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# Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 January 2024

**by M Ollerenshaw BSc (Hons) MTPI MRTPI**

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

**Decision date: 25 January 2024**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/W4705/D/23/3331535**

**43 Beaconsfield Road, Bradford BD14 6LQ**

- 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 Lambert against the decision of City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council.
  - The application Ref 23/01981/HOU, dated 5 June 2023, was refused by notice dated 1 August 2023.
  - The development proposed is described on the application form as 'proposed extensions and alterations to dwelling'.
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## Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

## Preliminary Matters

2. The Government published a revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) in December 2023. Those parts of the Framework most relevant to this appeal have not been significantly amended. Therefore, I am satisfied that there is no requirement to seek further submissions from the main parties on the revised Framework.

## Main Issues

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

## Reasons

*Whether inappropriate development*

4. The appeal site relates to a detached dormer bungalow situated within a large plot at the southern end of Beaconsfield Road within the Green Belt. The property is elevated above the road and includes a detached outbuilding,

- driveway and garden to the front and a larger garden to the rear and the eastern side of the dwelling. The site is surrounded by open land, including a golf course, to the east, south and west.
5. The appeal scheme includes an increase to the roof height of the property to create additional living accommodation at first floor level with dormers to the front, sides and rear, a new side extension in place of the existing, and alterations to the existing rear extension to include a balcony above.
  6. Although the Council's reason for refusal relating to the Green Belt refers to a conflict with the adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document (CS), I have not been referred to any specific policies in this regard. The Council has given greater weight to the provisions of the Framework in this instance, and I have no reason to disagree.
  7. Paragraph 154 of the Framework states that new buildings are inappropriate in the Green Belt unless they fall within the given list of exceptions. Under exception c) of that paragraph an extension to a building will not be inappropriate provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. The Framework does not specify what might be a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building. However, the Council's Householder Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) states that, where proposals result in an addition of over 30% of the original cubic volume, they are likely to be considered disproportionate.
  8. The appellants' figures indicate that the proposal would increase the volume of the existing building by 27%. However, those calculations do not take into account the previous extensions to the side and rear of the original building. The evidence before me indicates that the appeal proposal in addition to the previous extensions would represent a volume increase of over 30%, contrary to the guidance contained in the SPD.
  9. Notwithstanding this, whether an extension would be disproportionate is also influenced by other factors such as the relationship in terms of footprint, scale, form and massing. Whilst the proposal would not increase the footprint of the building, the new hipped roof, with associated increase in eaves and ridge height across the whole roof, would be substantial. Together with the addition of several new dormers, an enlarged side extension and a new front canopy, the result would be a significant increase in the scale and massing of the dwelling compared to the original. Therefore, the proposal would represent a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building.
  10. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposal would result in a disproportionate addition to the original building and would therefore be inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Such development is, by definition, harmful and is contrary to the guidance in paragraphs 152 and 154 of the Framework and the SPD. The resultant harm should be given substantial weight in determining the appeal.

### *Openness*

11. The Framework states that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence. The proposed development, in particular the increased eaves and ridge height, would add considerable bulk to the dwelling. The development would be clearly visible from the adjacent open land,

including the golf course, and from Beaconsfield Road and Edgar Street. Therefore, it would result in some loss of visual openness. This would be harm in addition to that caused by the inappropriateness of the proposal.

12. The Council consider that the proposal would also result in encroachment of the countryside, thus conflicting with the purposes of the Green Belt. However, given that the proposal would be contained within the footprint of the existing building, I find no conflict with respect to the Green Belt purposes referred to in paragraph 143 of the Framework.

#### *Character and appearance*

13. Although the host property has a relatively large footprint and is elevated above road level, due to its modest height it is not a prominent feature of the street scene. An established hedge to the front of the property partially screens it from Beaconsfield Road and Edgar Street. The property comprises a hipped roof, which gives the building a simple and uncomplicated appearance, albeit there are a small number of rooflights and a rear dormer. Consequently, it sits comfortably with its surroundings, including the adjacent open land.
14. The raised height of the building and the new dormers would make the building more prominent from Beaconsfield Road and Edgar Street, and from the surrounding open land. Given that the extension above the building would span the entire roof and be of substantial height, the proposal would be an excessively bulky and dominant addition, which would therefore fail to be subservient to the host property.
15. In addition, the proposed dormers to front, rear and each side of the roof would add further bulk to the new roof structure. Although I observed during my site visit that dormers are not an uncommon addition to properties within the adjacent residential streets, the number of dormers proposed as part of the scheme, and their position at eaves level, would detract from the simple character and appearance of the existing building.
16. For these reasons, I consider that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area. It would conflict with Policies DS1 and DS3 of the CS which seek, amongst other things, to ensure that development achieves good design and contributes to the character of the area. I also find that the proposal would conflict with the guidance contained in the Council's SPD, which seeks similar aims.

#### *Other considerations*

17. The Framework is clear that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. 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.
18. The appellants consider that the Green Belt boundary has been arbitrarily drawn in this location and that the appeal site should not logically be within it. However, the property sits within a spacious plot and is surrounded by green open space on three sides. It is clearly separated from the built-up residential area to the north and is distinct in terms of its setting and appearance. The inclusion of the appeal site within the Green Belt is therefore consistent with its

spacious and rural character. Consequently, my conclusion that the proposal constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt is unaltered.

19. The appellants refer to permitted development rights for the erection of extensions to the dwelling, and freestanding buildings within its curtilage, that would have a greater impact on the Green Belt than the appeal scheme. However, I have not been presented with details of any alternative schemes or certificates of lawfulness to enable me to compare such alternatives to the appeal proposal. There is little evidence before me to indicate that there is a realistic prospect of such alternative developments being constructed if the appeal is dismissed. I therefore give very little weight to this consideration.
20. The proposal would provide enlarged accommodation for the occupants of the dwelling. However, that could be said of many domestic extensions and therefore I attach limited weight to this factor.
21. I note the Council has found that the proposal would not be harmful to the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers. Based on what I have seen and read, I have no reason to disagree with that assessment. However, the absence of harm in respect of this matter is effectively neutral rather than weighing in favour of the appeal proposal.

### **Conclusion**

22. I have found that the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt. It would also harm the openness of the Green Belt and the character and appearance of the property and the surrounding area. I have given only limited weight to the other considerations in favour of the proposal, and conclude that, taken together, they do not clearly outweigh the harm that the proposal would cause. Consequently, the very special circumstances do not exist to justify inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
23. For the above reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

*M Ollerenshaw*

INSPECTOR