



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 03 March 2021

by Sarah Manchester BSc MSc PhD MEnvSc

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19th March 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/T2350/D/20/3265365

Burnside, Parsonage Road, Wilpshire, Blackburn BB1 4AG

- 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 Szabo against the decision of Ribble Valley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 3/2020/0780, dated 15 September 2020, was refused by notice dated 24 November 2020.
 - The development proposed is Proposed two storey side extension following the same roof line & cladding of rear elevation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - i) 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;
 - ii) The effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt; and
 - iii) If the proposal is 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

Whether or not inappropriate development in the Green Belt

3. The appeal building is a detached single storey dwelling with a rear dormer extension. It is in the countryside and the Green Belt beyond the settlement boundary of Blackburn.
4. Paragraph 143 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.
5. Key Statement EN1 of the Ribble Valley Borough Council Core Strategy 2008–2028 Adopted December 2014 (the LP) sets out the Council's intention to maintain the overall extent of Green Belt and safeguard the countryside from inappropriate development. To achieve this, it seeks to restrict new buildings in the Green Belt unless they meet one of a limited number of exceptions. This is consistent with Paragraph 145 of the Framework which states that the

construction of new buildings should be regarded as inappropriate in the Green Belt, subject to specific exceptions, including Paragraph 145 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.

6. The Framework defines an original building as a building as it existed on 1 July 1948 or, if constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was built originally. In this case, I understand that the rear dormer is a later addition to property. Therefore, for the purposes of the assessment, the dormer extension should not be considered as part of the original building.
7. Although neither the LP nor the Framework define what constitutes a disproportionate addition, the Council generally allows a 30% increase in the size of the building. No detailed calculations have been provided, but the evidence indicates that the proposal would increase the volume of the building by more than 50%. I note that the Council considers this figure is likely to be an underestimate, on the basis that the volume of the original building includes later extensions. Irrespective, the proposal would be a significant increase in the size of the building.
8. Therefore, the proposal would result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. It would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt. It would conflict with Policy EN1 of the LP and the policies in the Framework that protect the Green Belt.

Openness of the Green Belt

9. Paragraph 133 of the Framework advises that openness and permanence are the essential characteristics of the Green Belt. Openness is the absence of development and it has both spatial and visual aspects.
10. The part of Parsonage Road that includes the appeal site is separated from Blackburn by the vegetated corridor of Knotts Brook. There is a short ribbon of residential development on the opposite side of the road, but the south side of the road is largely undeveloped except for the appeal property, which is a modest single storey dwelling with outbuildings in a large plot.
11. By virtue of the hillside location, there is a change in ground levels across the width of the plot. Burnside sits on a sizeable area of hardstanding that extends from the road and along much of the lower side boundary of the appeal site. The plans illustrate that the proposal would be on the upslope side of the dwelling. It would extend beyond the existing built footprint resulting in a small spatial loss of openness.
12. Heading down Parsonage Road in the direction of Blackburn, Burnside is well screened by roadside trees and shrubs. Subject to retention of vegetation, the proposal would be similarly screened from views to the east. Looking towards the site from Blackburn, including locations around Knotts Brook and the nearby public right of way, the extension would be largely hidden from view behind the dwelling. Consequently, the proposal would not be overly prominent or conspicuous when viewed from either side of the appeal site.
13. Given its prominent roadside location, the proposal would be readily visible when viewed from the front of the property and in passing along Parsonage Road. Consequently, there would be a visual impact arising from the significant increase in the bulk of the building. While there would be no increase in height,

the property would have a significantly longer frontage. The increased bulk of the building would disrupt and obscure views through the site to the verdant open land to the rear. Given the scale of the proposal, this would equate to a small but nevertheless harmful loss of openness of the Green Belt. In this regard, the Framework is clear that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt

14. As part of the proposal, a small detached building to the rear of the property would be demolished. Consequently, when viewed from the direction of Blackburn, there would be a small increase in visual openness to the rear of the dwelling. However, when viewed from the front, the location of the outbuilding would be screened by the proposal such that its demolition would not mitigate the visual loss of openness arising from the proposal. Moreover, there is little before me to suggest that future outbuildings could not in any case be constructed at the site using permitted development rights.

Other Considerations

15. The proposed double garage would be used to store the appellant's landscape gardening business equipment. However, there is little to indicate that existing outbuildings, including proposed for demolition, are unsuitable for storage or that similar benefits could not be achieved by alternate means. Therefore, this is a matter that carries limited weight in favour.
16. The proposal would provide enhanced internal living accommodation and a private balcony to the rear. While this would be a private benefit to the appellant, the plans illustrate that the existing dwelling, albeit modest, provides a reasonable extent of living accommodation. Therefore, this is a matter that carries limited weight in favour of the scheme.

Green Belt balance

17. I have concluded that the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt. It would result in a small loss of openness of the Green Belt. In accordance with the Framework, these matters attract substantial weight.
18. There are no other considerations that would clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and loss of openness. Therefore, the very special circumstances necessary to justify the proposal do not exist.

Conclusion

19. For the reasons set out above, the appeal should be dismissed.

Sarah Manchester

INSPECTOR

