



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 March 2025

by **G Ellis BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7 April 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/L3625/D/25/3360023

2 Beechen Lane, Lower Kingswood, Tadworth KT20 6RY

- 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 Ricky James against the decision of the Reigate and Banstead Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/02068/HHOLD.
 - The development proposed is a double storey extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are: -
 - Whether the proposed extension would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt and, if so, whether other considerations clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt, and any other harm, so as to amount to very special circumstances.

Reasons

3. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) establishes that development within the Green Belt should be regarded as inappropriate unless one of the specified exceptions applies. Exception (c), as set out in paragraph 154 of the Framework, allows for the extension and alteration of a building, provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.
4. Policy NHE5 of the Reigate & Banstead Local Plan Development Management Plan (DMP) reflects this and sets out 4 elements d.(i-iv) which will be taken into account in that assessment. It does not, however, indicate any specific percentage limits, and thereby, what is “disproportionate” is a matter of judgment.
5. The parties have different figures for the increase in volume and floor area. The appellant's are based on the existing dwelling, whereas the assessment required is against the original building as it existed on 1 July 1948. The Council suggest that an existing single-storey rear element was added post-1948 and has included it as part of the cumulative assessment of extensions. Neither party has provided any specific evidence of the original property, which predates 1948, or the single-storey

rear element. However, even based on the appellant's figures, the proposal would result in a 49.7% increase in gross internal area (GIA) and 47.5% in volume.

6. The extension would be set down and back from the front elevation at the first-floor level. Following the general form of the property and with matching materials, it would not be a visually prominent addition. It would, nonetheless, substantially increase the width and scale of the property, which, at approaching a doubling of its size (and the Council's figures are higher), would be a significant and disproportionate addition.
7. It would therefore not meet exception c) and, having regard to the provisions of DMP Policy NHE5 and the Framework, the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
8. The Framework states 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 is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

Openness

9. Openness is one of the essential characteristics of the Green Belt. To the extent that the footprint and massing would increase, there would be a change in spatial terms. The enlarged property would be seen from the road, and it would extend development further to the west. However, in the context of being part of a group of residential streets with similar properties, and the buffer of trees to the A217, the extension would not materially impact the visual amenities of the surrounding area or the wider green belt purposes.
10. Nevertheless, while limited and localised, the proposal would give rise to some loss of openness, which adds to the harm to the Green Belt.

Other Considerations

11. The design of the proposed addition would be in keeping with and subservient to the host property; however, achieving well-designed places is an expectation of all development. It would also not affect any of the neighbouring properties, but again, this is a neutral factor.
12. Other properties in the locality do have extensions, although these are primarily single-storey additions. I did observe an example of a similar two-storey scheme, although the full background to that extension is not before me. Generally, however, the scale and form of properties along Beecham Lane exhibit a consistency in form, and larger extensions are typically situated to the rear. The Council also advise that the example referenced was allowed due to very special circumstances, and each case is to be considered on its own merits.
13. Whilst part of a relatively urban street scene and not directly surrounded by open countryside, the property is located within the Green Belt, and the associated policies are applicable.

Green Belt Balance

14. The proposal would be inappropriate development within the Green Belt. In accordance with the Framework, substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt. Other considerations provide little support for the proposal. These do not, therefore, clearly outweigh the totality of harm and so very special circumstances do not exist.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

G Ellis

INSPECTOR