



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 March 2025

by R Gee BA (Hons) Dip TP PGCert UD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25th March 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/B3030/D/24/3354364

High Park Farm, Cross Lane, Blidworth, Nottinghamshire NG21 0LX

- 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 M Lee against the decision of Newark & Sherwood District Council.
 - The application Ref is 23/02259/HOUSE.
 - The development proposed is proposed rear first floor extension to create en-suite.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. Following submission of the appeal, the revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published on 12 December 2024 and updated on 7 February 2025. The parts of the Framework most relevant to the appeal have not substantively changed from the previous version. As a result, I consider that there is no requirement for me to seek further submissions in respect of these matters, and I am satisfied that no party's interests would be prejudiced by my taking this approach.

Main Issues

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

Reasons

Whether inappropriate development

4. The Framework identifies that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. It goes on to state that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. The Framework further

establishes that the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt should be regarded as inappropriate, subject to a number of exceptions as set out in paragraph 154 of the Framework. One such exemption being the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original dwelling.

5. What constitutes a disproportionate addition is not defined within the Framework nor within Spatial Policy 4B of the Newark and Sherwood Amended Core Strategy 2019 (CS). An assessment of whether the proposed extension would be 'disproportionate' in the context of paragraph 154 c) is therefore a matter of planning judgement. The Council suggests that extensions of between 30-50% of the original dwelling would not be considered disproportionate. Whilst floorspace calculations can be used as a guide to determine whether a proposal would be a disproportionate addition, in my view, it is a matter of planning judgement and can include aspects such as floorspace, height and volume.
6. The appellant submits that the property was converted from a poultry house to a residential dwelling and extended prior to the site's inclusion within the Green Belt. I have no evidence to dispute this. Nevertheless, the Framework defines 'original building' as a building as it existed on 1 July 1948 or, if constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was built originally. The evidence indicates that there have been many alterations made to the building since 1948, reflecting its change from a farmhouse to a dwelling, including single and two-storey extensions and a double garage. The evidence also indicates that a stable block and ménage have also been constructed proximate to the dwellinghouse.
7. Whilst recognising that the existing footprint remains unchanged, as a result of the proposed development, the Council has stated that the proposed first-floor extension, when taken cumulatively with previous additions, would increase the floorspace of the original dwelling by 73% and the volume by 89%. Based purely on these statistical measurements the proposed and existing extensions would cumulatively lead to a sizeable increase in the floorspace and volume of the original dwelling.
8. Notwithstanding the above, it is important to consider the issue in terms of the scale, bulk, massing and built form that would result from the changes sought. The proposed extension would provide a first-floor extension, above an existing utility room, located to the rear of the dwelling. The increased height would add to the bulk of the property, particularly when viewed from the east and western elevations. Based on my observations, and the evidence before me, the proposed extension, together with the existing extensions, would substantially increase the volume, floorspace and bulk of the building.
9. The appellant refers to a now demolished outbuilding that would have contributed to the overall footprint, floorspace and volume of the original dwelling. However, I have no detailed information regarding this, including the precise scale and nature of the building. Furthermore, it is indicated that the buildings were in agricultural use, rather than domestic.
10. Whilst on its own, the proposed extension might well be acceptable, when combined with the existing extensions, it would represent a significant increase in the volume, floorspace and scale, such that it would clearly be disproportionate to the original building. In controlling disproportionate additions, Green Belt policy

seeks to avoid properties becoming ever larger through incremental extensions, and the associated increase in built form in the Green Belt. In this case, the property has already been extended significantly and consequently, the proposal fails to meet the exception under paragraph 154 c) of the Framework.

11. For the reasons stated, the proposal would result in inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Conflict therefore arises with Spatial Policy 4B of the CS.

Openness

12. The Framework defines one of the essential characteristics of the Green Belt to be its openness. There is no formal definition of openness but, in the context of the Green Belt, it is generally held to refer to an absence of development. Openness has both a spatial (physical) dimension, and a visual aspect.
13. The ridge line of the proposal would be at the same height as the existing roofline. Whilst the proposal would replace a section of the roof space of the existing ground floor utility room the proposal would increase the bulk and volume of the host dwelling that would spatially reduce openness.
14. The siting of the dwelling, set back from Cross Lane behind a substantial hedge and gates, combined with the location of the proposed extension to the rear of the property, means that the proposed extension would not be unduly prominent when viewed from the lane. Nonetheless, from a visual perspective the proposal would be evident from the site entrance and would be perceptible further east along Cross Lane. From this vantage point the extension would significantly extend the width of the property at first floor level.
15. Taken together, the spatial and visual impacts of the proposal would result in some reduction in openness. However, having regard to the overall context of the appeal property, the proposal would only result in moderate harm to the openness of the Green Belt. Be that as it may, conflict would arise with the aims of including land within the Green Belt when assessed against the Framework, to which I attach substantial weight.

Other considerations

16. The Framework states that inappropriate development should not be approved except in very special circumstances. These circumstances will not exist unless the development's harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
17. As the development would be within the confines of a residential plot, it would not conflict with any of the purposes of the Green Belt. There is no dispute that the proposal would be in keeping with the architectural style of the host dwelling. However, the design attributes of the proposal do not persuade me that the proposal would be acceptable having regard to the overall requirements of the development plan and the Framework relating to the assessment of proposals in the Green Belt. Similarly, the absence of harm to living conditions is a neutral matter.
18. The appellant submits that the proposal comprises sustainable development when considered against the guidance in the Framework. However, paragraph 11 d i) of the Framework specifies that permission should be granted, unless the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas of particular importance, including

Green Belt land, provide clear reason for refusing the development proposed. In this instance, there are clear reasons for refusing the proposed development and accordingly, the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply and does not weigh in favour of the proposal.

Green Belt Balance and Conclusion

19. Having regard to the development plan and national planning policy, the proposal comprises inappropriate development in the Green Belt. There would also be moderate harm arising from the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt.
20. The Framework says that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances, and that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt.
21. Having taken account of all matters raised in support of the proposal, I find that the other considerations in this case do not clearly outweigh the harm that I have identified. Consequently, the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development do not exist. Conflict therefore arises with Spatial Policy 4B of the CS and the Green Belt provisions of the Framework.
22. For the reasons given I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

R Gee

INSPECTOR