

Design Statement

Introduction

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was revised in July 2018. It says local planning authorities should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the green belt, with a few specific exceptions. Beyond that, it states that "inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the green belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances".

In paragraph 144, the framework explains what that means in practice: "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."

The NPPF states that local planning authorities shouldn't approve the construction of new buildings unless they propose the following exceptions:

- *Buildings which aid sustainable developments*
- Buildings which are to be used for agriculture or forestry
- *Facilities associated with outdoor sports or recreation*
- Facilities for cemeteries
- Extensions and alterations to existing buildings which remain proportionate and within the character of the original
- The replacement of a building according to the same parameters as the above
- Limited affordable housing
- Limited infilling in villages

Special Circumstances

The applicant offers the following reasons for the proposed tree house to be considered 'Special circumstances'

1. Sustainable Development

The proposed tree house will be constructed from entirely natural materials of wood and timber shingled roof, with all materials and construction methods, obtained from a sustainable source sympathetic to its setting.

2. Appearance

The simple construction would blend in with the natural surroundings and is, by its very nature, designed to look as unobtrusive as possible. It is felt that the proposal would have minimal impact or detrimental effect on the overall character of the site and green belt setting. The tree house would only be partially visible from the public road and would be set some 30m away from the main house.

3. Recreation

The proposed tree house would be used entirely for recreational purposes. It is therefore, not in itself, for any other purpose than to provide a source of enjoyment and adventure for the applicant's children.

4. Scale

In terms of the overall massing appearance and siting of the proposed tree house, it would be in keeping with the existing Grade II listed building of Churchill Old Farm and would not detract from its long-term preservation and would rather enhance its appeal and amenity provision.

5. Personal Circumstance

The applicants have five children, that they feel would most benefit from the proposal and enable the garden to be used to its full potential and thus promote the use and an appreciation of this natural environment.

Additional Information

Subject to the grant of planning approval, an arboricultural report will be provided, to ensure that the tree is capable of supporting the proposed structure and there will be no immediate or long-term damage to the tree's health.

Summary

In summary, the proposed tree house would not constitute an 'Inappropriate development' would have little or no detriment to the listed building and surrounding green belt land but would, moreover, improve the character and amenity for the family that now occupy the site.

The development being 'minor' in nature and as such, would not pose undue harm to the character and value of the existing green belt.