

4/629X/AD/P



**Planning Inspectorate
Department of the Environment**

Room 1404, Tollgate House, Hoxton Street, Bristol BS2 9DJ

Telex 4445231

Direct Line 0272-218 927
Switchboard 0272-218811
GTM 1274

CALLUVE
TICER

109

020 4/8

David Clarke
47 Gravel Lane
Borwick
NEMEL NEWSTAD
Berts
RP1 1SA

Your reference

8918

Our reference

T/APP/A1910/A/89/117591/PAA

Date

- 2 AUG 89

- 1 AUG 1989

Sir

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1971, SECTION 36 AND SCHEDULE 9
APPEAL BY MR A RICKETT
APPLICATION NO: 4/1746/88

1. As you know I have been appointed by the Secretary of State for the Environment to determine this appeal against the decision of the Dacorum Borough Council to refuse planning permission for a 2-storey side extension to form additional living accommodation at The Bohaleigh Inn, Wimpstead Road, Wrovingdon, Herts. I have considered the written representations made by you, the Council, and those made by the Parish Council to the original application and those of interested persons to both the original application and this appeal. I inspected the site on 6 July 1989.

2. The appeal site is a large detached public house and restaurant with staff and guest accommodation, sited on the south-west side of the B4503. The site is in a rural location outside the built-up area of Wrovingdon within the Metropolitan Green Belt. There is a car parking area adjacent to the road, with a caravan park to the side and rear of it. Highercoft is a large detached dwelling situated in its own large gardens close to the common boundary with the Bohaleigh Inn.

3. At present there is an area of hardstanding with a plastic corrugated roof covering between the north-eastern facade of the Inn and the common fence boundary with Highercoft. There are a number of trees standing just within the adjacent garden of Highercoft, with branches overhanging the Inn's hardstanding area. The proposal is to construct a 2-storey extension with living accommodation above (ie, a bedroom, office/study, bathroom, sitting room) and enclosed parking for 3 cars in tandem below. The property has been considerably extended with new staff and guest bedrooms and a lounge extension. I saw on my visit that the rear curtilage has been extended since the date of the application and now includes an additional single storey building on the boundary with Highercoft.

4. From my reading of the representations and from my inspection of the site and its surroundings, I consider the main issue in this appeal is whether the proposal has sufficient justification to outweigh the policy objections to inappropriate development within the Green Belt, taking into account the effect of the proposal upon the appearance of the area, the amenity of neighbouring residents and road safety.

5. The site is within the Metropolitan Green Belt as defined in the Hertfordshire County Structure Plan 1986 Review and the Adopted Dacorum District Plan. Policy 1 of the latter is that planning permission will not be granted, except in very special circumstances, for development unless the Council is satisfied that the proposal is for the purposes of agriculture or forestry, leisure purposes



appropriate to the area and which cannot reasonably be located within urban areas; or other uses appropriate to the Metropolitan Green Belt. Policy 18 sets out planning criteria to be considered in dealing with applications, whilst Policy 19 refers to car parking standards.

6. I consider the proposal is contrary to normal Green Belt policy in that it does not fall within one of the categories of development referred to above. However, it is clear that the Council have seen fit in the past to allow development in this location, presumably as an exception to normal Green Belt policy, given that this is an existing and already well-established use. Therefore, I have considered whether it would be appropriate to make an exception in this case.

7. The general area has a rural character, although there is a nearby caravan park and large detached dwellings in large gardens opposite. The property is an attractive and interesting building and, in my opinion, if viewed in isolation from its surroundings, the extension has been carefully designed in keeping with the existing building. However the building already has a considerable bulk and prominence on this road frontage side and the extension would add not insignificantly to the visible building mass, albeit in an attractive manner. At the same time the 2-storey extension would be built hard up against the site boundary, immediately adjacent to which are several modest but mature trees which at present add to the attractive appearance of this rural area. In my opinion, these trees would inevitably be damaged during construction and would either then be removed or if retained, would give a cramped and hampered appearance to the proposed extension. Either of these effects would be undesirable.

8. The extension would have a side window at first floor level overlooking the garden of Highcroft. If the existing tree screen were at the same time damaged or removed during construction, a degree of overlooking and loss of privacy for Highcroft's residents would result. More significantly, the proposed new first floor rear room would have a window facing almost directly towards the patio windows of Highcroft. Some loss of privacy would be inevitable. Although these windows could be obscure glazed, overlooking from open windows in the summer could still take place. Such loss of amenity and privacy would be undesirable.

9. The extension would add to the living accommodation potentially available. On behalf of your client you state it would be used primarily for staff but in my view such a restriction, even if desirable and necessary, would be unenforceable in practical terms. The first floor extension of 75 sq m would in net terms add to the potential capacity and turnover of the business as a whole, inevitably creating more parking demands. At the same time, no extra parking space would be made available. I have only limited evidence before me as to the adequacy or otherwise of the existing parking situation. The building is said to have a gross area of around 1,000 sq m and 35 car parking spaces. You have not disputed the neighbour's contention that the business is successful and popular and that at peak times parking takes place on the classified road, which is unrestricted and without street lights. I consider it would be contrary to road safety to add to such a practice, but I have not accorded this factor undue weight.

10. Taking all these matters into account, I consider an extension in the position proposed would in particular unnecessarily harm the amenity of the neighbours and the area's appearance and that there is insufficient justification therefore for making an exception to normal Green Belt policy. I have considered your argument that the proposal would in net terms enable more overnight accommodation to be made available to those using leisure/recreation facilities in this part of the Green Belt, but in my view such a need does not outweigh the planning objections to the proposal. I have taken account of all the other matters raised in the representations, but none have been sufficient to lead me to a different conclusion.

11. For the above reasons, and in exercise of the powers conferred on me, I
hereby dismiss this appeal.

I am Sir
Your obedient servant

C. J. Checkley

C. J. CHECKLEY BA(Hons) MRTP
Inspector