



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 May 2024 by Darren Ellis MPlan MRTPI

Decision by John Morrison BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 August 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/N3020/W/24/3339028

**Ravenshead Farm Shop, 131 Main Road, Ravenshead, Nottinghamshire
NG15 9GS**

- 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 Craig Voce against the decision of Gedling Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 2023/0743.
 - The development proposed is a single storey extension 'link' from Farmshop to the additional tearoom seating area, preparation and storage areas.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are a) whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt; b) its effect on the openness of the Green Belt; and c) if it would be 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 it.

Reasons for the Recommendation

4. The National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (the Framework) establishes that new buildings in the Green Belt are inappropriate except in certain circumstances as listed in paragraphs 154 and 155. Paragraph 154 c) allows for 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 3 of the Aligned Core Strategies Part 1 Local Plan 2014 and Policy LPD13 of the Local Planning Document Part 2 Local Plan 2018 are consistent with the Framework in that they seek to protect the Green Belt but allow limited extensions to existing buildings. Policy LPD13 explains that alterations and extensions to buildings may be granted where the extension does not exceed 50% of the floorspace of the original building, and that extensions or alterations should not have a detrimental impact on openness.
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6. The farm shop building has been extended previously, and the Council has calculated that the previous extensions have resulted in an increase of marginally over 74% of the floorspace of the original building. The appellant has not disputed this figure, which considerably exceeds the 50% threshold set out in Policy LPD13. The appellant further accepts that the proposal, which would be in addition to the previous extensions and despite the removal of the existing elements, would go beyond the 50% threshold.
7. Size is more than a function of floorspace and includes bulk, mass, and height. From the information before me I am satisfied, as a matter of judgement, that the current proposal, when added to the cumulative scale of previous additions to the original building, would be disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building for the Framework's purposes and Policy LPD13. The proposal would therefore be inappropriate development which is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt.

Openness

8. Openness is an essential characteristic of the Green Belt. The Planning Practice Guidance states that openness is capable of having both spatial and visual aspects, so that both the visual impact of the proposal and its volume may be relevant. As the visual and spatial bulk of the building would be increased by the extension and result in form where there was previously none, the spatial aspect of the Green Belt's openness would be inevitably reduced. The visual aspect too, albeit this would be tempered by some degree by the immediate surroundings. The reduction in the openness of the Green Belt would nevertheless be the source of additional harm thereto, along with that by reason of its inappropriateness.

Other Considerations

9. A substantially larger agricultural outbuilding might be possible to erect under permitted development. However, no details of any such have been provided and I have seen no evidence that a Certificate of Lawful Development has been applied for or gained. The appeal scheme seeks to link the farm shop building with the approved tearoom seating area, while an outbuilding would remain unlinked to any other building on the site and be for agricultural purposes on a holding of a specified minimum size. Moreover, such an outbuilding could still be erected under permitted development after in the event that the appeal proposal was allowed and be unrelated to the appeal site. Consequently, this perceived fallback position carries limited weight.
10. The proposed link would create 2 full-time and at least 4 part-time jobs, although it has not been specified where these jobs would be. Jobs would be created during the construction of the link, although these would be temporary and any associated economic advantages would be limited by the small scale of the development. It has not been demonstrated how the provision of the link itself, which would contain staff toilets, storage areas and a corridor, would provide additional jobs at the tearoom. I thus afford this matter limited weight.
11. The extension would provide staff toilets and improve the working environment, however it has not been demonstrated that these facilities could not be accommodated elsewhere within the buildings for the farm shop or tearoom seating area. As such this matter carries limited weight.

12. Given that the planning permission has already been granted for the tearoom seating area and as the tearoom is already in operation, it is unclear how the proposed link itself would provide any significant additional economic advantages to the business or the rural economy. Furthermore, I have no substantive evidence before me to demonstrate that the viability of the business would be harmed without the proposed link. This matter therefore attracts limited weight.

Conclusion and Recommendation

13. The proposed link would cause harm to the Green Belt by way of inappropriateness and through reducing openness, to which substantial weight should be afforded. This would lead to conflict with the Green Belt protection aims of the aforementioned policies and the Framework. Development should not be approved unless the harm to the Green Belt, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. Those advanced would not attract sufficient weight to clearly outweigh the totality of the harms. Consequently, the very special circumstances necessary to justify the proposed development do not exist.
14. There are therefore no material considerations worthy of sufficient weight, including the approach of the Framework, which indicate that a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. I therefore recommend the appeal be dismissed.

Darren Ellis

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

15. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's recommendation and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

John Morrison

INSPECTOR