



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 March 2025

by C Butcher BSc MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 March 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/N0410/D/24/3348878

Kensington House, Wood Lane, Iver Heath, Buckinghamshire SL0 0LE.

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr & Mrs Samra against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council.
 - The application Ref is PL/24/0997/FA
 - The development proposed is a first floor side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are: (i) whether the proposal is inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and any relevant development plan policies; (ii) the effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt; and (iii) would the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, be clearly outweighed by other considerations so as to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify the proposal.

Reasons

Whether the Proposal is Inappropriate Development

3. Policies GB1 and GB10 of the South Bucks District Local Plan, March 1999 (the LP) set out the approach to development in the Green Belt. The wording of the clauses in the two policies is slightly different to that contained within the Framework. However, in so far as they pertain to residential extensions, I am satisfied that the policies are in broad conformity with it.
4. The Framework establishes that the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt should be regarded as inappropriate, subject to a number of exceptions. One such exception, set out within paragraph 154(c) is 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. The supporting text to LP Policy GB10 states that extensions or alterations which would result in the original dwelling having increased its floorspace by more than half will not be considered to be appropriate.
5. In this instance, the Council has indicated that the original building had a floorspace of approximately 156 square metres and that, as a result of various extensions over the years, the floorspace has more than doubled. I note that

the appellant has not disagreed with the Council's figures. On that basis, even if I were to conclude that the proposed development would extend the existing dwelling by a fairly modest amount, I simply cannot come to any conclusion other than that the works would represent a disproportionate extension in terms of floor area. As such, the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Openness

6. In terms of spatial openness, I recognise that the footprint of the dwelling would not increase as a result of the proposed works. However, the development would still increase the building's overall volume. With regards to visual openness, the first-floor extension would inevitably make the building appear bulkier and more imposing. The fact that the building is well screened from public views does reduce the harm to visual openness, but it does not eliminate it entirely. Nevertheless, given that the appeal only involves a modest extension to a single dwelling, the overall harm to openness would be limited.

Other Considerations

7. The proposed development would provide additional space for the occupiers of the dwelling. However, this is a private benefit that I attribute very little weight to.

Conclusion

8. The Framework indicates that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Substantial weight should be given to the harm to the Green Belt, and very special circumstances will not exist unless the harm is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
9. In this instance, the identified limited harm to the Green Belt is not outweighed by other considerations. As such, very special circumstances do not exist and the proposed development conflicts with LP Policies GB1 and GB10, as well as the relevant aspects of the Framework. For this reason, the appeal is dismissed.

C Butcher

INSPECTOR