context under which it was constructed is not directly comparable. As such, it does not serve to justify the appeal proposal.
12. Accordingly, the proposed extension would harm the character and appearance of the area and would conflict with Policy QE 7 of the CS and the SPD which seek to ensure that proposals harmonise with the scale and proportions of adjacent buildings and enhance the character and appearance of the street scene, amongst other things.

Other considerations

13. The Framework advises that inappropriate development is harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Very special circumstances 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.
14. I have not been provided with any considerations that may weigh in favour of the proposal.

Whether very special circumstances exist

15. The proposal would constitute inappropriate development to which substantial weight is given. Further harm would be caused to the character and appearance of the area to which I afford considerable weight. No considerations in support of the proposal have been advanced. Therefore, the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development do not exist. As such, the proposal would fail to accord with Policies CC 2 and CS 5 of the CS and the Framework.

Conclusion

16. The proposal would be contrary to the development plan and the Framework taken as a whole. There are no material considerations which indicate that the decision should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

H Ellison

INSPECTOR