

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 January 2017

by Martin Andrews MA(Planning) BSc(Econ) DipTP & DipTP(Dist) MRTPI

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

Decision date: 09 February 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/U1430/D/16/3162301

Little Paddock, High Street, Ticehurst, Wadhurst TN5 7BG

- 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 M Wilson against the decision of Rother District Council.
 - The application, Ref. RR/2016/2149/P, dated 11 August 2016, was refused by notice dated 22 September 2016.
 - The development proposed is a loft conversion, provision of an entrance porch and associated alterations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a loft conversion, provision of an entrance porch and associated alterations at Little Paddock, High Street, Ticehurst in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref. RR/2016/2149/P, dated 11 August 2016, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision;
 - 2) The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Drawing Nos. 16-1291-LSP; 16-1291-2; 16-1291-3; 16-1291-4A.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the appearance of the existing dwelling and on the character and appearance of the surrounding area, including the street scene of this part of the High Street.

Reasons

3. The Council's concern relates mainly to the proposed dormers, with the assertion that because of their size, design, siting and materials they would be too large, top heavy and incongruous. In the Council's view, the appeal scheme would be out of character and proportion with the existing dwelling and result in an adverse effect on a street scene that forms part of the approach to the historic core of Ticehurst.
 4. On my visit to Little Paddock and its surroundings I made two main observations. Firstly, within the firmly residential context the buildings in this part of Ticehurst are extremely varied in their age, type, design and materials. This variety includes the housing estate of former (and perhaps in part still existing) Local Authority tenure in Springfields to the north. Secondly, I saw
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that Little Paddock itself stands out as a building of no design merit. Its front elevation includes a regimented unattractive fenestration unrelieved by any form of entrance (the 'front' door is in the eastern flank elevation) and the low eaves line results in a dominant and featureless front roof slope. Moreover, with two storey dwellings to either side, Little Paddocks' low profile gives it a squat appearance, and combined with the aforementioned absence of any other design merit this results in the building drawing the eye as a negative feature in the street scene.

5. The appeal scheme introduces a 'proper' front door and porch to improve the dwelling's legibility and also front dormers, which I consider to be proportionate to the roof slope and to counter the existing featureless character. In addition the dormers would lessen the squat appearance by, as the appellant points out, continuing the line of first floor windows in this part of the High Street. The flat roofs of the dormers are in my assessment more appropriate than pitched roofs bearing in mind the rectilinear form of the host building.
6. To the rear, I agree with the Council that the dormers would be somewhat oversized and acknowledge that this is a disadvantage of the proposal. On the other hand, I accept that they are necessary given the unviable alternative of almost a complete re-build to raise the roof. I also support the proposed external materials that, although disliked by the Council, will freshen up the bland appearance of the dwelling to make it more distinctive but less discordant in its mixed setting of new and older housing.
7. Overall, I conclude that the proposal would have an enhanced rather than a harmful effect on the appearance of the existing dwelling and the character and appearance of the surrounding area and the street scene of this part of the High Street. Despite the scale of the rear dormers there would in my view be no unacceptable conflict with Policy HG8 of the Rother District Local Plan 2006; Policies OSS4 & EN3 of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 and Section 7: 'Requiring Good Design' of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.
8. I shall therefore allow the appeal. A condition requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans is needed for the avoidance of doubt. The suggested condition in the Appeal Questionnaire requiring the external materials to match the existing is not appropriate in this case.

Martin Andrews

INSPECTOR