



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 January 2024

by J Davis BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 07 February 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/M3645/D/23/3326653

32 Stoneleigh Road, Limpsfield, Surrey, RH8 0TR

- 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 & Mrs Prince against the decision of Tandridge District Council.
 - The application Ref TA/2023/288, dated 7 March 2023, was refused by notice dated 15 May 2023.
 - The development proposed is first floor rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was revised in December 2023. As the changes do not materially affect the main issues in this case, the parties have not been invited to make further comments. Where reference is made to the Framework in this decision, the paragraph numbers are those that appear in the latest version.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - Whether the proposed development constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (the Framework) and any relevant development plan policies; and
 - The effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The appeal concerns a two-storey, semi-detached dwelling located in a row of houses of a similar character and appearance. The site is within the Green Belt.
5. The Framework states that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. This is subject to the exceptions listed in the Framework which include at paragraph 154 (c) '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'.

6. Policies DP10 and DP13 of the Tandridge District Local Plan Part 2: Detailed Policies 2014-2029 (adopted 2014) (LPP2) set out similar provisions. For the purposes of Policy DP13, in the case of an extension or alteration to an existing dwelling, the 'original building' is taken to be the dwelling as it existed on 31 December 1968 or, if constructed after 1968, as it was built originally. The Framework defines the date of an 'original building' as 1 July 1948, or as originally built if constructed after that date. Nevertheless, the LPP2 policies are broadly consistent with the Framework.
7. The Framework does not define what constitutes a disproportionate addition. The reasoned justification to Policy DP13 states that the Council will adopt a pragmatic approach in determining what constitutes a disproportionate addition and that each proposal will be judged on its individual merits, taking into account the size of the original building, the bulk, height, mass and prominence of the extension and its impact on the openness of the Green Belt.
8. The Council states that mathematically and as a guide, proposals resulting in a 40% volume increase above that of the original building are likely to be supported subject to a visual assessment. However, this figure does not appear in any of the policies provided to me, or in their supporting text. I therefore consider that the mathematical percentage increase alone should not be the overriding factor in determining whether the proposed extension would represent a disproportionate addition.
9. The dwelling has previously been extended and the Council calculates that the proposed extension would result in the volume of the dwelling being extended over and above the 'original building' by about 48%. This figure is not disputed by the appellants. The Council also acknowledges that the scheme has been reduced since the refusal of previous applications on the site, including that proposed under application ref. 2021/1692 which I note was determined at appeal¹. Whilst this proposal was dismissed at appeal for other reasons, the Inspector concluded that the proposed extensions would not constitute disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original dwelling.
10. The proposed rear extension would be sited above part of an existing single storey rear extension. It would have a depth of 2.82m and a width of about 3m and accordingly, would not dominate the rear elevation of the dwelling. The extension would have a 'crown' roof, with the top of the roof being only slightly higher than the eaves height of the existing dwelling. Given its limited scale and height, the extension would not be particularly apparent when viewed externally and would sit comfortably within the constraints of the site.
11. In applying a pragmatic approach and judging the proposal on its individual merits in accordance with Policy DP13, I consider that the proposed extension would be a proportionate and subordinate addition to the host dwelling. I am therefore satisfied that the proposed extension, together with the previous additions to the dwelling, would not amount to disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.
12. As such, I consider that the proposed extension would not be inappropriate development within the Green Belt and would benefit from the exception in paragraph 154 (c) of the Framework. Consequently, there would be no conflict with Policy DP10 and DP13 of the LLP2.

¹ Appeal ref. APP/M3645/D/22/3292354

Character and appearance

13. The proposed extension would be sited above part of an existing single rear extension and I have already concluded above that it would be subordinate in size and scale to the existing dwelling.
14. The host dwelling, along with the adjoining semi, has a simple hipped roof form. The eaves height of the extension would match that of the existing dwelling. However, the extension would have a flat-topped low 'crown' roof, with a valley running between it and the remainder of the existing roof of the dwelling such that it would sit independent of it. While the extension would be constructed in matching materials, it would not be well integrated with the host dwelling, particularly in terms of its roof form. Instead, it would appear as an incongruous 'box like' addition which, due to its lack of integration, would not appear as a harmonious addition and would be harmful to the original character and appearance of the existing dwelling. I acknowledge that the proposed extension would not be prominently located in relation to the street scene but it would be visible from adjoining gardens where its inharmonious design and appearance would be apparent.
15. I note the presence of other extensions to dwellings in the immediate area, including the dormer at No 28 Stoneleigh Road. However, these extensions are somewhat different to the appeal proposal and I therefore place little weight on these examples.
16. I therefore conclude that the proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and the surrounding area. Accordingly, it would be contrary to Policy CP18 of the Tandridge District Core Strategy (adopted 15 October 2008); Policy DP7 of the LPP2 and Policy LNP3 of the Limpsfield Neighbourhood Plan (2019) (NP). Together these policies expect new development to be of a high-quality design which reflects and respects the existing character, setting and local context.
17. The Council also refer to Policy LNP5 of the NP which relates to the impact of proposals on the wider landscape. As the proposed extension would not be readily visible in the wider landscape, there would be no conflict with Policy LNP5.

Other Matters

18. I acknowledge that the proposal would result in improved living conditions for the appellant's and their family. However, this consideration does not outweigh the harm that I have identified above.

Conclusion

19. For the above reasons I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

J Davis

INSPECTOR