



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 February 2022 by Elizabeth Davies BSc (Hons) MIEMA, CEnv

Decision by Martin Seaton BSc (Hons) Dip TP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15th July 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3615/D/21/3283761

Cherrymans Shophouse Lane, Albury GU5 9EG

- 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 Isabelle Duncan against the decision of Guildford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20/P/02092, dated 7 December 2020, was refused by notice dated 5 July 2021.
 - The development proposed is erection of single storey extension and alterations to the existing outbuilding.
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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 in the appeal are:
 - Whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF); and
 - The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host outbuilding and adjoining outbuildings.

Reasons for the Recommendation

Whether it would be inappropriate development

4. Paragraph 149 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that new buildings are inappropriate in the Green Belt unless they fall within the given list of exceptions. Policy P2 of the Guildford borough Local Plan: strategy and sites 2015-2034 (Adopted 25th April 2019) (the 'Local Plan') echoes this statement and defers to the Framework with regard to exceptions. One exception in the Framework is 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. Having regard to extensions to buildings, Policy P2 of the Local Plan states that the "original building" shall mean the building as it existed on 1 July 1948, which is consistent with the definition as set out in Annex 2 of the Framework.

5. The term 'disproportionate additions' is neither defined in the Framework, nor is there a defined way of assessing and measuring proportionality set out within the development plan. It is held therefore that this is a matter for the decision maker to determine in the context of whether the extension would be disproportionate, albeit that with the reference to 'size' as set out in the Framework, this could reasonably refer to volume, height, external dimensions, footprint, floorspace or visual perception.
6. The Council consider that the proposed single storey extension to the outbuilding would represent a disproportionate addition based upon a clear indication provided by the extent of the floor area increase. In this regard, I note there is some considerable variance in the calculations of the percentage increase in floor area between the parties. The appellant has indicated the proposed percentage uplift in floor area over the original building would be 21.5%, whilst the Council's calculations conclude an uplift of 185.5%.
7. It would appear from the evidence before me that the Council have made a significant error when calculating the percentage uplift in floor area, even based upon the figures set out in their own calculations in the Planning Officer's Report. However, even allowing for any variation in the appellant's figures due to differing calculations from the Council on the original Gross External Area (GEA) and whether the lean-to is included within the baseline figures or not, from the evidence submitted, the appellant has provided a more reasonable basis for the calculation.
8. Despite the dispute, this calculation cannot be solely relied upon to assess proportionality, but it does provide an appropriate indication of proportionality of the proposed development. Whilst the proposed extension would create additional floorspace, the width of the extension is modest and would follow the line of the existing 'lean to'. In addition, part of the proposals would result in the removal of an oil tank and compound located next to the outbuilding, which is currently a significant and bulky feature within the courtyard.
9. On this basis, I do not therefore consider that the proposals would represent a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building, and it would therefore not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt as defined by the Framework. The proposals are therefore in accordance with Policy P2 of the Local Plan.

Character and Appearance

10. The outbuilding is part of a group of traditional farm buildings arranged around a gravel courtyard. The outbuildings are all clad in dark painted featheredged timber boarding with pitched clay tile roofs and appear as a unified group. The courtyard and group of outbuildings are visible from outside the entrance to St Michael's Church, a small converted barn building at the top of an unmade track that runs adjacent to the appeal property.
11. I note that the majority of modern additions such as the proposed roof lights and bi-fold doors face the main house and garden of the appeal property, away from the courtyard, adjoining outbuildings and public view, and I do not consider the design or arrangement of these more modern additions would harm the character and appearance of the outbuilding or the group of adjoining outbuildings. I can appreciate that the design alterations proposed seek to link contemporary design with the rural setting and the use of complementary

stained timber to clad the extension would help to unify it with the outbuilding and the group.

12. However, although the proposed extension is modest and the overall ridge height of the outbuilding would not increase, the proposed eaves height would be set above the existing eaves height of the outbuilding, disrupting the current roof form and resulting in an awkward design detail. Due to the detailed design and height of the eaves, the extension, when viewed from the entrance to the courtyard would appear to overwhelm the original outbuilding and to some extent the adjoining outbuilding. The flat roof nature of the extension would contrast unfavourably with and detrimentally alter the shape and form of the group of outbuildings.
13. On the basis of the above, I conclude that the proposal would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the outbuilding and adjoining outbuildings, as such, it would conflict with Local Plan Policy D1 which seeks, amongst other things to ensure development achieves high quality design. It would also conflict with saved Policy G5 of the Guildford Borough Local Plan 2003 (Adopted January 2003) which seeks, amongst other things, to ensure new development protects the character and appearance of buildings and the surrounding environment. It would also conflict with the Framework in so far as it requires that development should add to the overall quality of an area and should be sympathetic to local character.
14. The proposal would also not accord with the Council's Residential Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 2018 which states that extensions should be designed to complement the existing roof and be subordinate.

Other Matter

15. The appellant has made brief reference to the contention that the proposals and the refurbishment of the building would safeguard its future. However, whilst the continued and future use of the building would clearly be desirable, there is no evidence adduced to demonstrate that the proposed works are a necessity in order to facilitate the renovation of the building. I do not therefore attach any significant weight to this contention in support of the proposed development.

Conclusion and Recommendation

16. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

Elizabeth Davies

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

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

Martin Seaton

INSPECTOR