



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 June 2022

by Mr M Brooker DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 6 July 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/P2935/D/22/3297178

Heighley Wood, Morpeth NE61 3JW

- 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 Joel Ross against the decision of Northumberland County Council.
 - The application Ref 21/04026/FUL, dated 12 October 2021, was refused by notice dated 14 April 2022.
 - The development proposed is described as a two storey extension protruding from western side to provide 2no. additional bedrooms, dining area and gym.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issues are:
 - i. Whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the Framework and any relevant development plan policies.
 - ii. The effect on the openness of the Green Belt.
 - iii. Would the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, be clearly outweighed by other considerations so as to amount to the very special circumstances required to justify the proposal.

Reasons

Whether inappropriate development

3. The Council Decision Notice refers to policy STP 8 of the Northumberland Local Plan (NLP) that itself refers to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). Part 13 of the Framework refers to development in the Green Belt and is therefore relevant to the appeal scheme.
4. Paragraph 149 of the Framework details that the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt is inappropriate. Exceptions to this are, of particular relevance to the appeal scheme, "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".
5. Annex2: The Glossary to the Framework defines that the Original building is the building as it existed on 1 July 1948 or, if constructed after 1 July 1948, as

it was built originally. In this instance the Original building is the building as it existed on 1 July 1948, referred to by the appellant as the 1947 buildings. I note that large dormer windows and a conservatory have been added to the property since that date.

6. In relation to exception c), the Framework and STP 8 of the NLP do not provide a definition of what constitutes a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building.
7. The appellant accepts, in their grounds of appeal, that the proposed extension "would not be a necessarily small building however it would have a volume less than the existing building as well as its height being reduced compared to the main house." The plan titled 'Massing proposal in comparison with site' details a volume increase of 39% and footprint increase in 25%".
8. Furthermore, the appellant has referred to the extensions and alterations to The Red House. However, I am not aware of all of the policies and circumstances that applied at the time that planning permission was granted. Nonetheless, that this is a material consideration and I have had regard to this in reaching my decision.
9. In considering what constitutes a disproportionate addition it is also necessary to consider the scale, bulk, massing and built form that would result from the changes sought.
10. In this instance the additional built form proposed by this appeal is shown on the submitted plans as being significant in itself and in proportion to the existing and the original dwelling. I note that the ridge height of the proposed extension is lower than the appeal property and that the use of glazing reduces the impression of the overall bulk and scale of the extension.
11. However, based on the evidence before me and my observations at the site visit, it is my planning judgement that the appeal scheme would fundamentally change the size and scale of the property.
12. Therefore, for the reasons detailed above I find that the proposal would result in the creation of a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building and is therefore inappropriate development in the Green Belt contrary to STP8 of the NLP and the provisions of the Framework.

The effect on the openness of the Green Belt

13. Openness is an essential characteristic of the Green Belt and openness has a spatial aspect as well as a visual aspect. The appeal site and proposed extension is situated within an open site that is enclosed by mature trees in a countryside location.
14. However, while the extensions are shown on the submitted plans as being a disproportionate addition to the dwelling, it is nonetheless still domestic in use and small in the context of the surrounding landscape and scale of the Green Belt as a whole.
15. In that the bulk of the building would be increased by additional built development, the proposal would reduce the openness of the Green Belt 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. Thus, the appeal scheme would harm the openness of the Green Belt contrary to guidance set out in the Framework.

Other Considerations

16. As detailed previously, the appellant has referred to planning permissions in respect of nearby properties in the past. In these circumstances I give some weight to the precedent set by this earlier development.

Conclusions

17. The proposed development would be inappropriate development and the Framework establishes that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt. In addition, there would be a minimal loss of openness.
18. On the other hand, the appeal scheme is not dissimilar in scale to another development in the area. However, this other consideration does not clearly outweigh the totality of harm which is the test that they have to meet. Consequently, very special circumstances do not exist.
19. For the reasons given the overall conclusion is therefore that the appeal should fail.

Mr M Brooker

INSPECTOR