
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 October 2016

by Grahame Gould BA MPhil MRTPI

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

Decision date: 18th October 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/U1430/W/16/3148950

**Pear Tree Cottage, Lunsford Manor, Ninfield Road, Bexhill, East Sussex
TN39 5JJ**

- 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 Mr and Mrs F Holt against the decision of Rother District Council.
 - The application Ref RR/2016/115/P, dated 7 January 2016, was refused by notice dated 2 March 2016.
 - The development proposed is described as 'erection of 3 garage group for secure parking of private motor vehicles (in lieu of existing open air parking)'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the countryside.

Reasons

3. The appeal site forms part of a parcel of land owned by the appellants that lies to the south of Pear Tree Cottage and this land is being used as an extension to the grounds of the cottage. This southern parcel of land is in part occupied by two timber sheds, linked to another by a roof, creating a structure similar to a carport, and various other sheds and/or outbuildings.
 4. The development would involve the construction of three detached, flat roofed, timber clad, single garages, for the parking of vehicles associated with the occupation of Pear Tree Cottage. Those garages would be sited at the southern extremity of the appellants' landholding and would replace the open air parking that is currently permitted elsewhere. The appellants submit that they require the garages in order to provide secure parking facilities for their vehicles because of the '... isolated position ...' of their property and because of a covenant that applies to Pear Tree Cottage, which only permits forecourt parking to be undertaken for a limited number of hours within any given day within the Lunsford Manor complex.
 5. For the purposes of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy of 2014 (the Core Strategy) this site is within the open countryside. The Core Strategy's Policies OSS4, RA2 and RA3 variously seek to safeguard the intrinsic value and locally distinctive character of the countryside, by avoiding development that would be harmful to the countryside's character and appearance.
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6. The proposed garages, while being modestly proportioned, would add to the proliferation of structures that are present within the appellants' landholding. I find that the new garages would fail to maintain the generally open character of the countryside at this point. I recognise that the garages would generally be screened from public view by the recently installed gates and planted evergreen trees that adjoin the access onto Pear Tree Lane. However, the above mentioned Core Strategy policies seek to maintain the character of the countryside, as well as its appearance, and the provision of additional buildings this far beyond the buildings within the Lunsford Manor complex would be at odds with the countryside's open character.
7. I am sympathetic to the appellants' wish to have secure parking available to them. However, I am not persuaded that the provision of garaging would provide a level of security significantly greater than the prevailing situation, especially as the above mentioned evergreen trees and gates provide some physical deterrent to unauthorised access to the appellants' land. While other security measures might be required to enhance the security arrangements, I am not persuaded that they would need to be so 'extreme' as to have a greater impact upon the character of the countryside at this point when compared with the construction of three garages. I am also of the opinion that in visual terms there would be no particular advantage in substituting garaging for open air parking.
8. For the reasons given above I conclude that the development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area and because of that harm there would be unacceptable conflict with Policies OSS4, RA2 and RA3 of the Core Strategy.

Conclusion

9. For the reasons given above the appeal is dismissed.

Grahame Gould

INSPECTOR