



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 July 2022 by Andreea Spataru BA (Hons) MA

Decision by Chris Forrett BSc(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16 August 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/J4423/D/22/3298326

**Totley Grove, Totley Grove Cottage, Hillfoot Road, Totley,
Sheffield S17 3AX**

- 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 Chris Staniland against the decision of Sheffield City Council.
 - The application Ref 22/00617/FUL, dated 15 February 2022, was refused by notice dated 13 April 2022.
 - The development proposed is for the erection of a single storey extension, canopy over front door and amendments to the existing elevations.
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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. These are:
 - Whether the proposed development would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt for the purposes of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and the development plan;
 - The effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt; and
 - If the development would be inappropriate, whether the harm to the Green Belt by way of inappropriateness and any other harm, would be clearly outweighed by other considerations so as to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify it.

Reasons for the Recommendation

Whether inappropriate development in the Green Belt

4. The Framework, at paragraphs 149 and 150, set out the categories of development which may be regarded as not inappropriate in the Green Belt, subject to certain conditions. Paragraph 149c) includes the extension or alteration of a building, if it does not result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building.
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5. Policy GE6 of the Sheffield Unitary Development Plan (1998) (UDP) states that extensions to existing houses will be permitted where they would form a minor addition to the original house. Guideline 9 of the Designing House Extensions – Supplementary Planning Guidance from the Unitary Development Plan (SPG) adds to this by outlining that for smaller houses a minor addition is defined by the Council as up to one third of the cubic content of the original house. In my view, the cubic content of the original house can only be calculated from the point when the building became a dwelling. Given that the proposal is less than one third of the cubic content of the house from when it was converted, the proposal accords with Policy GE6.
6. However, I am conscious that Policy GE6 dates back to 1998. Whilst this policy should not be considered out of date simply because it was made prior to the Framework, it is necessary to consider its degree of consistency with it.
7. In that sense, Policy GE6 is inconsistent with the Framework as it allows for minor additions to the original house rather than an addition which is not a disproportionate one to the original building. Given that the dwelling was recently formed through the conversion of an existing building this is a significant material consideration in the assessment of this proposal. As such, I consider that more weight should be given to the Framework rather than Policy GE6.
8. The appeal dwelling currently has an open plan living area that has a direct access to the garden through a raised patio located to the north-west of the property. The proposed single storey flat roofed extension would project approximately 1.5m beyond the existing elevation and would be approximately 6.8m wide. It would be along the full width of the living area and over part of the existing patio. The appellant has stated that it would be a 7.1% increase in volume from the existing dwelling.
9. Whilst I have not been provided with plans of the original building, the site history of the appeal property, as outlined within the planning officers' report, indicates that the existing dwelling is as a result of previous alterations, including the erection of pitched roof to create room as first floor level, and changes of use. The Council has stated that the proposed development, which consists of a single storey extension, a canopy over the front door and amendments to the existing elevations, when taken cumulatively with previous alterations, would increase the volume of the host dwelling by approximately 74%. Whilst the appellant considers that the canopy should not be included in such a measurement, it is clear that when compared to the original building there is a significant increase in its size.
10. Whilst the development, when considered in isolation, would be modest in terms of its overall size and scale, when taken cumulatively with previous alterations, it would lead to a sizeable increase in the volume of the original building. Given my views above, this is the most important factor.
11. Consequently, when comparing the original building to the dwelling that would result if the proposal were to go ahead, the outcome would be disproportionate. The proposal would therefore be inappropriate development, which according to paragraph 147 of the Framework is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt.

Openness

12. The Framework indicates that openness is an essential characteristic of the Green Belt. The proposal would introduce a further element of built form to the site albeit that it would be an extension to an existing building. The development would inevitably increase the scale and mass of the dwelling and as a result there would be a loss of Green Belt openness. Whilst such a loss of openness would not be significant, it would nevertheless have a negative perceptible impact.
13. In coming to that view, I accept that the development would not be unduly visible to the public. However, this does not mean that it would not affect the openness of the Green Belt.
14. I therefore conclude that the development would lead to a loss of Green Belt openness and would impact on the Green Belt purpose of safeguarding the countryside from encroachment contrary to the Framework.

Other considerations

15. The appellant has referred to a potential fall-back position which, if the appellant were to replace the existing dwelling, it could do so with a larger dwelling as figures of up to 33% increase have been previously found acceptable by the Council. My attention has also been drawn to a couple of planning permissions, although the details provided are very limited.
16. However, given the scale of the proposal, and the fact that the dwelling has only been recently converted, I am unconvinced that this is more than a theoretical possibility rather than being a genuine fall-back position. Consequently, this matter only carries very limited weight.
17. I acknowledge that the proposal is sympathetically designed and would provide a more sustainable alternative to continually moving to a new house for the appellant's family, and that it would improve the family's living space. Furthermore, the development would be beneficial to the local economy during the construction process. I also acknowledge that there have been no objections to the proposals from the occupiers of surrounding properties. Whilst these factors weigh in favour of the proposal, they provide only minor benefits.

Whether very special circumstances necessary to justify the proposal exist

18. The Framework indicates that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. The Framework states 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.
19. In this case, I have found that the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, and there would also be a loss of Green Belt openness. Whilst the level of harm to openness is only limited, there is nevertheless some harm.
20. In considering the other matters put before me, the suggested fallback position can only attract very limited positive weight. Furthermore, whilst the other

factors do provide some benefits, none of these amount to a convincing justification for the development before me.

21. In considering the substantial weight given to the Green Belt, to my mind, the benefits outlined above do not clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt. Therefore, I find that the other considerations in this case do not clearly outweigh the harm that I have identified. Consequently, the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development do not exist and the proposal would conflict with the Framework.

Other Matters

22. The appeal site is located close to a road bridge over Hillfoot Road which is a Grade II Listed Building. Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires me to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of this building. The site is also located close to the boundary of the Totley Conservation Area.
23. Given the nature of the proposal before me, and its position relative to the bridge and the Conservation Area, I am of the view that the setting of both of these heritage assets would be preserved. As such, the proposal would accord with the heritage aims of the Framework and the Development Plan.

Recommendation

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

Andreea Spataru

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

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

Chris Forrett

INSPECTOR