The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 June 2022 by C Glaister BSc (Hons)

Decision by K Taylor BSc (Hons) PGDip MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 July 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/R3650/D/22/3290862
Rose Cottage, The Street, Ewhurst, Cranleigh GU6 7PG

- 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 Thompson against the decision of Waverley Borough Council.
- The application Ref WA/2021/02046, dated 9 June 2021, was refused by notice dated 9 December 2021.
- The development proposed is described as "First floor extension above the family room to include slight raising of the roof, and between existing built form at Rose Cottage, The Street, Ewhurst".

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 in the Green Belt for the purposes of the development plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) (the Framework);
    - the effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt; and
    - if the proposal would be 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 it.

Reasons for the Recommendation

Inappropriate Development

4. Paragraph 147 of the Framework states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 149 states that the construction of new buildings should be regarded as inappropriate in the Green Belt, with the exception of, among other things, 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. The Framework defines 'original building' as the building as it existed on 1 July 1948 or, if constructed after this date, as it was built originally. Policy RE2 of the Waverley Borough Local Plan Part 1: Strategic Policies and Sites (February 2018) (the Local Plan) largely reflects the policy provided in the Framework.

5. The appeal property is a two-storey detached dwelling. It includes a single-storey element on one side that extends past the front of the original house. The proposal would add a second storey above part of the existing single-storey development. Whilst the site is set back from the road, the property and parts of the proposal would be visible from public land.

6. There are differences in the calculations provided by the Council and the Appellant for the changes in floor area. The Council claim that the totality of development would amount to an increase in the floor area of 129% beyond the original building. The table provided in the grounds of appeal give figures lower than those reached by the Council. In any case, the totality of development would clearly represent a very large percentage increase, which would also have a substantial impact on the size of the property in visual terms. The size and position of the extension would clearly affect the massing of the property and add bulk to the building. With consideration to the previous development, the extension would represent a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building.

7. The Council have referred to a guideline suggesting individual or cumulative increases in floor space of more than 40% will be unlikely to be considered proportionate. This guideline appears to originate from the supporting text of Policy RD2 of the Waverley Borough Council Local Plan 2002 which relates to the extension of dwellings outside of settlements, and which was not included in the reason for refusal. The Council have confirmed that the site is within the settlement area, and the guidance provided in Policy RD2 is not therefore directly relevant to the proposal. Nevertheless, the proposal would still represent a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building.

8. Accordingly, the development would result in harm to the Green Belt. Paragraph 148 of The Framework instructs that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt, and that '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.

Openness

9. The site is on the edge of the village settlement. The area to the rear of the site is largely comprised of open fields, trees, and hedgerows. The development would be located within the footprint of the existing building. Accordingly, although the development would be proportionally significant to the original dwelling in combination with the previous extensions, its effect upon the openness of the Green Belt would be limited.

10. Although the harm would be limited, the proposal would nevertheless be detrimental to the openness of the Green Belt.

Other Considerations

11. The appellant has suggested that usable space in the loft could be achieved through permitted development rights. The rights referred to by the appellant do not apply to a dwellinghouse on article 2(3) land. The Council have indicated that the site is within a conservation area and an area of outstanding natural beauty, and as such, the fallback position cannot be given weight.

12. The appellant has indicated that the bedroom space provided within the dwelling is cramped and that it is essential that the existing building is extended to allow for their continued occupation. This is a personal circumstance that holds little weight. Although the proposal is acceptable in design terms, it would not provide any significant visual improvements to the property as a whole, and this therefore has little weight.

Conclusion and Recommendation

13. The proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt and would be detrimental to openness. It would therefore conflict with the Framework, and the aims of Policy RE2 of the Local Plan. The other considerations do not clearly outweigh these harms, and the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development do not therefore exist. Based on the above, and having regard to all matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

C Glaister

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

14. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

K Taylor

INSPECTOR