



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 November 2024

by J D Westbrook BSc(Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28th November 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/B3438/D/24/3348370

27 Ash Bank Road, Werrington, Staffordshire, ST2 9DS

- 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 Ms Diane Martin against the decision of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council.
 - The application Ref is SMD/2024/0187.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a single-storey side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues in this case 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, and
 - if inappropriate, whether any 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 required to justify the proposal.

Reasons

3. No 27 is a detached house situated on the northern side of Ash Bank Road, within a row of semi-detached and detached houses of largely similar design and scale. It is brick-built with a hipped roof and has a conservatory and other extensions to the rear. The rear extensions consist of a large pitched-roof element with a smaller element to its rear. The appeal site lies within the Green Belt.

Inappropriate development

4. The Framework states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open, while one of the essential characteristics of Green Belts is their openness. Paragraph 154 states that the construction of new buildings is inappropriate in the Green Belt with certain exceptions, one of which 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.

5. In this case, the appellant contends that the cumulative extensions to the original building, including the current proposal, would represent a 45% addition of floorspace. However, the Council has stated that evidence from historical maps indicates that extensions, including the current proposal, would bring the total footprint of extensions to 125% of the original building, which would be considered disproportionate.
6. The Council's evidence relates to additions since 1st July 1948. Since the house would appear to have been constructed in the 1930's, the 1948 date represents the relevant date for assessing the original building, as set out in Annex 2 (Glossary) of the Framework. I have no details regarding the date adopted by the appellant as the baseline for the original house, but it would appear likely that this is subsequent to 1948 and may include extensions constructed during the post-1948 period.
7. From the information presented to me in the statements of the appellant and the Council, and given that the large rear extension at No 27 appears relatively modern, I find that the current proposal would be likely to result in cumulative extensions to the original house that would exceed a 100% increase in its footprint, and that this would represent disproportionate additions. On this basis, the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Very Special Circumstances

8. Paragraph 152 of the Framework states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 153 of the Framework states that '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.
9. Given its limited scale and the location of the proposed extension to the side of the house and attached to the rear extension, it would have a very limited impact on the openness of the Green Belt. Nevertheless, there would be some harm.
10. In accordance with Paragraph 153 of the Framework, I place substantial weight on the harm to the Green Belt that I have identified with regard to inappropriate development and openness.
11. The proposed development would result in a slightly larger house, which would be a private and public benefit. However, this very limited benefit does not clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt identified above and there are, therefore, no very special circumstances to justify the proposal. Policy SS10 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan states that strict control will be exercised over inappropriate development in the Green Belt, allowing only for exceptions as defined by Government policy. On this basis, the proposal would conflict with Development Plan policy.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above, I dismiss this appeal.

J D Westbrook

INSPECTOR