



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 March 2022

by Martin Allen BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 01 April 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/P0119/D/22/3291332

Homeview, Earthcott Green, Alveston BS35 3TA

- 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 R Taylor against the decision of South Gloucestershire Council.
 - The application Ref P21/07163/PDR, dated 8 November 2021, was refused by notice dated 17 December 2021.
 - The development proposed is the erection of single storey extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:

- Whether or not the proposal is inappropriate development in the Green Belt,
- The effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt,
- The effect on the character and appearance of the host building, and
- If the proposal 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 or not the proposal is inappropriate development in the Green Belt

3. The appeal site is located within the Green Belt. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), at paragraph 149, indicates that, other than in connection with a small number of exceptions, the construction of new buildings should be regarded as inappropriate in the Green Belt. The extension of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building, is listed as one of the exceptions.
4. The proposal involves an increase in the volume of the building of 49%, which is not contested by the appellant. While I am conscious that policy PSP7 of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan: Policies, Sites and Places Plan (the PSP Plan) outlines that increases between 30 and 50% could be considered acceptable, the greater the extension exceeds 30% increase, the more likely it is to be

disproportionate. In my view, the 49% increase in volume cannot reasonably be considered to result in anything but a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building. That this volume increase includes an area of roof void does not dissuade me from this.

5. Consequently, in not complying with the exceptions as outlined by paragraph 149 of the Framework, the scheme would comprise inappropriate development in the Green Belt, which paragraph 147 states is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Therefore, the scheme would conflict with the provisions of the Framework.

The effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt

6. The Framework, at paragraph 137, indicates that openness and permanence are the essential characteristics of the Green Belt. The scheme would result in the addition of an extension to an existing property, thereby introducing additional built form. Whilst the extension is not, when considered in isolation, a vast extension, nor would it generally be visible from public vantage points, it would nevertheless result in an increased quantum of built development at the site. Consequently, the scheme would not preserve, and there would be a small loss of, the openness of the Green Belt.

Character and appearance

7. The existing building is a modest, single storey converted barn. The proposed extension would be constructed to one of its gable ends, maintaining the linear form of the property. However, given the modest proportions of the existing, the proposal would appear overly large. While it would have elements of subservience in terms of a stepped down ridge height and stepped elevations, its length when viewed against the existing would appear excessive and overly dominant. As a result, the modest proportions of the existing converted barn would be lost, and its existing character would be diminished.
8. Accordingly, the scheme would conflict with policy CS1 of the Core Strategy, as well as policies PSP1 and PSP38 of the PSP Plan. Together, and amongst other things, these seek to ensure that development is of a high standard of design, responds constructively to buildings and that extensions respect scale and proportions.
9. The Council's Supplementary Planning Document – Traditional Buildings, Guidance on barn conversions, is also referenced. However, this document provides guidance for initial conversion proposals and does not appear directly relevant to a standalone extension. Nonetheless, this does not diminish the conflict with policy I identify above.

Other considerations

10. The appellant outlines that the extension is required in order to accommodate the family needs of the appellant, who lives at this location and is involved in the management of a nearby rural enterprise. The extension would allow the appellant to remain at the property, in close proximity to the rural enterprise, without the need to seek alternative accommodation elsewhere, possibly necessitating a greater reliance on the use of a car.

Other Matters

11. I note comments that the appellant sought to discuss an alternate design with the Council. However, I have considered the appeal scheme as submitted.
12. Reference is made to previous buildings that occupied the site however these have been removed and as such do not affect my consideration of the appeal scheme.
13. The appellant also refers to extensions being constructed to a nearby property. No details have been provided in respect of these and as such I am unable to draw any meaningful comparisons. There is also mention of an "industrial fabrication" yard opposite the site. However, this is an existing site unrelated to the appeal site. Accordingly, these matters have little bearing on my decision.

Green Belt Balance and Conclusion

14. The proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt and the Framework establishes that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt. It would also lead to a small loss of openness. I find that the other considerations in this case do not clearly outweigh the harm that I have identified. Consequently, the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development do not exist. The proposal would be contrary to the guidance of the Framework.
15. Therefore, for the reasons given and having regard to all matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

Martin Allen

INSPECTOR