



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 July 2024

by S. Hartley BA (Hons) Dist.TP (Manc), DMS, MRTPI, MRICS

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 2 August 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/P2365/D/24/3343117

Moss Cottages, Plough Lane. Lathom, Lancashire L40 6JL

- 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 Philip Gilbert against the decision of West Lancashire Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 23/1119/FUL.
 - The development proposed is a single storey detached garage/store.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The appeal property is located within the Green Belt.
3. The main issues are therefore (i) whether the proposed extension is inappropriate development within the Green Belt including its impact upon openness and (ii) if the proposal is inappropriate development in the Green Belt, whether the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations so as to amount to very special circumstances to justify development.

Reasons

Whether inappropriate development

4. Paragraph 152 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (the Framework) states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt, and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 154 makes it clear that, other than in specified circumstances, new buildings are inappropriate development. One of the exceptions to this is paragraph 154(c) which permits 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.
5. Policy GN1 of the West Lancashire Local Plan 2013 (LP) states that development proposals will be assessed against national policy and any relevant local plan policies.
6. The Council's Policy GB4 of its Green Belt Supplementary Planning Document 2015 (SPD) states that a proposal for an extension to an existing building within the Green Belt should not have a total volume, together with any previous extensions, alterations and non-original outbuildings, of more than 40% above the volume of the original building.

7. The appellant has submitted a volume comparison which indicates that previous extensions and the proposed outbuilding would amount to an 82.2% increase to the original building.
8. The proposed garage would be positioned alongside the dwellinghouse. In this case, owing to its position and relationship with the dwellinghouse, and use as a domestic garage, I find that it would be experienced as being a normal domestic adjunct, and as such, would be an extension to the existing dwellinghouse on the site.
9. Therefore, I conclude that the volume increase of the proposed development over that of the original building is such as to amount to inappropriate development in the Green Belt, contrary to LP policy GB4 and the Framework. This is a matter to which I afford substantial adverse weight in decision making terms.

Effect upon the openness of the Green Belt

10. Paragraph 142 of the Framework states that '*the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence*'.
11. The appeal proposal would be set back from the access road but is nevertheless visible from it. In both spatial and visual terms, the proposed development would reduce the openness of the Green Belt to a limited extent.
12. Overall, I find that there would be limited harm caused to the openness of the Green Belt.

Character and appearance

13. The proposed garage/store would be positioned to the side of the existing bungalow and would have a length at least as great as the adjoining elevation of the property. However, it would not extend beyond the front elevation of the bungalow and the view from the access lane would be mainly of its width of approximately 4 metres as opposed to its greater length. Its single storey height, its pitched roof and the proposed external materials to match the existing bungalow would assimilate with the existing dwelling.
14. Therefore, for the above reasons, I conclude that the appeal proposal would not constitute an incongruous addition to the main dwelling and would not detract from the street scene. It would accord with policy GN3 of the LP which requires good design in accordance with the West Lancashire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2008, and where the latter requires garages and outbuildings to be architecturally consistent with the host properties.

Conclusion

15. While I have concluded that the proposed development would not cause harm to the character and appearance of the area, it would nevertheless be inappropriate development within the Green Belt. Furthermore, limited harm would be caused to the openness of the Green Belt. I conclude that the totality of the harm caused to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and the impact upon openness would not be clearly outweighed by other

considerations so as to amount to very special circumstances to justify development. Therefore, the appeal should be dismissed.

S. Hartley

INSPECTOR