



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 January 2023

by S Edwards BA MA TCP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 February 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/D1265/W/22/3301008

Land adjacent to Little Orchard, Broadmoor Road, Corfe Mullen BH21 3RB

- 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 and Mrs M and J Saunders against the decision of Dorset Council.
 - The application Ref P/FUL/2021/05114, dated 26 November 2021, was refused by notice dated 30 May 2022.
 - The development proposed is erect a stable block.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The building which the appellant proposes to use as a stable block has been to a large extent completed, and I have therefore considered the appeal on the basis that planning permission is being sought retrospectively.
3. The Council's reason for refusal does not refer to any Green Belt development plan policies. I shall proceed on the same basis.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are:
 - Whether the appeal scheme constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt, having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and any relevant development plan policies; and
 - If found to be inappropriate development, whether the harm, by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, are clearly outweighed by other considerations, so as to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify the appeal development.

Reasons

Whether inappropriate development

5. Located within the South East Dorset Green Belt, the appeal site lies within a rural area, which is predominantly characterised by scattered residential development and agricultural buildings and has a pleasant spacious and open feel. The site comprises a timber framed and clad single storey structure located within proximity to the road frontage, as well as a large hardstanding area.

6. The Framework stresses that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 149 of the Framework adds that the construction of new buildings should be regarded as inappropriate development in the Green Belt, except in a restricted number of circumstances. These include the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, etc, but provided that the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.
7. The appeal building was originally constructed to be used as an office, though I have been presented with no evidence suggesting that the structure or the associated hardstanding area benefit from planning permission. The appellants are now proposing to alter the building to enable its use as a stable block for their horses. The Planning Policy Statement indicates that the adjoining paddock, which is owned by the appellants, is and has historically been in use for the grazing and exercising of horses.
8. This was not evident at the time of my site visit, notably because the presence of a seating area suggests that the field may have been used for ancillary residential purposes, rather than a paddock. I also share the concerns raised by the Council regarding the suitability of the appeal building for horse stabling, particularly as it is surrounded by hardstanding and separated from the adjacent field by fencing.
9. Notwithstanding the above, it is accepted that the construction of a stable block can be regarded as a facility for outdoor recreation for the purposes of paragraph 149 b) of the Framework. However, for the reasons detailed above, it is my view that, having regard to the available evidence, the facility is not appropriate for the intended purpose.
10. Furthermore, and whilst the building may be to some extent screened by existing vegetation, it nevertheless remains visible within the street scene, particularly in winter months. The appeal building has replaced a smaller structure and, by virtue of its siting and size, this has resulted in a loss of openness, both in visual and in spatial terms, despite being located within proximity to Little Orchard and other residential properties or agricultural buildings. The construction of an additional built form in this location also fails to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, contrary to one of the purposes of including land in the Green Belt.
11. As it fails to preserve the openness of the Green Belt and conflicts with one of the purposes of including land within it, the appeal scheme does not fall within the exception envisaged by paragraph 149 b) of the Framework. It therefore represents inappropriate development in the Green Belt, contrary to Section 13 of the Framework.

Other considerations

12. The Framework stresses 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.

13. The appellants' submissions indicate that locating the stable block elsewhere could result in encroachment into the Green Belt and reduce its openness, though little information has been presented regarding possible alternatives to the development subject to this appeal. Accordingly, very limited weight has been ascribed to this argument.
14. My attention has also been drawn to the various consents which appear to have been approved at Home Farm Cottages, within proximity to the appeal site. However, I do not have the full details of the circumstances that led to these approvals and cannot therefore be certain that they represent a direct parallel to the appeal development.

Planning Balance

15. The appeal scheme constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt, as it reduces openness and conflicts with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. Substantial weight is ascribed to the adverse effect which the development is causing to the Green Belt. These considerations weigh heavily against the scheme subject to this appeal.
16. When taken individually or cumulatively, the other considerations advanced in support of the appeal do not clearly outweigh the harm caused to the Green Belt. Consequently, the very special circumstances that are necessary to justify inappropriate development in the Green Belt do not exist. This has therefore no bearing on my consideration of the appeal.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons detailed above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

S Edwards

INSPECTOR