



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 August 2022 by Thomas Courtney BA(Hons) MA

Decision by Anne Jordan BA (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 3 October 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/M1595/D/21/3286865

1 Inglefield Road, Fobbing SS17 9HW

- 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 Sue Williams against the decision of Thurrock Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/01072/HHA, dated 20 June 2021, was refused by notice dated 25 August 2021.
 - The development proposed is a hipped to clipped hipped roof extension with front dormer, extension of rear dormer and front rooflight to be repositioned.
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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.

Procedural Matter

3. In the interest of accuracy and conciseness, the description of development in the header above is based on the decision notice.

Main Issues

4. The main issues 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 development plan policy;
 - The effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt;
 - The effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area; 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.
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Reasons for the Recommendation

Whether the development would be inappropriate development

5. The appeal property comprises a semi-detached one and a half storey dwelling situated amongst a small grouping of properties within the Green Belt. The property is L-shaped and features a hipped roof and existing rear and side extensions as well as a rear dormer window. A stable building also lies at the end of the rear garden.
6. Paragraph 149 of the Framework states that new development is inappropriate in the Green Belt unless it falls within the given list of exceptions. Exception (c) addresses 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. Policy PMD6 of the *Core Strategy and Policies for Management of Development 2015* document (the 'Core Strategy') is consistent with this as it also states that the extension of a building in the Green Belt must not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. It adds that, in the case of residential extensions, this means no larger than two reasonably sized rooms or any equivalent amount.
7. The Council states that the proposal, combined with previous extensions, would represent a disproportionate increase in floor area over the original building and would exceed the two reasonably sized room allowance referred to above. Whilst the proposed uplift in floorspace would be modest with the floor area only increasing by 14 sqm, it would not be proportionate in the context of the size of the original dwelling, which has already been substantially enlarged. Furthermore, the increase in width of the rear dormer and built form at first floor level of the dwelling would result in greater visual bulk. Therefore, I conclude that the scale of the extensions, taken in combination with previous extensions, would represent a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building.
8. On this basis, the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt and would conflict with Paragraph 149(c) of the Framework, as detailed above, and Policy PMD6 and CSSP4 of the Core Strategy which together seek to resist inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Openness

9. Openness is identified in the Framework as one of the Green Belt's essential characteristics. It has a spatial aspect as well as a visual aspect. The additional bulk and volume as a result of the enlargement of the rear dormer and alteration of the roof would materially impact on openness in a spatial aspect resulting in some limited harm to the Green Belt.
10. Furthermore, the increase in floorspace, volume of roofscape and first-floor bulk due to the enlarged width of the rear dormer means the proposal would also have a greater visual impact on the openness of the Green Belt. I acknowledge the proposed roof form would be similar to the adjoining semi-detached property. However, given the side boundaries of the site are quite open, the excessive size of the rear dormer would be visible to adjacent occupiers on Inglefield Road. In my view, the visual harm that would occur in this regard would be greater than any benefits derived from creating a more symmetrical rear elevation. For these reasons, the proposed development

would result in an adverse impact on both the spatial and visual openness of the Green Belt resulting in limited harm to the Green Belt.

Character and appearance

11. The proposed alteration of the roof form from a hipped roof to a clipped hipped roof and the integration of a front roof dormer would harmonise well with the adjacent dwelling, improving the symmetry and visual cohesion of the two properties. However, the proposed enlargement of the rear dormer would appear unacceptably bulky. Indeed, whilst the development would be finished with sympathetic materials, the resultant width and depth of the rear dormer would be excessive. The appellant states that its width would match the width of the neighbouring rear dormer, however, it would be significantly larger than the adjoining dormer, as it would sit forward of it, and so would appear much larger and more dominant.
12. Furthermore, the dormer would occupy more than three fifths of the height of the roof and more than three fifths of the width of the roof, thereby conflicting with the guidance set out within the Council's 'Residential Alterations & Extensions' Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The proportions of the resultant dwelling would thus not be well-balanced as a result of the enlarged dormer, which would be read as an incongruous addition.
13. I note that the appellant has submitted an application for an enlarged dormer through the Permitted Development (PD) process (ref. 21/01847/CLOPUD) and has provided the drawings as part of Appendix 2 to the appeal statement. Whilst the appellant contends that the proposal would be more visually coherent than the PD scheme, it would appear bulkier given it would be of greater depth.
14. The rear aspect and eastern side elevation of the resultant dwelling would be awkwardly proportioned, appearing top-heavy because of the enlarged rear dormer. The development would be out of scale with the surrounding built form and would therefore have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
15. Given the above, the proposed development would have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area. It would conflict with Policies CSTP22 and PMD2 of the Core Strategy, the Framework and the 'Residential Extensions and Alterations' (SPD) which together seek to ensure proposals are well-designed and do not harm their surrounding contexts.

Other considerations

16. The Framework highlights that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances, with substantial weight given to any harm to the Green Belt. 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.
17. In this regard, the appellant has drawn my attention to a fallback position through the PD process emphasising that an application for an enlarged dormer has been submitted (ref. 21/01847/CLOPUD). As mentioned above, the appellant opines that the rear dormer as proposed would be more in-keeping

with the host dwelling than the PD scheme and the impact on the Green Belt would be comparable. I appreciate the fact that the proposed rear dormer would appear more symmetrical and visually coherent. However, the prior approval scheme, if granted, would lead to a smaller increase in added bulk and volume and would have less of an impact on the spatial and visual openness of the Green Belt. I therefore attach only very limited weight to this consideration.

Planning Balance and Overall Conclusion

18. I consider that the development causes harm to the Green Belt by way of its inappropriateness and limited harm to its openness, and substantial weight must be given cumulatively to this harm. It would also have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area. I have taken into account the impact of the potential permitted development fallback position, to which I have attached very limited weight. On balance, the weight attributed to the other considerations in this case does not clearly outweigh the harm I have identified. I conclude therefore there are no very special circumstances to justify the development.

Recommendation

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

Thomas Courtney

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 the appeal is dismissed.

Anne Jordan

INSPECTOR