

Appeal made against the refusal of planning permission

Appeal reference	APP/P1805/D/11/2156930
Planning Application	11/0319-TC
Proposal	Side utility/wc extension with bedroom over
Location	312 Birmingham Road, Bordesley, Redditch, B97 6RJ
Ward	Alvechurch
Decision	Refused (delegated decision): 1st June 2011

The author of this report is Mr. Tim Collard who can be contacted on 01527 881243 (e-mail: t.collard@bromsgrove.gov.uk) for more information.

Discussion

The Inspector considered the key issues were:

- Whether the proposed development is inappropriate development for the purposes of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 2: 'Green Belts'* (PPG2) and local development plan policy;
- If it is inappropriate development, whether the harm caused 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 the development.
- The effect on the openness of the Green Belt (GB); and
- The effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

The Inspector quoted *Planning Policy Guidance 2: Green Belts* (PPG2) which says that provided that the proposed development does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the original building, the extension or alteration of dwellings is not inappropriate in Green Belts. The Inspector considered that aspects of policies DS2 and S11 of the Bromsgrove District Local Plan (BDLP) reflect the thrust of national policy guidance in this respect, with the latter policy being specifically related to extensions to dwellings in the GB.

The Inspector noted the Council's supplementary planning guidance on extensions to dwellings in the green belt (SPG) which advises that an extension or cumulative extensions of over 40% of the original floorspace is likely to be disproportionate in the context of GB policy. The Inspector attached significant weight to the SPG since it has been subject to extensive public consultation, and assists in clarifying the provisions of local and national green belt policies.

It was noted that the proposal follows another recently refused planning permission, and aims to overcome the previously identified deficiencies. According to the Council's calculations, the proposed two-storey extension, added to the size of previous extensions, would result in the floorspace of the original dwelling (as at 1st July 1948) being exceeded by approximately 75%. The Council's calculations have not been seriously challenged.

In the light of the guidance on the size of extensions contained in the Council's SPG, the Inspector considered that the proposal would amount to a disproportionate addition to the original dwelling. The proposal would therefore be inappropriate development which, by definition, is harmful as set out in paragraph 3.2 of PPG2. This attracts substantial weight against the grant of planning permission.

The Inspector noted that the appeal property is contained within a long ribbon of development stretching alongside the A441 to the north of Redditch. The SPG recognises that development proposals contained within such ribbons need to be carefully evaluated, on their merits, to judge the effect on openness. Judging from the officer report on the application, the Council does not consider the openness of the GB would be harmfully affected by the development.

It was noted that that the most important attribute of Green Belts, according to PPG2, is their openness. The extension would impinge on the openness of the Green Belt, by erecting new built form in an open area, above the carport alongside the house, where none currently exists. Although the effect on openness would not be widely seen or felt, this represents additional harm to the Green Belt over and above that resulting from the inappropriate nature of the development. However, having regard to the location of the property within a ribbon of development, and the SPG's guidance where such circumstances arise, the loss of openness involved attracts limited weight.

The Inspector noted that within the ribbon of development there are a variety of house designs, but the Inspector considered that the properties between 306-316 (inclusive) are read as a group of fairly substantial detached dwellings, with each dwelling's individuality being currently safeguarded by the nature of the gaps between them.

The Inspector shares the Council's view that the loss of the gap would lead to the creation of a harmful terracing effect when viewed from the street, which, if repeated too often, would radically change the visual character of the area, contrary to the provisions of policy DS13 of the Bromsgrove District Local Plan (BDLP).

The harmful effect of the development on local character was considered by the Inspector to attract significant weight.

The inspector noted that in the design of the extension, the appellant has attempted and succeeded in ensuring that the extension would appear subservient to the main dwelling, and this attracts limited weight.

The inspector also noted that the appellants raise the issue of precedent, that is, some local examples of extensions or properties built to their side boundaries already exist, and I saw the 4 properties specifically mentioned. However, precedent is rarely a good reason, in itself, to justify the grant of permission, and the examples provided by the appellants amply demonstrate the type of harmful development the Council is currently seeking to prevent and discourage, lest the character of the area be further compromised. The Inspector attributed little weight to the issue of precedent.

The harm identified, by the Inspector, as a consequence of the inappropriateness of the development, its effect on openness, and local character and appearance carries substantial, limited and significant weight respectively, which collectively bears heavily against the development. The other considerations identified carry limited or little weight, and the Inspector concluded they were insufficient to clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt. The very special circumstances necessary to justify the inappropriate development therefore do not exist. The proposal conflicts with the thrust of the advice of PPG2 and BDLP policies DS13 & S11.

The appeal was therefore dismissed.

Costs application

No application for costs was made.

Appeal outcome

The appeal was **DISMISSED**.

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to RESOLVE that the item of information be noted.