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Green Belt Assessment

PROPOSED SINGLE STOREY REAR EXT. & RAISED TERRACE AREA

Introduction

This green belt assessment has been written to support the associated Planning application Ref. 20/01186/HOUS.

The assessment will look to provide an overview of the site, its location and significance within the allocated green belt space as well as assess the proposals impact on the area and green belt while referencing relevant Planning Policy set forth by the Local Authority.

Site Analysis

The site is located along Rochdale Road in Castleton, Rochdale immediately facing a local garden store. The site belongs to a row of semidetached properties lining the west side of Rochdale Road. Each dwelling along the road offers a consistent street scene aesthetic by predominantly using redbrick facades and white Upvc window and door frames.

Ariel site photographs illustrate that almost each dwelling along the row has been developed in some way with extensions being situated mainly to the rear of the properties with a mixture of single storey and two storey extensions.

The area allocated covers a minimum 70m radius area when measured from the site and therefore includes sits such as ALL IN ONE GARDEN CENTRE, St.Johns Church and

Thornham Cricket Club in addition to residential streets and roads including Thornham Lane, Grange Road and Church Avenue.

As previously outlined, a number of residential properties in the area have been extended to the side and rear. Unfortunately due to the lack of available information provide by the Local Authority Planning Website, it is unclear which extensions are lawful and to what extent the extensions have developed.

Planning Policy

RMBC provides guidance to developments within the Green Belt. A number of Local and National policy aids in the design of developments in the green belt as well as provides guidance to restrict inappropriate development on sites belonging to the green belt.

As per RMBC Unitary Development Plan (2016), policy G/D/2 outlines that the Green Belt will be protected from inappropriate development in order to maintain the framework of open land separating and surrounding the urban areas of the borough.

Additionally Core Strategy policy G4 seeks to restrict development within the Green Belt to the limited types of development which are deemed appropriate by national planning policies unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated. Paragraphs 143 and 144 of the NPPF state that, as with previous Green Belt policy, inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. '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.

Paragraph 145 of the NPPF indicates that "a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in Green Belt", subject to the following exceptions:

- a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;

- b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green

Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;

- **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;**

- d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;

- e) limited infilling in villages;

- f) limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and

- g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:
    - – not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or

    - – not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.

Therefore, the main consideration in assessing the principle of development is whether the proposed scheme constitutes inappropriate development within the Green Belt and, if so, whether very special circumstances have been demonstrated which may outweigh the presumption against development.

In respect of the above policy guidance, Section 5.20 of the of the Council's adopted 'Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development '(2016) Supplementary Planning Document states that normally, in principle, extensions that result in up to a 35% increase in floor space or volume over and above the original dwelling would normally be considered appropriate and not disproportionate (this calculation would include previous extensions to the original dwelling, which is defined as the dwelling as it was first built or as it stood on 1 July 1948). However, the guidance goes on to state that the characteristics of properties and proposals will vary significantly and there may be instances when a 35% increase would be

considered disproportionate and other occasions when a greater than 35% increase may be considered proportionate.

Paragraph 79 of the NPPF also states that “the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence”.

The five purposes of including land in the Green Belt are outlined in paragraph 80 of the NPPF as follows:

- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

Proposal

The proposal looks to provide a single storey rear extension to the host dwelling increasing the overall kitchen and dining area to the rear of the dwelling. In addition to this, the proposal includes the addition of raised decking to the rear of the dwelling to offer more usable amenity space to the property given the harsh topography of the site. The raised decking would also provide a glass balustrade along its edging as well as stepped access to the lower garden area.

The proposed single storey extension offers a modern aesthetic often associated with properties matching the host dwelling style and location with the introduction of a lantern being an effective way of adding passive natural light to the property.

Assessment

When applying Planning Policy to the proposal, it is key to first understand the nature of the proposal largely matches that of developments to houses in the immediate area, this would indicate that the proposed development is considered appropriate in principle.

The single storey nature of the proposal allows the extension to sit comfortably within the site while respecting the scale of the host dwelling. The scale of the proposal is considered to have very little impact on the green belt given the amount of development in the area. The extension does not contribute to urban sprawl and conversely looks to respect the Green Belt and provide an opportunity for current and future users of the site to enjoy the green belt to its fullest.

With regards to appropriateness of the development, as previously mentioned, the development constitutes additional residential living space in a single storey design which, as evidenced by local development, is an appropriate use. The existing volume of the host dwelling is 357m³ with the proposed extension / development volume being 89m³. This provides a total proposed volume of 446m³ resulting in a 25% increase in volume; this excludes the volume of the decking and associated stairs. By including the decking area and stairs the percentage increases to 32%, it is considered that the void beneath the decking does not provide additional enclosed volume and should not be included within the percentage increases of the development. As described the proposed volume is under the required 35% volume increase to the host dwelling set out within RMBC supplementary planning document and complies with section 'C' of Paragraph 145 of the NPPF.

The proposal also contributes greatly to the Green Belt by including a raised decking area, this massively increases the dwellings sustainability and inclusiveness by allowing for level access to the rear of the host dwelling and an inclusive amenity space by way of the raised decking. This contribution should be seen as a significant asset to the dwelling and the Green Belt as a whole as it aids in reducing the need for development on green sites to provide accessible housing while also increasing the social value of the Green Belt. Raised decking and terrace areas are also evident to the rear of a number of dwellings in the area including 861, 859, 853 and 849 Rochdale Road.

Conclusion

Based on the above assessment, it is the opinion of this report that the development, by virtue of its scale and design, meets the requirements set forth in the SPD guidance. It is considered that the proposal does not consist of inappropriate development given the proposal is comfortably below the 35% requirement and does not contribute any negative factors to the green belt . It is also considered the development has little to no impact on the openness of the green belt given the nature of the extension and the scale and design of approved / allowed development within the area since 2016.