



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 October 2020 by Darren Ellis MPlan

Decision by M Seaton BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 November 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/C3430/D/20/3255804

The Old Pump House, Bennetts Lane, Wolverhampton, WV6 7EY

- 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 Pietro Corbelli against the decision of South Staffordshire Council.
 - The application Ref 20/00266/FUL, dated 6 March 2020, was refused by notice dated 8 June 2020.
 - The development proposed is a rear two storey extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issues

3. The appeal site is within the Green Belt and so the main issues are:
 - Whether the proposal would be inappropriate development for the purposes of development plan policy and the National Planning Policy Framework;
 - The effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt;
 - The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling; and
 - If the proposal 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

Whether the proposal would be inappropriate development

4. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) establishes that new buildings in the Green Belt are inappropriate except in certain circumstances, including where they involve the extension of an existing building. This is provided that the extension does not result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building. The Framework defines 'original
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building' as 'a building as it existed on 1 July 1948, or, if constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was built originally.' It does not however define 'disproportionate'.

5. This exception for extensions to a building is reflected in Policy GB1 of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (adopted 11th December 2012) (CS). Section 4 of the Green Belt and Open Countryside Supplementary Planning Document (April 2014) (SPD) sets out that extensions to dwellings in the Green Belt should be limited to an increase of floorspace of between 20-40%.
6. The appeal dwelling formerly consisted of a pump house that was part of a sewerage works. Planning permission was granted in 1999¹ and renewed in 2005² for the change of use, alterations and extensions to the pump house to form a dwelling and detached garage. The proposed development would see the erection of a two-storey rear extension to the dwelling.
7. The former pump house is therefore the original building for the purposes of the Framework and Policy GB1 of the CS. The Council's calculations show that the proposed extension in combination with the extensions from the conversion would increase the footprint by 123% above the footprint of the original building. The Council further calculates that the proposed extension alone would increase the footprint by 64% above the original building. The appellant does not contest these figures. The range set out in the SPD would therefore be exceeded considerably.
8. The Framework refers to extensions and alterations not resulting in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. Size is more than a function of floorspace and includes bulk, mass, and height. From the information before me I am satisfied, as a matter of judgement, that the additions to the original building would be disproportionate in the context of the Framework and Policy GB1 of the CS.
9. The proposal would therefore be inappropriate development which is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt.

Openness

10. Openness is an essential characteristic of the Green Belt. The Planning Practice Guidance states that openness is capable of having both spatial and visible aspects, so that both the visual impact of the proposal and its volume may be relevant³. As the visual and spatial bulk of the building would be increased by the extension, the proposal would result in a reduction in the openness of the Green Belt. This would cause moderate harm to the openness of the Green Belt and is in addition to the harm by reason of its inappropriateness.

Character and Appearance

11. The depth of the proposed two-storey extension would be similar to the depth of the existing dwelling, and as such the extension would be a considerable addition to the property. Furthermore, the side elevations of the proposed extension would have large expanses of bare brickwork. For these reasons, the proposal would fail to respect the scale, massing and design of the existing

¹ Planning application ref. 99/00587/COU

² Planning application ref. 04/01433/FUL

³ Planning Practice Guidance, Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 64-001-20190722

dwelling. The proposal would therefore conflict with Policy EQ11 of the CS, which amongst other things requires development to be of a high-quality building design and detailing.

Planning balance and Conclusion

12. The development causes harm to the Green Belt by way of its inappropriateness and to its openness, and the Framework establishes that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt.
13. The Framework states that development should not be approved unless the harm to the Green Belt, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. No considerations have been put forward by the appellant although I recognise that the proposal would result in the increase in habitable space in the appeal dwelling. However, the harm that would be caused to the Green Belt in addition to the harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling would not be clearly outweighed by any private benefits to the scheme. Consequently, very special circumstances do not exist.
14. Therefore, for the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

D Ellis

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

15. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

Martin Seaton

INSPECTOR