

Proposed Single Storey Extension at Side/Rear

54 Starling Road, Radcliffe M26 4LN

PLANNING STATEMENT

Introduction

In a letter dated 23 December 2022 the planning office pointed out that the house is in the Green Belt and raised the issue that the volume of the proposed extension may exceed the Council's guideline in SPD6 that "domestic extensions in the Green Belt should not normally exceed a third of the volume of the original dwelling". Reference is also made to the National Planning Policy Framework although the quoted paragraph numbers are from a superseded version of the NPPF.

Number 54 Starling Road is an imposing traditional semi detached house, one of a number of similar houses on the east side of the road. It has an enormous rear garden bounded by Moorgate Road (public footpath 215A).

It is proposed to demolish a detached double garage and a conservatory at the rear of the house. They would be replaced by a larger single storey extension to include a family room, single garage, shower room and garden room. The design and materials would match the existing house, including pitched, slate roofs.

Planning Policy

The proposed extensions do add more than 33% volume to the original house and it is necessary to justify the proposal in terms of Green Belt policy and guidance.

Bury Unitary Development Plan was adopted as long ago as August 1997 and, despite its age, is still Bury's development plan. Policy OL1/2 points out that "limited extension" of existing dwellings is "appropriate development" in the Green Belt "provided that this would not result in disproportionate additions" to the original dwelling.

Supplementary Planning Document 6 "Alterations and Extensions to Residential Properties" was updated in January 2010 to supplement UDP Policies including H2/3 – Extensions and Alterations.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was issued in its latest revised form in July 2021 and supersedes parts of the UDP. Like previous guidance, it points out that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, with the emphasis on sustainable development.

Guidance in the NPPF on Green Belt is similar, but not identical, to previous policy. Appropriate development 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" (para 149). The NPPF does not distinguish between dwellings and other buildings, does not define "disproportionate" and does not specify an acceptable volume. The NPPF does not preclude "inappropriate development" if a case can be made that there will be no harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

The NPPF points out that local planning authorities should look for solutions rather than problems and should seek to approve applications for sustainable development wherever possible.

Justification

The original house has a volume of 651 cubic metres. The buildings to be demolished have a volume of 145 cubic metres, making a total of 796 cubic metres. The proposed extension has a volume of 282 cubic metres, a 43% increase in the volume of original house. The proposal does therefore constitute inappropriate development requiring “very special circumstances” to be put forward. The development should not be judged on size alone.

- The “one third” figure in SPD6 should only “normally” be applied, depending on other factors. It is simply guidance not a rule.
- Green Belt policy in the NPPF refers to “disproportionate” additions without defining the meaning of “disproportionate” or tying it to a precise figure. In my opinion, the extension is proportionate to the house despite its volume exceeding the recommended percentage.
- The extension will be narrower than the existing garage and equally unobtrusive when viewed from Starling Road.
- There is an irregular pattern to the extensions and outbuildings which project behind the houses, numbers 40 to 72 Starling Road. The extension will therefore not stand out as being any more visually obtrusive than other existing extensions.
- Given the size of the rear garden it cannot be said that the site will be over developed.
- The garden, and consequently the extension, is well screened from the adjacent public footpath by mature trees and other vegetation
- The design and materials complement the existing house and the neighbouring property and are appropriate to the Green Belt location.

There will be no harm to the openness of the Green Belt. There is no reason why planning permission should not be granted.