



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 March 2025

by N Teasdale BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 1 April 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/B5480/D/24/3350872

Chase End, Risebridge Chase, Romford, Havering RM1 4PR

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant full planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Mark Thursting against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Havering.
 - The application Ref is P0532.24.
 - The development proposed is erection of single storey garage with attached store for mobility scooter.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - Whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and any relevant development plan policies;
 - The effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt;
 - The effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area; and
 - Whether any 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 inappropriate development

3. The appeal site relates to a detached property set within a spacious plot located at the end of Risebridge Chase on the eastern side of the street. The site lies within the Green Belt and Policy G2 of the Havering Local Plan 2016-2031, 2021 (LP) explains at criterion A that the Green Belt should be protected from inappropriate development. It sets out that 1) development proposals that would harm the Green Belt should be refused except where very special circumstances exist. 2) subject to national planning policy tests, the enhancement of the Green Belt to provide appropriate multi-functional beneficial uses for Londoners should be supported.

4. Paragraph 154 of the Framework relating to proposals affecting the Green Belt explains that development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless one of a number of exceptions applies. This includes amongst others, c) 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. The proposed development seeks planning permission for the erection of a single storey garage with attached store for mobility scooter. The proposed garage would have a pitched roof design with a footprint of approximately 73 square metres and would be 4.24 metres in height. The original dwelling had an approximate footprint of 78 square metres while the annex/converted garage had an approximate footprint of 50 square metres. Whilst the Framework does not define what constitutes a disproportionate addition, such a significant increase in footprint would clearly constitute a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building covering almost the same footprint as the original dwelling. The appellant claims that the original dwelling includes the dwelling and its integral garage having a footprint of 128 square metres although I have limited detail to confirm that this is the case. Even if the original dwelling included the garage, the proposed footprint would still comprise a disproportionate addition being in excess of half of this footprint. The size of the plot would not alter my findings on this as the test is clear in that it relates to the size of the original building. Matters relating to openness and character and appearance are discussed separately below.
6. For the above reasons, the proposed development would result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building. It would therefore fail to meet the exception test of paragraph 154 c) of the Framework. I conclude on this issue that, for the purposes of the Framework, the proposed development would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt which would by definition be harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances (Paragraph 153, Framework). For the same reasons, the proposed development would also be contrary to Policy G2 of the LP.

Effect on openness

7. Paragraph 142 of the Framework explains that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. Openness of the Green Belt has a spatial aspect as well as a visual aspect and thus both aspects need to be considered.
8. The overall size and scale of the proposed building would result in a bulky building being added to this site where there is already a substantial dwelling located. The area of land in question is currently free from built form and provides for a level of openness/spaciousness to the site which would be reduced as a result of the proposed development. In both spatial and visual terms, the footprint and mass would inevitably result in a loss of openness of the Green Belt. The commercial land behind the site does little to mitigate against this as the site is visible from the highway/surrounds and is viewed in a very open/spacious context which would be significantly altered by the development leading to a fundamental change to the Green Belt.

Character and appearance

9. The proposed development would, by reason of its height, scale, bulk and excessive footprint, fail to appear subservient to the original dwelling. This is despite its set back from the dwelling and materials to match. It would be an overly dominant addition within the subject site and surrounding area which would detract from the existing scale and character of the original dwelling whilst interfering with the spaciousness of the plot.
10. For the reasons given above, the proposed development would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area. It would therefore be contrary to Policy 26 of the LP which explains amongst other matters, that the Council will promote high quality design that contributes to the creation of successful places in Havering. For the same reasons, the proposed development would be contrary to section 12 of the Framework relating to achieving well-designed places. The Council has included Policy G2 of the LP within its second reason for refusal although I have dealt with this policy above and thus I do not find it relevant to attach it again here.

Other considerations

11. The appellant puts forward personal circumstances requiring the need for the proposed development including dependence on private car travel for everyday mobility and transportation. I have had due regard to the medical evidence provided in this respect and I attribute considerable weight to such matters. That said, I am not sufficiently convinced if a garage of this scale and design is necessary or that this specific location is the only option to meet the medical requirements outlined. Whilst not determinative, I am also aware that the site previously had a substantial integral double garage which was converted for habitable use. The appellant may have not been aware that further extensions would be precluded but this additional storage within the dwelling has been lost for a greater inhabitable footprint.
12. Reference has been made to permitted development rights where the appellant claims that the position of the garage behind the house would create a cramped and cluttered site and thus this option is not favoured by the appellant and his extended family. I have limited details to be certain of any fallback position, and this would not alter my findings on the appeal I am considering.
13. I am aware of the planning history at the site and changes made from a previous scheme. I am also aware of the discussions that have taken place with the Council, but this would not alter my findings in relation to the above main issues.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

14. Paragraph 153 of the Framework indicates that Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
15. Whilst I acknowledge the other considerations put forward by the appellant as set out above, the Framework makes it clear that when considering any planning

application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt which I have applied.

16. Therefore, 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.
17. In considering this appeal, I have had due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) set out under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, in particular the need to eliminate discrimination against persons with the protected characteristics of age and/or disability, advancing equality of opportunity for those persons and fostering good relations between them and others. Following careful consideration of the appellant's circumstances, I am satisfied that the impact of dismissing the appeal is proportionate and necessary.
18. In failing to comply with the policies as identified above, the proposal cannot be said to comply with the development plan taken as a whole. There are insufficient material considerations to justify a decision other than in accordance with the development plan.
19. For the reasons given above, the appeal is dismissed.

N Teasdale

INSPECTOR