



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 October 2024 by Darren Ellis MPlan MRTPI

Decision by John Morrison BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4 November 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/M0655/D/24/3343671

3 Reddish Hall Cottages, Broad Lane, Grappenhall and Thelwell, Warrington WA4 3HS

- 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 G Jones against the decision of Warrington Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 2024/00263/FULH.
 - The development proposed is 'single storey extension to side'.
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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

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 as listed in paragraphs 154 and 155. Policy GB1 of the Warrington Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 is consistent with the Framework as it includes a general presumption against inappropriate development. 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.
5. Neither the Framework nor GB1 define 'disproportionate'. However, the Warrington House Extensions Supplementary Planning Document 2021 sets out that any extensions and additions that result in an increase in size of over 33%

of the original building could be disproportionate. The appeal property is a two-storey semi-detached dwelling which has been previously extended. Both parties accept that the previous increase in floorspace and/or floor area exceeded 33%.

6. Size can be more than a function of floorspace and floor area. In this case, the scale, bulk and mass of the building has already been considerably increased through the previous addition. The appeal scheme would further increase the massing and scale of the dwelling. Subsequently, 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

7. 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, despite its modest size in context, would take up otherwise undeveloped space in the Green Belt. 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.

Other Considerations

8. There remains some ambiguity as to whether the shed which is proposed to be removed is lawful and thus whether it can be taken into account as a 'trade off' against the proposed extension. If it is, the openness of the Green Belt might be increased, but the extension would still be inappropriate development due to the combination of it and the previous one. It appears that the shed was built after the previous extension in any case, a condition imposed on the permission for which removed permitted development rights for outbuildings. With all of this in mind, I attach limited weight to the perceived fallback value of the shed.

Conclusion and Recommendation

9. 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. This would result in conflict with the development plan. 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.
10. There are therefore 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

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

John Morrison

INSPECTOR