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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 October 2022 by M Long BA (Hons)

**Decision by K Taylor BSc (Hons) PGDip MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 01 November 2022**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/R3650/D/22/3294107**

**5 Smithbrook Cottages, Horsham Road, Alfold, Cranleigh GU6 8LH**

- 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 Adam Haydon against the decision of Waverley Borough Council.
  - The application Ref WA/2021/02656, dated 6 August 2021, was refused by notice dated 20 December 2021.
  - The development proposed is a two storey side extension, full height green oak atrium entrance hall to the front and full width single storey rear extension.
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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 appeal site is within the Green Belt and therefore the main issues are:
  - whether the proposal constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt for the purposes of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and development plan policies;
  - the effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt;
  - the character and appearance of the area; and,
  - would the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, be clearly outweighed by other considerations so as to amount to the very special circumstances required to justify the proposal.

### Reasons for the Recommendation

4. The appeal property is a two-storey dwelling with a ground-floor rear projection that is set within a large plot on the eastern side of Horsham Road. The appeal dwelling forms a semi-detached pair with No 6. The pair share a similar traditional appearance, however No 6 has a two-storey side extension with a front oak-framed porch and a wide single-storey extension to the rear. The surrounding area has a largely rural character formed from open fields and mature trees; there are a handful of nearby residential dwellings.

5. The proposed development includes a two-storey side extension that would be set down from the main ridge line and incorporate a flat roof. This extension would also incorporate a two-storey, glass-fronted atrium on the front elevation of the appeal dwelling. The proposal would also replace the existing rear projection with a single-storey extension that would cover the full width of the appeal dwelling and proposed two-storey extension.

*Whether there would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt*

6. Paragraph 147 of the Framework establishes that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 149 outlines that the construction of new buildings should be regarded as inappropriate, save for a number of exceptions. One of these 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.
7. The original building, taken by the Council to be as it existed in 1968, has a total floor area of approximately 113.89 metres squared. The proposal would increase the floor area to approximately 233.4 metres squared, representing an uplift of 104.9%. The appeal statement has referenced different figures which state the dwelling's current floor area is approximately 106.22 metres squared and the proposal would add 105.37 metres squared to create a property with a total floor area of 211.59 metres squared. Even taking these lower figures, the proposed mass would be a substantial addition to the dwelling that would close to double its total floor area. It would therefore be a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building.
8. It is suggested that loss of garden space, rather than total floor area, would be a more suitable means through which to determine harm to the Green Belt. The proposal is considered against Paragraph 149(c) of the Framework, which specifically requires the assessment to relate to any additions compared to the size of the original building. In this particular case, floor area presents a suitable measure to compare the sizes of the original and proposed dwelling.
9. Given the above, the proposal would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt. It would be contrary to the Waverley Borough Local Plan Part 1, adopted February 2018, specifically Policy RE2 which seeks to prevent inappropriate development in the Green Belt. There would be further conflict with retained Policy RD2 of the Waverley Borough Local Plan 2002, which seeks to resist extensions that result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original dwelling.

*Openness*

10. Paragraph 137 of the Framework sets out that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence.
11. The proposal would add considerable bulk to the appeal dwelling, which would encroach upon openness to some extent. However, there would be limited public views of the proposal and its domestic appearance would fit within the immediate residential context in which it would be seen. As such, the proposal would detract from the openness of the Green Belt, albeit, for the above reasons, the effect would be modest.

### *Character and Appearance*

12. The flat roof of the two-storey side extension would have an unsympathetic design that would be at odds with the existing roof of the appeal dwelling and the roof shape of the corresponding side extension at No 6. While the set down from the main ridge line would reflect the neighbouring side extension and have a rebalancing effect on the semi-detached pair, this would not mitigate the overall harm from the flat roof design.
13. The significant height of the proposed atrium, in combination with the large amount of glazing, would appear overly dominant on the front elevation. While it has been indicated the design relates to the oak-framed porch at No 6, its significantly larger scale would not maintain a sense of balance between the pair. The atrium would allow light to the interior of the property, however this is a private benefit that would not outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of this area. Moreover, there is not sufficient evidence to suggest that satisfactory light could not be provided through an alternative design.
14. My attention has been directed to a number of approved schemes in the wider area which introduce contemporary designs and materials to traditional-style properties<sup>1</sup>. While the full details of these cases are not before me, it appears there are a number of differences to the appeal scheme, for instance, contemporary features have been incorporated across neighbouring properties or both dwellings in a semi-detached pair. In this instance, the atrium would be viewed in the immediate context of No 6, which retains its traditional appearance, and so would have an unbalancing and discordant appearance.
15. The site is located in an Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV). Harm has been identified to the character and appearance of the semi-detached pair. However, the relatively limited scale of the proposed extensions, and that it would be viewed in a domestic context, close to the extended No. 6, it would not result in harm to the landscape character of the AGLV.
16. As such, the proposed development would result in harm to the character and appearance of the semi-detached pair. It would conflict with retained Policy D4 of the Waverley Borough Local Plan 2002 which seeks to ensure development is appropriate to the site in terms of its form and appearance, as well as retained Policy D1 which seeks to prevent development that harms the visual character of a locality. It would also conflict with the Waverley Borough Local Plan Part 1, specifically Policy TD1 which seeks to ensure new development responds to the distinctive local character of an area. The Council have mentioned conflict with Policy RE3, which seeks to ensure development in the AGLV respects the distinctive character of the landscape. While no harm is identified against this Policy, this lack of harm would not mitigate the harm found above.

### *Other Considerations*

17. The proposed extensions would, to some extent, result in a rebalancing of the semi-detached pair. However, the two-storey atrium feature and side extension's flat roof would be incongruous additions that would detract from the appearance of the neighbouring dwelling. As such, the overall design of the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the properties and so I give the potential rebalancing effect limited weight.

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<sup>1</sup> LPA Ref: WA/2012/1094, WA/2011/1304 and 1 and 2 Chestnut Cottages, Chestnut Way, Bramley.

18. The proposal would provide additional accommodation that would meet the needs of the appellant and their family, in particular by providing space for home working. However, there is not sufficient evidence before me to suggest that the appeal scheme is the only way these needs could be met and that similar outcomes could not be provided through a scheme that does not conflict with the aims of the Framework. I therefore give this matter limited weight.
19. There would be economic benefits associated with the construction of the proposed development, such as providing work to local builders. Also, the proposal would include the installation of a heat source pump and a sewage plant to improve the sustainability of the scheme. Nevertheless, these benefits carry modest positive weight.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

20. The proposal constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt which is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt. The limited harm to openness and the harm to the character and appearance of the area are also added to this harm. Paragraph 148 of the Framework specifies 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 is clearly outweighed by other considerations. Taken together, the other considerations do not carry significant positive weight and so do not clearly outweigh the harm identified. As such, the very special circumstances that would be needed to justify the proposal do not exist.
21. The proposed development would not accord with the development plan, when considered as a whole. Based on the above, and having regard to all matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

*M Long*

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

### **Inspector's Decision**

22. 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