



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 April 2024

by Lynne Evans BA MA MRTPI MRICS

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 07 May 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/L3625/D/23/3333919

Cherry Tree Farm, Smalls Hill Road, Horley RH6 0HR

- 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 Davidson against the decision of Reigate & Banstead Borough Council.
 - The application Ref: 23/01446/HHOLD dated 13 July 2023, was refused by notice dated 7 September 2023.
 - The development proposed is a two storey side and single storey rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposed extension would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt and, if so, whether other considerations clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt, by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, so as to amount to 'very special circumstances'.

Reasons

Whether inappropriate development

3. The appeal property is a detached property together with a number of outbuildings set within a large plot of land, on the western side of Smalls Hill Road. It lies within the countryside and within the Green Belt.
4. The proposed development is a two-storey side extension to the main house together with a single storey rear extension, both of which would follow the design style of the existing house.
5. Paragraph 154 of the Framework sets out that the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt is inappropriate except for a limited number of exceptions including the extension or alteration of a building providing that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. The term disproportionate is not further defined.
6. The Council has referred to Policy NHE5 of the Reigate and Banstead Development Management Plan 2019 (DM Plan) which sets out a criteria based approach to development within the Green Belt, including at criterion d that the extensions would not be disproportionate to the original building taking into account of a range of factors, including any additional floor area, massing and bulk, height and visual prominence.

7. The Council has calculated the original floorspace on the basis of the floorplans submitted in 1986 under the Council's Ref: 86/08170/F to rebuild the house after a fire. This would accord with the definition of the original building as set out under criterion d i of Policy NHE5. The planning history as set out by the Council indicates a number of subsequent extensions have been permitted to the house as well as a number of outbuildings around the site, some of which, both in their siting and their use, are closely related to the main house.
8. The Council has calculated that the proposed extension together with previous additions would result in an increase in floorspace of some 54% over the original size of the house. This has taken into account some but not all of the outbuildings which exist on the site. I have not been provided with detailed calculations by either the Appellants or the Council and the Appellants have not put forward any alternative calculations or sought to contest the figures presented by the Council.
9. In addition to the significant uplift in floorspace compared with the original dwelling, the two-storey extension would also result in additional bulk and massing by increasing the width of the main house including at roof level. The two-storey extension would also come closer to the detached pool side building and so would reduce the open spacing between the main house and this ancillary building.
10. Taking all these factors into account, and having regard to Policy NHE5 and the Framework, it is my view that the proposed extension would be a disproportionate addition to the original house and would therefore be inappropriate development. The extension would also harm the openness of the Green Belt, in both spatial and visual terms, through the introduction of new built form.

Other considerations

11. The Appellants have referred to much larger properties and developments in the vicinity compared with the appeal property. However, the policy consideration at both a national and local level relates to extensions and alterations to the individual property under assessment rather than a comparison with the size and scale of surrounding properties. This does not therefore add weight in support of the proposal.
12. The proposed extension would improve the standard of accommodation at the appeal dwelling. However, given the scale and range of the accommodation as existing this would only provide limited weight in support of the proposals.
13. Other than in respect of Green Belt grounds, there are no objections to the proposed extension. The design approach would respect the existing design of the main dwelling, but a high standard of design approach is to be expected in accordance with national and local plan policies. Therefore, the absence of any other harm does not provide weight in favour of the proposal but is neutral in my overall assessment.
14. There would be no conflict with the other criteria under Policy NHE5 of the DM Plan (criteria a, b and c) but these are all requirements, and no weight is therefore added to the proposal as a result of meeting these first three criteria.

Conclusion

15. The proposal would be inappropriate development within the Green Belt and would harm openness. In accordance with the Framework, substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt. Even taken together, the other considerations put forward provide little support for the scheme. Therefore, they do not outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and 'very special circumstances' do not exist. Therefore, the proposed extension would not accord with the development plan and there are no other material considerations to outweigh that finding.
16. For the reasons given above, the appeal should not succeed.

L J Evans

INSPECTOR