

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 March 2022 by G Sibley MPLAN MRTPI

Decision by L McKay MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26 April 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/T3725/D/22/3291560

Lodge Farm Barn Lapworth Street, Lowsonford, Henley-In-Arden B95 5ES

- 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 Andrew Lilly against the decision of Warwick District Council.
 - The application Ref W/21/1242, dated 28 June 2021, was refused by notice dated 4 November 2021.
 - The development proposed is a single storey extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) and any relevant development plan policies
 - the effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt
 - the effect of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the host dwelling
 - if the development is inappropriate, whether the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, would be clearly outweighed by other considerations so as to amount to the very special circumstances required to justify the proposal.

Reasons for the Recommendation

Whether inappropriate development

4. The Framework establishes that new buildings within the Green Belt are inappropriate development subject to a number of exceptions (paragraph 149). This includes the exception in paragraph 149 c) for the extension or alteration to a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.

5. Policy DS18 of the Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029 (LP) (adopted 2017) states that national Green Belt policy will be applied. The explanatory text for Policy H14 of the LP states that, as a guide, the Council is likely to consider an increase over 30% of the gross floor space of dwellings in the Green Belt to be disproportionate.
6. The Council has identified that the original building had a floor space of around 168 square metres (sqm) and that the proposal, together with various previous additions, would result in an increase of the internal gross floor space of around 174 sqm. This would result in an approximately 104% increase in the gross floorspace associated with the dwelling. Although I do not have the plans associated with the previous approvals, the appellant has not disputed the Council's figures. The cumulative additions, including this proposal, would therefore be far beyond the 30% guideline set out in the explanatory text for Policy H14.
7. The proposed extension would be a single storey addition located on the flank wall of the dwelling facing the shared driveway. The existing dwelling appears to be two barns, one two-storey and one single-storey connected by a small link extension to create one large L shaped building. The proposed single storey extension would retain the narrow dimensions of the building and, in isolation, its scale would not be a disproportionate addition to the host building. Nevertheless, there have been significant additions already, including a similar extension on the other end of the building and the link. When viewed in combination with these existing additions, the proposal would result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.
8. Accordingly, the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt contrary to Policy DS18 and H14 of the LP as well as paragraph 149 c) of the Framework.

Impact on openness

9. The site is located at the end of a private road and, as a result, is visually secluded from the public domain. Nevertheless, when approaching the site, the proposal would be in a visually prominent location adjacent to the shared driveway, set forward of the rest of the dwelling. While it would be a relatively small single storey addition, it would nevertheless harmfully erode the visual openness of the Green Belt, albeit the harm would be limited and localised due to its location away from public viewpoints.
10. The proposal would also introduce new built form in the Green Belt where there currently is none. As a result, the proposal would harmfully erode the openness of the Green Belt in spatial terms.
11. Consequently, the proposal would adversely affect both the visual and spatial openness of the Green Belt and have a greater impact on openness than the existing situation.

Character and appearance

12. The proposed extension would create a balanced appearance across this section of the building with the similarly designed extension on the opposite side of the building. Nonetheless, the proposal would introduce a large window on the wall facing the road which is the most prominent section of the building. The existing wall is simple in appearance and retains the traditional agricultural

appearance of the building. In comparison the proposal would appear overly domesticated due to the large area of glazing. This amount of glazing would not give the impression of an adaptation of a former traditional structure and would harm the integrity of the former barn.

13. Whilst a similar extension was built on the opposite side of the building, given its location it is largely hidden from view when approaching the site and therefore has little impact on how the two-storey former barn is perceived. Additionally, the garden room extension which connects the two buildings is seen as a largely blank brick wall when viewed from the road, with the glazing located to the rear of this connecting building. This has retained the traditional appearance of the building as a whole, which the proposal would fail to achieve.
14. Therefore, the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling and would not accord with Policy BE4 of the LP insofar as the proposal, alongside the existing additions, would involve extensive alteration to the external appearance of the building. Moreover, the proposal would fail to respect the character of the original dwelling by failing to retain its visual dominance and thus would not comply with Policy H14.

Other considerations

15. 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. Substantial weight must be given to any harm to the Green Belt and 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.
16. The proposal would improve the energy efficiency of the building which would be supported by local and national policies that seek to address the impacts of climate change. Nevertheless, given the limited scale of the proposal this would carry limited weight in favour of the proposal.
17. The proposal would enhance and increase the functionality and floor space of the dwelling but given the scale of the development and because this would be a private benefit for the appellant, I attribute very limited weight to this consideration.
18. While other extensions were deemed to not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, those additions were in less prominent locations compared to the proposal. Additionally, those additions have since been built and contribute to the overall additional built form added to the building in the Green Belt. Moreover, each case must be assessed on their own merits.

Whether very special circumstances exist

19. The proposed development would cause harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and the reduction in the openness of the Green Belt and I attach substantial weight to those harms. Moreover, the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling, a matter which I afford significant weight. It would also conflict with the LP and the Framework. The other considerations of the scheme do not, either individually or cumulatively, clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt. Consequently, the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development do not exist.

Conclusion and Recommendation

20. Due to the identified conflict with the development plan as a whole and the Framework, and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

G Sibley

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

21. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and, on that basis, I agree with the recommendation and shall dismiss the appeal.

L McKay

INSPECTOR