

ITEM 5.7

Application: 2021/1259

Location: 1 Carewell Cottages, St Piers Lane, Lingfield, Surrey, RH7 6PN

Proposal: Erection of two storey side and single storey rear extensions.

Ward: Dormansland and Felcourt

Decision Level: Planning Committee

Constraints – GB, ASAC, AWOOD within 500m, GAT_BIRDSTRIKE, D Road Class, SPA, Gatwick safeguarding

RECOMMENDATION:

REFUSE

1. This application has been called to the Planning Committee at the request of Cllr Steeds.

Summary

2. Planning permission is sought for the erection of a part single/part two storey side and rear extension to an existing residential dwelling. The proposal would not result in significant harm to neighbouring amenity; however, given the scale and bulk it is considered to result in harm to the character and appearance of the dwelling. Furthermore, the proposed extension would result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building on the site and, as such, would cause harm to the Green Belt with no very special circumstances present to clearly outweigh the harms identified, contrary to the NPPF and Policies DP10 and DP13 of the Tandridge District Local Plan Part 2: Detailed Policies. As such, it is recommended planning permission be refused.

Site Description

3. The site comprises a two-storey semi-detached dwelling located on the eastern side of St Piers Lane within the Green Belt area of Lingfield. Residential properties are located sparsely within the local area with reasonably informal plot curtilages. The site features a deep front garden with space to the side and rear of the building to serve the occupants of the dwelling; this area is bounded by hedging and trees to offer screening from the highway which runs adjacent to the north western side. There is no allocated parking as far as can be identified and the site.

Relevant History

4. 2018/2440 – Two storey side extension and single storey rear extension – Withdrawn 12/02/2019

2019/746 – Erection of two storey side extension and single storey rear extension -Refused 06/06/2019

2019/1280 – Erection of two storey side and single storey rear extensions – Refused 06/11/2019 and dismissed at appeal 01/07/2020

2020/1214 - Erection of two-storey side and single storey rear extensions – Refused 16/10/2020

There is no other relevant history associated with this site.

5. Whilst there is limited history with regards to enlargements, the single storey rear element is considered to be an addition based on the site plans from the neighbouring property under 89/1070 and 99/709. Furthermore, the attached “shed and coal bunker”, shown on the submitted existing plans would therefore not be considered as part of the original dwelling. This is consistent with the view taken by this Authority in previous formal decisions.

Key Issues

6. The site is located in the Green Belt where the key issues are whether the proposal constitutes inappropriate development and, if so, whether very special circumstances are demonstrated that clearly outweigh the harm by definition and any other harm; and also impact on character and appearance and residential amenity.

Proposal

7. Planning permission is sought for the erection of a two-storey side extension and single storey rear extension. The extension would provide a reception room and enlarged kitchen/dining room at ground floor level and a bedroom and bathroom at first floor level. The extension would be set down approximately 0.2m lower than the existing ridge height of the main dwelling and the width of the two-storey extension would measure 2.4m.

Development Plan Policy

8. Tandridge District Core Strategy 2008 – Policies CSP1 and CSP18
9. Tandridge Local Plan: Part 2 – Detailed Policies 2014 – Policies DP1, DP7, DP10 and DP13
10. Woldingham Neighbourhood Plan 2016 – Not applicable
11. Limpsfield Neighbourhood Plan 2019 – Not applicable
12. Caterham, Chaldon and Whyteleafe Neighbourhood Plan 2021 – not applicable
13. Emerging Tandridge Local Plan 2033 – Policies TLP01, TLP02, TLP03 and TLP18

National Advice

14. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021)
15. Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

Statutory Consultation Responses

16. *Dormansland Parish Council – “No objection subject to an assessment to ensure compliance with DP10 and DP13 in terms of increase in size relative to*

the original building. If deemed compliant with those policies the increase in size appears to be very close to the maximum that would be permitted and therefore it is suggested that permitted development rights be removed to prevent further increase in size.”

17. *County Highways Authority* - As it is not considered that the likely net additional traffic generation, access arrangements and parking would have a material impact on the safety and operation of the public highway, the highway authority were not consulted on this application.

Other Representations

18. Third Party Comments – None received

Assessment

Green Belt

19. Paragraph 147 of the NPPF advises that inappropriate development is, by definition harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances with paragraph 148 adding that such circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. Paragraph 149 of the NPPF sets out a number of exceptions for the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt being regarded as inappropriate and, under criterion c), this includes 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 which applies to this proposal.
20. Local Plan Policy DP10 advises that within the Green Belt, planning permission for any inappropriate development which is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt, will normally be refused and will only be permitted where ‘very special circumstances’ exist that clearly outweigh any potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm.
21. Policy DP13 of the Local Plan lists exceptions to new buildings in the Green Belt being regarded as inappropriate development and includes an assessment for the extension/alteration of buildings and the re-use of buildings. In terms of extension/alteration proposals, these will be permitted where the proposal does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building as it existed at 31 December 1968 (for residential dwelling) or if constructed after the relevant date, as it was built originally.
22. The proposal is similar to the previously refused schemes under application references 2019/746, 2019/1280 and 2020/1214; although the width of the two-storey side extension has been reduced as part of this submission which has thus also reduced the scale. In relation to the mathematical assessment, it is considered that the volume of the original building was approximately 259.9m³. The single storey rear element is considered to be an existing addition totalling approximately 14.1m³ (based on neighbouring site applications site plans – application references 89/1070 and 99/709). It is not considered that the existing “shed and coal bunker”, shown on the submitted existing plans, formed part of the original dwelling. In the determination of this application a calculation of the volume of the whole building including the original, existing (noting which would be demolished as part of the proposal) and proposed additions has been

calculated to have a total volume of approximately 461.9m³ which is 78% over the volume of the original building.

23. The submitted planning statement states;

“The original building totals approximately 308 cubic metres. This comprises 275 cubic metres for the main two-storey dwelling and 33 cubic metres for the attached single storey rear shed and coal bunker. The Inspector did not dispute this.”

24. However, in this regard, the Inspector actually stated within the appeal decision (in relation to application 2019/1280);

“The Council has undertaken a mathematical assessment and calculates that the original building (including those parts to be demolished) along with the proposed additions would have a total volume of approximately 487.9 metres cubed, which it says equates to around a 87.7% increase over the volume of the original building. However, the appellant disputes the Council’s calculations. I note that the appellant has included the attached single storey rear shed and coal bunker within his calculations pertaining to the original building and has calculated the volume increase to be approximately 152 metres cubed, which is said to represent an approximate 49.1% increase over the size of the original building (taking account of a revised lower ridge height) ...

There is clearly a difference in opinion between parties as to what parts of the property at the site would constitute the original building. Corresponding to this, there is also difference between parties as to the resulting volume of the development that would take place. Taking the lesser of the two calculations, the addition would add 49.1% volume, this is, almost half the size of the existing property. This would represent a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building. As such, this would be inappropriate development that, by definition, would be harmful to the Green Belt and that would be contrary to the Framework and Policies DP10 and DP13 of the Local Plan.”

25. The submitted supporting statement states;

“The width of the two-storey side element has been reduced and the roof pitch to the ground floor rear section lowered such that the cumulative volume increase would be 120 cubic metres, which would represent an increase of some 38.9% over and above the original building.”

26. These figures submitted by the applicant are disputed by the Council with limited evidence as to how the percentage increase has been calculated. The Council has therefore proceeded to make an assessment based on our calculated figures as above and conclude that the development would result in a mathematically disproportionate addition.

27. Extensions in the Green Belt as stated within Local Plan Policy DP13 are also assessed for their visual impact. It is considered that the proposed extensions works would add significant bulk. The proposal, when considering its scale and previous additions, would result in a visually cumulatively disproportionate addition to the original dwelling. It therefore represents inappropriate development within the Green Belt and which would also reduce the openness of the site which amounts to demonstrable harm.

28. This proposal falls outside the range of new development that is stated to be acceptable within the Green Belt, paragraph 149 of the NPPF, and would comprise inappropriate development within the Green Belt by definition, contrary to Local Plan Policies DP10 and DP13. According to the NPPF, inappropriate development is by definition harmful and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Very special circumstances will be discussed below.
29. A query has been raised by a Council Member in relation to the neighbouring property and the enlargement of this; however, no recent planning applications for enlargement to the dwelling have been received with regards to No.2 Carewell Cottages with the last one submitted in 1999 when policies were substantially different to present. As such no significant weight is given to the enlargement of that property and the development must be assessed on its own merits in line with the current adopted Development Plan.

Character and Appearance

30. Policy CSP18 of the Core Strategy 2008 requires new development to be of a high standard of design that must reflect and respect the character, setting and local context, including those features that contribute to local distinctiveness. Policy DP7 of the Local Plan 2014 provides the Council's general policy for new development and requires proposals to respect and contribute to distinctiveness of the area in which it is located and to have a complementary building design and materials.
31. It is considered that, by reason of the scale and design of the proposed two storey side extension it would have a harmful impact upon the character and appearance of the existing building and surrounding area. Whilst it is recognised that the width and bulk of the extension has been reduced following the refusal of previous applications, it is not considered that this is sufficient to address the harm previously identified.
32. In relation to the impact of the two-storey side extension under application 2019/1280, within the appeal decision the Inspector stated;
- “Although the proposed two storey side extension would be stepped back from the frontage of the host dwelling and would have a lower ridge height, the extension would have a wider frontage than that of the existing dwelling. The width, combined with the overall size of the two storey side extension, would create an extension of larger appearance appended to the host property and would visually compete with the host building. As a result, it would not have the appearance of a subservient addition to the existing dwelling, despite being designed to match the appearance of the existing dwelling. Consequently, the side extension would not reflect or respect the character of the host property.”*
33. Whilst the width of the extension has been reduced and is no longer greater than the width of the existing dwelling, this is only by a small amount and would therefore continue to visually compete with the appearance of the dwelling. The development would therefore not remain subservient and detract from the distinctive character of the semi-detached property. The proposed materials would not harm existing building or surrounding area. However, overall the proposal would not respect or contribute to the distinctive character and appearance of the existing property. As such the proposal would not comply with the provisions of Local Plan Policy DP7 and Core Strategy CSP18.

Residential Amenity

34. Policy CSP18 of the Core Strategy advises that development must not significantly harm the amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring properties by reason of overlooking, overshadowing, visual intrusion, noise, traffic and any adverse effect. Criteria 6-9 of Policy DP7 of the Local Plan Part 2: Detailed Policies seek also to safeguard amenity, including minimum privacy distances that will be applied to new development proposals.
35. The design and scale of the proposed works would not result in unacceptable harm to neighbouring amenity whilst also considering the distance between the plots and location extension to the side elevation. There is a window proposed at first floor level to the side (north west) elevation; however, this would be located over 34m away from the nearest building forming part of Lingfield College, Le Clerc House, and would overlook St Piers Lane. As such it is not considered that adverse overlooking could occur in this case. The proposal would not result in an overbearing or overshadowing to neighbouring amenity. As such it is considered that the proposal would comply with Local Plan Policy DP7 and Core Strategy CSP18 with regards to the impact upon neighbouring amenity. However, this does not outweigh the harm to the Green Belt as discussed above.

Very Special Circumstances

36. According to the NPPF, inappropriate development is by definition harmful and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm, including its openness, are clearly outweighed by other considerations.
37. As stated above, the Council disputes the calculations provided within the application details and the development is therefore considered to be mathematically disproportionate based on the Council's figures. Furthermore, it is also considered that the proposal would result in visually disproportionate addition in the Green Belt. In this case, no justifications for other considerations accompany the application and therefore no very special circumstances are identified which clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and also character.

Other matters

38. The site is located within 500 metres of an Ancient Woodland. Given the distance to the designated area, it was not considered necessary to consult the Tree Officer. No objections are therefore raised and is therefore considered acceptable.

Conclusion

39. Although the impact to neighbouring amenity is minimal, the development would significantly impact the openness of the Green Belt and result in a mathematically and visually disproportionate dwelling which is by definition, harmful to the Green Belt. There is no Very Special Circumstances demonstrated. Furthermore, given the scale and bulk of the proposed additions the development would significantly harm the character and appearance of the existing dwelling. Therefore, it fails to comply with detailed Policies DP7, DP10 and DP13 and Core Strategy CSP18 and as such, recommended for refusal.

RECOMMENDATION:**REFUSE**

1. The proposal would result in a disproportionate addition to the original building which would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt to which substantial harm must be attached. There are no very special circumstances present to clearly outweigh the harm by reason of inappropriateness and other harm such as to justify the proposal. As such, the development is contrary to the NPPF and Policies DP10 and DP13 of the Tandridge District Local Plan Part 2: Detailed Policies (2014).
2. The proposal, by reason of its scale, design and bulk, would fail to respect and reflect the character and appearance of the existing property resulting in significant harm, contrary to Policy CSP18 of the Tandridge District Core Strategy (2008) and Policy DP7 of the Tandridge District Local Plan Part 2: Detailed Policies (2014).