



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 June 2022 by G Sibley MPLAN MRTPI

Decision by L McKay MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13th July 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/R1845/D/22/3293839

The Lodge, 12 New Wood Lane, Blakedown, Worcestershire DY10 3LD

- 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 Gary Rawle against the decision of Wyre Forest District Council.
 - The application Ref 21/0265/HOU, dated 9 March 2021, was refused by notice dated 3 December 2021.
 - The development proposed is loft conversion.
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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.

Preliminary Matter

3. Following the submission of this appeal the Wyre Forest District Local Plan 2016 – 2036 (LP) was adopted in 2022. The policies within the LP superseded those in the Core Strategy (adopted 2010) and the Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan (adopted 2012). I have been provided with the relevant policies from the LP and both parties have had the opportunity to comment on the change in policy context.

Main Issue

4. The main issues are:
 - whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) and any relevant development plan policies
 - the effect of the openness of the Green Belt
 - 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

5. The Framework establishes that new buildings within the Green Belt are inappropriate development subject to a number of exceptions. 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. The Framework defines 'original building' as a building as it existed on 1 July 1948 or, if constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was built originally.
6. Policy DM.22 of the LP provides that development will not be permitted within the Green Belt except in very special circumstances or where one of a list of exceptions applies. Criterion iii allows for extensions to existing dwellings, provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original dwelling.
7. No 12 is a detached bungalow set back from the roadside within spacious grounds. The Council has identified that the property has been considerably extended to the side and rear, including a swimming pool and garage. The appellant does not dispute the Council's planning history for the site.
8. Based on the information before me, the original building would have been a small bungalow and the additions to date have approximately doubled the width of the original dwelling as well as making elements of it considerably deeper. These additions have created a significantly larger dwelling compared to the original.
9. The proposed front dormer windows would be set below the ridge and set in from the eaves of the roof. Nevertheless, they would introduce new built form, creating a bulkier roof. The proposed rear dormer window would similarly add new built form at this level. The proposed hip to gable extensions would also add bulk to the roof. The proposed roof lights would be built within the roof slope and would not increase the size of the building. The proposed rear infill would increase the footprint of the dwelling, albeit this would be located between two existing features.
10. The proposed additions to the dwelling would be relatively limited in scale but when taking into consideration the comparatively large scale of the extensions that have already been built, the cumulative effect of the proposal would result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original dwelling. Consequently, it would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Openness of the Green Belt

11. The proposed rear dormer window and extensions to the rear would be screened from public view by the existing dwelling. The front dormer windows proposed and hip to gable additions at either end of the dwelling would introduce new built form and enlarge the dwelling at roof level, visible from the road, but would be within the existing footprint of the dwelling.
12. As a result, the proposals would erode both the spatial and visual openness of the Green Belt, however only to a limited degree given their modest scale and the degree of screening.

Other considerations

13. 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.
14. The appellant has identified a number of dwellings in the local area that are larger than the appeal property, some of which have recently been extended. For the purposes of Green Belt policy, the assessment of whether an extension would be disproportionate is however specific to each individual building and its particular circumstances, not whether the extended dwelling would be similar in scale to neighbouring properties. I have very little information about the other properties and how they came to be the size they are, or why any extensions were considered acceptable. Consequently, I cannot conclude that the circumstances were comparable to the appeal proposal, and these other properties do not therefore weigh in favour of this proposal.
15. The proposal would provide opportunities to improve the energy efficiency and reduce the carbon footprint of the dwelling. This would be supported by national policy which seeks to support the transition to a low carbon future. Nevertheless, considering the limited benefits of what could be achieved through the improvements to this single dwelling, I give this limited weight.

Whether very special circumstances exist

16. The proposed development would cause harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and reduction in openness and I attach substantial weight to those harms.
17. The other considerations cited in support of the proposal do not either individually or cumulatively, clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt. Consequently, the very special circumstances necessary to justify inappropriate development in the Green Belt do not exist.
18. Therefore, the proposal would conflict with LP Policy DM.22 and Green Belt policy set out in paragraphs 147-151 of the Framework.

Conclusion and Recommendation

19. Accordingly, the proposal would conflict with both local and national Green Belt policy and there are no material considerations that justify granting permission contrary to the development plan. For the reasons given above, 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

20. 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