



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 August 2023

by K Lancaster BA (hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27th October 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/V4250/D/23/3321819

297 Crankwood Road, Abram, Wigan, WN2 5YB

- 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 Martin Conroy against the decision of Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref A/22/94342/RET, dated 2 September 2022, was refused by notice dated 18 April 2023.
 - The development proposed is described as a "garden shed bicycle storage, turbo trainer (indoor bike apparatus), DIY use, router table, table saw, drill press, band saw."
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. At my site visit I observed that the development had commenced and was substantially complete. However, I noted some differences between the submitted plans and the development which had been constructed, including the addition of rooflights. For the avoidance of doubt, I have therefore determined the appeal on the basis of the submitted plans.

Main Issues

3. The main issues of the appeal are:
 - Whether the development would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and any relevant development plan policies;
 - The effect of the development on the openness of the Green Belt;
 - The effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area; and
 - Whether the 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

4. The appeal site, 297 Crankwood Road, is a two-storey semi-detached dwelling. It has a small, paved driveway to the front, with access to its rear garden located to the side of the property. The appeal site is located at the end of a row of semi-detached houses that front onto Crankwood Road. The majority of

the dwellings on this side of Crankwood Road are two storeys in height and are of brick construction. They are sited on a well-defined building line, set back from the pavement behind landscaped front gardens. Many of the neighbouring properties have been altered or extended and have outbuildings to the side of rear.

5. The appeal site which is located within the Green Belt has a semi-rural feel. Open countryside, in the form of agricultural fields, are located to the rear of these properties. The appeal site is also bordered to the east by an agricultural field.
6. This appeal relates to 'Shed A', which is the larger of three outbuildings located in the rear garden. The building has a dual-pitched roof and is finished in timber cladding. It has four large window openings on its eastern elevation which overlook the adjoining field, a further three in the western elevation, as well as two rooflights. The building measures approximately 10.6 metres in length and runs along the eastern boundary of the site, with a ridge height of approximately 3.6 metres. The overall volume of the building is 235 cubic metres.

Whether Inappropriate Development

7. Paragraph 147 of the Framework states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence.
8. Paragraph 149 of the Framework regards the development of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. However, it lists some exceptions to this, including Paragraph 149(c) which relates to 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 CP8 also states that development within the Green Belt will only be allowed in accordance with national planning policy.
9. My assessment therefore requires me to consider whether the appeal development would, when taken in combination with any previous additions to the original building, result in a disproportionate addition in terms of its size. This exercise does not require me to consider the visual impact of the development or any effect on openness at this stage.
10. The Framework does not provide a definition of 'disproportionate additions' and therefore an assessment of whether a proposal would amount to a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building is a matter of planning judgement.
11. I have not been provided any evidence to demonstrate the extent of the original dwelling house, including what outbuildings existed on 1 July 1948. However, it is clear from the planning history of the site and my observations during my site visit that the original dwelling has already been extended, with the addition of a large conservatory to the rear.
12. Whilst this appeal relates only to 'Shed A', the submitted plans also show that there are two further sheds located in the rear garden. There is no evidence that these sheds existed before July 1948. However, a Lawful Development

Certificate¹ has recently been granted in respect of these two buildings. The Council found that these buildings constituted permitted development under Schedule 2, Part 1, Class E of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 as amended.

13. I therefore find that the length, height, and volume of the development together with the existing rear conservatory extension and other outbuildings results in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building, which is contrary to Paragraph 149(c) of the Framework.
14. For these reasons, the proposed development represents inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Openness

15. The Framework identifies that the fundamental aim of the Green Belt is to prevent urban sprawl and keep land permanently open. The openness of the Green Belt has both spatial and visual dimensions.
16. The outbuilding is highly visible in the surrounding area and appears larger in volume than other outbuildings observed in the local area, as well as in height and length. The outbuilding together with the other buildings and the conservatory, results in a combination of structures which affects both the visual and spatial openness of the Green Belt.
17. The position and size of the building serves to enclose the rear garden area, with very little of the original curtilage retained as open garden. The presence of two further outbuildings on the opposite boundary of the site, which are of a similar size, scale and design further contributes to this sense of enclosure.
18. For the reasons above, the outbuilding results in both spatial and visual harm to the openness of the Green Belt and therefore does not preserve the openness of the Green Belt contrary to the fundamental aim of the Framework.

Character and Appearance

19. The Council's House Extensions Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2019 (SPD) provides guidance on the position of outbuildings, advising that they should be sensitively located, in locations that do not have an adverse impact on the visual amenity of an area, especially the appearance of the streetscene. The guidance advises that they should also complement the original house in terms of scale and design.
20. The location of the building on the eastern boundary of the appeal site means that even though the building is single storey, it is highly visible as you approach from the East and from the road. There are more limited views of the building to the West as it is largely screened by intervening the development. Nevertheless, the building is a visually prominent addition to the area.
21. The length of the building, together with the design and height of the development above the boundary fence results in an incongruous addition that fails to have regard to the scale and layout of the host property and surrounding area, as such, the building is not viewed as a sympathetic or high-quality addition to the host property.

¹ Planning Application Ref: A/22/94294/LUCE

22. Therefore, I conclude that by virtue of its location, scale and size the development harms the character and appearance of the area. The development is therefore contrary to Policies CP10 and CP17 of the Wigan Local Plan Core Strategy 2013 (WLP), which require, amongst other things, development to respect and acknowledge the character and identity of the borough and its locality, in terms of the materials, siting, size, scale and details used and to integrate effectively with its surroundings.

Other Considerations

23. Paragraph 148 of the Framework states that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt. It establishes that very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
24. The development provides the appellant with additional domestic storage which would be a personal benefit. I give this benefit limited weight in favour of the development, however it does not outweigh the substantial weight that I am required to give to any harm to the Green Belt and any other harm resulting from the proposal, which in this case is harm to the character and appearance of the area.
25. Consequently, very special circumstances to justify the development do not exist.

Green Belt Balance & Conclusion

26. The development therefore conflicts with Policy CP8 of the WLP which seeks to protect the Green Belt and Policies CP10 and CP17 of the WLP, which require, amongst other things, development to have regard to the scale, design, layout, and materials of the surrounding and existing buildings and to protect the general amenity of an area.
27. For the reasons given, the proposal would therefore not accord with the development plan when taken as a whole. There are no material considerations of sufficient weight that indicate the appeal should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

K Lancaster

INSPECTOR