



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 October 2022

by H Miles BA(hons), MA, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 08 November 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/D3640/D/22/3294127

Pinelands, Westwood Road, Windlesham GU20 6LS

- 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 Linda Mufti against the decision of Surrey Heath Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20/0813/FFU, dated 11 September 2020, was refused by notice dated 14 December 2021.
 - The development proposed is ground and first floor extensions.
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Decision

1. This appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have taken the address from the appeal form and decision notice, which more accurately describes the site address than the reference to 'Pinewoods' on the submitted application form.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - Whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the Framework and any relevant development plan policies.
 - The effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt.
 - The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area
 - Whether any harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, would be clearly outweighed by other considerations, so as to amount to the very special circumstances required to justify the proposal.

Reasons

Whether the proposal would be inappropriate development

4. The National Planning Policy Framework July 2021 (the Framework) sets out that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; and the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. The Framework goes on to state that inappropriate development is harmful to the Green Belt. The construction of new buildings in the Green Belt should be regarded as inappropriate, and thus should be approved only if very special circumstances

exist, unless they come within one of the categories in the closed list of exceptions in paragraph 149 of the Framework.

5. Of relevance to this appeal is that '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' is listed as an exception in paragraph 149c.
6. Pinelands has previously been extended, and both the Council's and Appellant's calculations estimate this to be by around 123sqm with extensions at ground and first floor, representing a 114% increase in floorspace from the original floor area.
7. The extensions proposed as part of this appeal would result in a large two storey property with crown roof above across almost the full extent of the existing footprint. It is put to me that the proposed development would result in an increase of around 90sqm, which includes an open sided entrance porch. The proposed development would not increase the ridge height or footprint. Nevertheless, this resultant development would be an increase of close to 200% from the original floor area.
8. It is put to me that the resultant dwelling would be a similar scale to other dwellings in the locality, and retains its front elevation unchanged and would be proportionate to the whole site. However, the Framework is clear that to meet exception c of paragraph 149 it is the size of any extension relative to the original building that is relevant. This considerable increase in bulk and scale would result in overly large, disproportionate additions relative to the size of the original building.
9. Therefore, for the reasons described above, the proposed development would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt in the terms of the Framework.

Openness

10. Openness has both spatial and visual dimensions. The proposal would introduce first floor development where currently there is none, and therefore there would be harm to spatial openness. The proposed development would also be visible in glimpsed views from the road, albeit these would be limited due to the lack of footpath and the boundary treatment. Nevertheless, it would also be likely to be seen in private views from the property opposite. Therefore, in terms of visual intrusion, the proposed development would have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than existing.
11. Consequently, for the reasons above, the proposed development would be harmful to the openness of the Green Belt. Therefore, it would be contrary to the Framework.

Character and Appearance

12. Westwood Road is characterised by substantial properties in generous grounds. In this area the design of dwellings is varied, however those closest to Pinelands appear to be traditional in appearance with pitched roofs.
13. Pinelands is a part single, part two storey building set in substantial grounds. The front elevation is a wide two storey element, although its two storey height is limited in its depth, and it has a traditional pitched roof. The remainder of the property appears as mainly single storey with two gable ends to the rear

elevation. There are also some subservient additions at roof level above. This results in the existing pitched roofs being clearly evident and an attractive part of the building's appearance.

14. The proposed development would convert the rear part of the house to two storeys, with a significant increase in bulk at first floor level. It would not increase the height above the existing ridge height but would create a crown roof above the extended part of the property.
15. These alterations would harmfully erode the traditional pitched roofed appearance of the host dwelling. The prominent and sizable area of flat roof would also harm the modest character and traditional features of Pinelands and would emphasise the notable increase in scale. The host dwelling would remain smaller than other buildings in the surrounding area. However, taking into account the varied styles and appearances of the nearby buildings, this does not overcome the harm to the host dwelling. As set out above, these extensions would be partially visible from the road and from nearby properties and as such this harm would be experienced.
16. Therefore, the proposed development would be contrary to Policy DM9 and CP2 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2011-2028 (2012) and paragraph 130 of the Framework which together seek high quality design that respects and enhances the local character, and urban environment amongst other things. As well as the advice in principles 7.5, 10.1 and 10.5 of the Surrey Heath Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2017 which provide further detail that roof forms should not diverge from the prevailing character, roof alterations should be subservient and that extensions should be subordinate to and consistent with the original building.

Other considerations

17. The extension would provide enlarged and improved living accommodation for the occupiers. However, this benefit would mainly be private and therefore I afford this minimal weight. It would also create local employment during construction, although due to the size of the proposed development any benefits in this regard would be limited in scale and would be temporary.

Green Belt Balance

18. The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. Paragraph 148 of the Framework states that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt. I have found harm to the Green Belt by reason of the proposed development's inappropriateness and effect on openness. As well as the public and permanent harm to the character and appearance of the area. These issues are not outweighed by the considerations advanced by the appellant. Therefore, the other considerations in this case, even when considered together, do not clearly outweigh the harm that I have identified.
19. The very special circumstances necessary to justify the development therefore do not exist. Consequently, the proposed development would conflict with paragraph 148 of the Framework the aims of which are set out above.

Other Matters

20. I note that the appellant was not satisfied with the length of time that it took between submission and the date of the Council's decision. However, this does

not affect the planning merits of the case and as such it does not alter my decision.

Conclusion

21. The proposal would not accord with the development plan and there are no other considerations, including the provisions of the Framework, to indicate that the appeal should be determined otherwise. Therefore, for the reasons given above, I conclude that this appeal should be dismissed.

H Miles

INSPECTOR

