



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 August 2024 by Darren Ellis MPlan MRTPI

Decision by John Morrison BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 October 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/M0655/D/24/3338249

106 Glazebrook Lane, Rixton-with-Glazebrook, Warrington WA3 5BE

- 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 L Crichlow against the decision of Warrington Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 2022/42130.
 - The development proposed is described as 'Demolition of existing garage. Demolition of existing conservatory and outhouse. Construction of two storey rear extension.'
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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; c) its effect on the character and appearance of the area; and d) 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

Inappropriate Development

4. The National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (the Framework) establishes that new buildings in the Green Belt are inappropriate except in certain circumstances. These are set out by paragraphs 154 and 155. Policy GB1 of the Warrington Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 (CS) is consistent with the Framework as it includes a general presumption against inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Paragraph 154 c) of the Framework 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, which the Framework defines as a building as it existed on 1 July 1948, or, if constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was built originally.

5. Neither the Framework nor GB1 define disproportionate. However, the Warrington House Extensions Supplementary Planning Document 2021 sets out that, amongst other things, any extensions and additions that result in an increase in size of over 33% of the original building will be considered to be disproportionate.
6. The appeal property is a two-storey semi-detached dwelling which has been previously extended. When taken together, the Council states that the previous and proposed extensions would increase the footprint of the original property by 39%, although their calculations include the first floor so it's more akin to floorspace than footprint, and that the volume increase, excluding roof space, would be almost double the 33% threshold. The Council's figures don't appear to include the demolition of the shed and garage, although they do include this in their assessment.
7. The appellant asserts that a large shed further back in the garden has not been taken into account in the Council's calculations. Although they have included two other outbuildings which they have found to have been existing since before 1st July 1948, and that they made no reference to the large shed in this regard. Furthermore, no substantive details have been provided to demonstrate that the large shed has been in place since before 1st July 1948. Consequently, there is insufficient evidence before me to be able to conclude that the large shed forms part of the original dwellinghouse. Notwithstanding this, and even if the shed is included, the appellant suggests that the floorspace increase would be 29% and the volume increase would be 53%. The latter still, in any case, well over 33%.
8. When the proposed demolition of the shed and garage next to the house is taken into account, this would result in smaller increases to the footprint, floorspace and volume of the original building. However, no calculations or figures have been provided to reflect this so whether the threshold would be exceeded is unknown.
9. Nevertheless, size can be more than a function of footprint, floorspace and volume. In this case, the scale, bulk and mass of the building has already been increased through the previous additions. The appeal scheme would considerably increase the massing and scale of the dwelling again, including at first floor level and thus being of noticeably (in terms of the extended elements) greater height. Consequently, and taking all of the above into account, the combination of the previous and proposed extensions would amount to disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. The proposal would therefore be inappropriate development which is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt. This would result in conflict with both the Framework and, by association, GB1, the aims of which I have set out above.

Openness

10. Openness is an essential characteristic of the Green Belt. Planning Practice Guidance explains that openness can have spatial and visual aspects. The land take and mass of the proposed extension would take up otherwise undeveloped space in the Green Belt. Whilst the shed and garage would be removed, the proposal would include considerable additional bulk at the first floor level where none currently exists and concentrating it. As such, there would be an unavoidable reducing effect on the spatial aspect of its openness. There would

be a more limited effect on the visual aspect given the built-up nature of the immediate area. Overall, and taking into account one of the fundamental aims of Green Belt policy being to keep land permanently open, the appeal scheme would reduce the openness of the Green Belt. This would also conflict with the Framework. This harm would be in addition to that caused by the proposed development's inappropriateness.

Character and Appearance

11. The appeal building is a good quality example of a traditional two storey semi detached dwelling, sharing a two storey projection to the rear in the form of an outrigger, amongst other minor alterations over time. It has a pleasant simplicity to its shape and front elevation with a structured and formal appearance to the placement of doors and windows and a chimney projecting from the gable end.
12. The proposed extension would largely mirror the appearance of the outrigger's shape and roof profile, albeit stepping slightly down. This would ensure some subservience to the existing dwelling, but when viewed from the front, the roof form would jar awkwardly with the direction of the gable on the main building. It would appear somewhat disjointed and unrelated. An effect which would be exacerbated by the informal window arrangement which would be off centre in the context of the more structured front elevation. The extension would not be obvious from the street but nonetheless visible and, as a result of the above, would detrimentally affect the quality of the building's original and characteristic features. Accordingly, and by association, the extension would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area.
13. The proposal would therefore conflict with CS Policy BE6, insofar as it requires development to make a positive contribution to local character, including with regards to scale and massing. The proposed extension would also fail to comply with the guidance in the Warrington House Extensions Supplementary Planning Document, which states that extensions should complement the existing house in terms of scale and proportions, and with the requirements at Paragraph 139 of the Framework for development to be well designed and to reflect local design policies.

Other Considerations

14. An appeal was allowed for extensions at 73 Glazebrook Lane, reference APP/M0655/D/21/3277399, which resulted in floorspace and volume increases of about 40% above that of the original building, and where the removal of a garage was then considered sufficient to reduce the size increases to an acceptable level. However, in the case before me the volume increase would be significantly higher than the 40% at No 73, and that already includes the removal of the outbuildings. The overall increase in size of No 106 would therefore be considerably more than the increase at No 73. As such, the previous appeal is not directly comparable to the scheme before me. I therefore afford it limited weight.
15. The appellant suggests that a single-storey side extension could be constructed under permitted development, together with the relocation of the two outbuildings. However, no drawings of any such extension have been provided and there is no indication that a Certificate of Lawful Development has been applied for or granted. Furthermore, there is no specific indication that any

such extension would be built if this appeal is dismissed. This would also relate to a single storey extension which would not have the same effect as a two storey one in either design or Green Belt terms. I therefore attach limited weight to this perceived fallback position.

Conclusion and Recommendation

16. The proposed extension would cause harm to the Green Belt by way of inappropriateness and through reducing openness, to which substantial weight should be afforded. The proposal would also cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. Development should not be approved unless the harm to the Green Belt, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. Those I have identified would not attract sufficient weight to clearly outweigh the totality of the harm. Consequently, the very special circumstances necessary to justify the proposed development do not exist.
17. There are no material considerations, 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

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

John Morrison

INSPECTOR