

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 February 2017

by Claire Victory BA (Hons) BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 8th March 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/A3655/W/16/3161628

Clubhouse, Traditions Golf Club, Pyrford Road, Woking, Surrey GU22 8UE

- 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 Traditions Golf Club against the decision of Woking Borough Council.
 - The application Ref PLAN/2016/0080, dated 27 January 2016, was refused by notice dated 27 April 2016.
 - The development proposed is internal alterations, infill courtyard, ground and first floor extensions, remove existing stairs and enlarge viewing gallery with new stairs, entrance porch, alterations to parking and driveway.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted for internal alterations, infill courtyard, ground and first floor extensions, remove existing stairs and enlarge viewing gallery with new stairs, entrance porch, alterations to parking and driveway at Clubhouse, Traditions Golf Club, Pyrford Road, Woking, Surrey GU22 8UE in accordance with planning Ref PLAN/2016/0081, dated 27 January 2016 and subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

Procedural Matter

2. I have also dealt with another appeal Ref: APP/A3655/W/16/3161629 on this site. That appeal is the subject of a separate decision.

Main Issues

3. The main issues in the appeal are:
 - Whether the proposed development would constitute a disproportionate addition to the Golf Club in the Green Belt; and
 - If the development would be a disproportionate addition in the Green Belt, whether the harm to the Green Belt arising from this, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations, so as to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify it.

Reasons

4. Traditions Golf Club is formed of a detached building fronting Pyrford Road, with an 18 hole golf course behind, and car parking areas to either side, with access taken from Pyrford Road. The golf course itself, to the east, does not form part of the appeal site but is in the same ownership. The surrounding area is residential in character.
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5. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), in the third bullet point of paragraph 89, allows alterations and extensions to buildings within the Green Belt providing they would not constitute disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. This is defined within Annex 2 of the Framework as ***a building as it existed on 1 July 1948 or, if constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was built originally.***
6. The golf clubhouse was formerly a farmhouse at Lee Farm. The Inspector allowing the appeal noted that the conversion of the farmhouse to the golf clubhouse would result in a 160% increase in the size of the building. No figures have been provided by either party to dispute this. My starting point is therefore the building before me, taking into account the enlargement by the earlier planning permission¹.
7. Policy DM13 of the Development Management Policies (DMP) DPD (2016) at Section B reiterates the advice in the Framework regarding extensions and alterations to existing buildings in the Green Belt. Further to the above, paragraph 5.40 of the reasoned justification to that policy states that different locations and forms of development present different site specific characteristics, and the details of any application will be judged on its own individual merits. No figure is set out in the development plan as to what might be considered as a disproportionate addition, but the Council in its appeal statement asserts that a rule of thumb for similar development within Surrey and the South East has been 20-40% above the volume of the original volume of the building. It also notes that in some cases such as in open and prominent locations, an increase in volume of less than 20% may still be disproportionate.
8. The proposal involves some internal alterations to provide a larger floorspace for club members to use as a lounge area by squaring off the two rear projections at ground floor level and taking part of the existing golf shop, and the roof used to extend the existing balcony viewing area at first floor level. The rear extension would not project further forward than the main rear elevation. An internal courtyard that is proposed to be infilled is presently used as part of the kitchen and would become part of the new bar area. The small front infill section would not project forward of the main elevation. In addition, a proposed function room at first floor level currently in use as office space was included as part of the clubhouse in the original planning permission and so should not be considered as additional floorspace. The proposed porch at the side would have a flat roof with two columns and would be an open canopy.
9. There has already been an increase of 160% above the size of the original building. However, this was accepted by the Inspector in allowing the construction of the golf course and conversion of the farmhouse to a clubhouse. Taken together, the alterations and extension subject of the present appeal would result in a relatively modest increase in floorspace over and above what has already been permitted, and the proposed additions would have a limited visual impact on the surrounding area, and would be largely screened from public view. Accordingly, I consider that the proposal would not be a disproportionate addition to the original building and the development would not be inappropriate development.

¹ Paragraph 17 of Appeal Ref: T/APP/A3655/A/96/272396/P2 dated 23 June 1997

10. The proposal would also comply with DMP Policy DM3² which prioritises the re-use of any existing buildings in proposals for outdoor sport and recreation. The Council is concerned with the reduction in size of the club shop but it is up to the Golf Club how they wish to organise their facilities internally and this would have no effect on the external appearance of the building. Although there would be a small loss of the golf shop floor space overall there would be a net gain for the Clubhouse as a whole, for the benefit of users.
11. Furthermore, whilst the Council considers it has not been demonstrated that the uplift in the floor area is for appropriate facilities for outdoor sport and recreation, that is not the test in the Framework for extensions to existing buildings. As the proposal has met the requirements of bullet point 3 paragraph 89 of the Framework it is not necessary to consider whether it is an appropriate facility for outdoor sport and recreation.
12. I conclude that the proposal would not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, and would comply with Policy CS6 of the Woking Core Strategy (2012) and DMP Policy DM13. As such, there is no need for me to consider whether any very special circumstances might exist to justify the need for the development.

Conclusion

13. I have found that the appeal would be acceptable, subject to certain conditions. I have specified the approved plans for certainty. A condition requiring the external materials used in the extension to match existing building is also required to safeguard the character and appearance of the building and the surrounding area.
14. The Council require details of the design of the proposed club house porch to 1:50 scale including external finishes to be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. However, the building is not within a Conservation Area nor is it listed. The plans and elevations submitted at 1:100 scale show the proposed roof as a simple flat roof and two columns, and so I do not consider it is necessary for the appellant to provide further detailed drawings at 1:20 scale of the porch, in addition to the proposed external materials condition.
15. For the above reasons I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Claire Victory

INSPECTOR

² PolicyDM3 supersedes Policy REC9 of the Woking Local Plan (1999)

Schedule of Conditions

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: OS Location Plan; existing Site Plan Ref. PYR 1505/9; proposed Site Plan Ref. PYR 1505/7; existing ground floor plan Ref PYR 1505/1; proposed ground floor plan Ref PYR 1505/4 Rev C; existing first floor plan Ref PYR 1505/2; proposed first floor plan Ref PYR 1505/5 Rev B; existing and proposed roof plans Ref PYR 1505/8; existing elevations Ref PYR 1505/3; proposed elevations Ref PYR 1505/6 Rev C.
- 3) The external finishes of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building in material, colour, style, bonding and texture.

-----END OF CONDITIONS-----