Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 October 2015

by P Willows  BA DipUED MRTP
an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 23 October 2015

Appeal Ref: APP/F4410/D/15/3128915
Rose Cottage, Selby Road, Askern, Doncaster DN6 0ET

- 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 Mark Hinchcliffe against the decision of Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council.
- The application Ref 15/00201/FUL, dated 28 January 2015, was refused by notice dated 9 April 2015.
- The development proposed is a new two storey extension to side and rear of property.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issues

2. The site falls within an area of Green Belt. Accordingly, the main issues are:
   - Whether the proposal is inappropriate development for the purposes of the National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) and development plan policy;
   - The effect of the development on the openness of the Green Belt;
   - The effect of the development on the character and appearance of the building and the area; and
   - If the development is inappropriate, 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 the development.

Reasons

Whether the proposal is inappropriate development within the Green Belt

3. Policy ENV3 of the Doncaster Unitary Development Plan indicates that limited extensions to existing dwellings in the Green Belt may be permissible. Policy ENV14 indicates that extensions in the Green Belt are not permitted where they would significantly increase the size of the original dwelling. Neither policy is entirely consistent with the Framework, which limits the weight I attach to them. Core Strategy Policy CS3 says that national policy will be applied in respect of the Green Belt.
4. The Framework advises at Paragraph 89 that, other than in the case of a number of specified exceptions, the construction of new buildings within the Green Belt is inappropriate. The listed exceptions include 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. Rose Cottage was built in the 1970s and a store/garage extension was subsequently added. Figures provided in the planning officer’s report, which are not disputed, indicate that the extension now proposed would result in a building about 120% larger (in terms of its volume) than the original building. In my view cumulative additions to the original building of this overall scale, more than doubling its size, would be disproportionate. Accordingly, the proposal is inappropriate development within the Green Belt.

6. The Framework advises that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be permitted except in very special circumstances. I attach substantial weight to the harm arising due to the inappropriate nature of the development.

Openness

7. The extension would add significantly to the existing building to the front and side. As a result, and notwithstanding the extensive size of the plot, the openness of the site and the Green Belt would be reduced. The extent of the loss would be small and would be unobtrusive due to the extensive planting and fencing that restricts views of the site. Nevertheless, it gives rise to further conflict with the Framework, which advises at Paragraph 79 that openness is an essential characteristic of Green Belts. Accordingly, it adds, to a limited extent, to the harm to the Green Belt.

Character and appearance

8. Although the appellant considers that the extension would be a subordinate addition, it would, despite its slight set back and lowered ridge, change the form of the house, resulting in a significantly wider, deeper building. However, the building already has a noticeably elongated appearance due to the extended single storey element. This would help to balance out the proposed addition to the 2 storey element. I also accept that the design detailing and materials would be appropriate. With these points in mind, there would be no harm to the character and appearance of the building as it stands, in its already extended form. Accordingly, I find no conflict with UDP Policy ENV54, which seeks to ensure that extensions are sympathetic to existing buildings. Any visual effect on the wider area would also be limited due to the restricted views of the site. I do not, however, consider that the appearance of the building would be improved, and regard this as a neutral factor in my overall assessment of the scheme.

Other considerations

9. I appreciate that the development would provide improved accommodation for the appellant and his large family. As the appellant points out, the Framework emphasises the need to make places better for people. However, the house is already of a good size and is capable of providing desirable family accommodation as it is, even if falling short of the appellant’s ideal. Accordingly, I attach only limited weight to this consideration.
10. The appellant says that other large extensions have been permitted elsewhere in the Green Belt nearby, and refers to a particular case at Norton Common Farm, which is said to have been increased in volume by 90%. However, even that is less than the 120% cumulative increase here, and I therefore attach little weight to it.

11. I accept that the isolated location of Rose Cottage means that the extension would not have any harmful effect on nearby properties and also note that there have been no objections made to the Council regarding the proposal. I regard these as neutral factors rather than positive benefits of the scheme.

Conclusion

12. Having considered all matters raised in support of the proposal I conclude that, collectively, they do not clearly outweigh the harm I have identified in relation to the Green Belt. Accordingly, very special circumstances do not exist and the proposal is at odds with Policy CS3 and the Framework. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Peter Willows
INSPECTOR