

Proposed Two Storey Garage/Entertainment Suite

Heatherslade, Greenacre Close, Shuttleworth, BL0 0HD

PLANNING STATEMENT

Introduction

The planning officer has raised the issue that the volume of the proposed building exceeds the Council's guideline in SPD6 (see below) that "domestic extensions in the Green Belt should not normally exceed a third of the volume of the original dwelling". Accordingly, justification is required that will, hopefully, lead to the granting of planning permission.

"Heatherslade" is a large detached house at the head of a steeply sloping unadopted road. It is screened from view by trees on three sides and can only be seen in long views from the other side of the valley beyond Ramsbottom.

Planning permission (number 60003) was granted in June 2016 to remodel the dwelling to include a conventional first floor and a single storey extension at the rear. The permission has been implemented, resulting in an attractive modern house.

It is now proposed to erect a separate two storey building with a garage and bedroom on the ground floor. The first floor would cover a greater area and contain a living/entertaining area with a balcony and a gym/wellbeing area.

The layout allows for flexible use of the building. It would accommodate family visitors from Ireland. The applicant is a physiotherapist who treats elite sports people including the successful St Helens Rugby League team. He has just acquired the building and existing business of CJM Physiotherapy in Tottington and is investing in the local area and community. The proposed building at Heatherslade could provide facilities to treat individual patients, complementing this business.

The applicant 's family are conscious of the need to protect the Green Belt and the local environment. Tthe children have been educated by living in such an area observing and feeding the wildlife that visits, including birds, squirrels and deer.

The appearance of the building would reflect the design of the house but there would be a flat roof to reduce both its volume and its visual impact. A sedum covered roof is proposed and the building would be highly energy efficient.

The building would be largely hidden by the existing house and mature trees to the other three sides. The balcony would take advantage of views across the valley to Holcombe Hill.

Planning Policy

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. The applicant is happy to receive an approval with appropriate conditions to make the development acceptable to the LPA.

Justification

The original house had a volume of 746 cubic metres. As extended it has a volume of 1029 cubic metres, an increase of 283 cubic metres., approximately 38%. The new building has a floor area of 240 square metres and a volume of some 730 cubic metres, only slightly less than that of the original house. The proposal does therefore constitute inappropriate development. However, there are mitigating circumstances and the development should not be judged on size alone.

- The “one third” figure in SPD6 should only “normally” be applied, dependant on other factors, and 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.
- The flat roofed building will be subsidiary to the house in its appearance.
- The building will be well screened and only partly visible from miles away on the other side of the valley. There will be no impact on the openness or visual amenity of the Green Belt.

The NPPF encourages the granting of planning permission for sustainable development. There will be no harm to the Green Belt. There is no reason why planning permission should not be granted.