

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 February 2017

by Les Greenwood MRTPI

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

Decision date: 10 March 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Y9507/D/16/3165266

Heath Ridge, Graffham Common Road, Graffham GU28 0PT

- 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 Gold Oak Investments against the decision of the South Downs National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref SDNP/16/03734/HOUS was refused by notice dated 13 October 2016.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a 2 storey side extension, a single storey rear extension, a double garage to the rear and a new access/egress.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the house and Graffham Common Road and on the landscape of the National Park.

Reasons

3. Heath Ridge is a sizeable detached house set in wooded countryside within the National Park. Its formal design, with a double gabled front elevation and mansard roofs to the side, contrasts with the varied but generally much more informal architecture of the other nearby houses scattered along Graffham Common Road. Its elevated position makes it a prominent feature in the street scene here, despite the fence and landscaping at the front of the site.
 4. The proposal includes a substantial 2 storey side extension and a 1.5 storey garage wing to the rear, plus a new in/out drive arrangement to replace the existing single access. The District Council's refusal notice refers only to the proposed extensions. The Parish Council, on the other hand, supports the extensions, but raises concerns about the impact of the new access arrangements on the informal rural setting.
 5. Looking first at the proposed extensions, the resulting building would be of considerable scale, but significantly smaller than a recently approved replacement house. It would fit comfortably within this very large garden.
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6. The proposed side extension would be designed as a subsidiary element of the building, with a slight set-back at the front and a less stylised roof line. Although it would disrupt the formal symmetry of the house, I consider this to be acceptable in this rural, countryside situation where the house's formality sets it apart from others in the vicinity. The building's frontage and much of this side elevation would be seen from the lane, but would not be unduly intrusive due to a generous set back and the landscaping of the front garden. The garage wing to the rear would be lower and less prominent. It would be a minor and appropriate feature for a house of this scale, even with its dormer windows.
7. The proposed double access arrangement, with frontage parking and manoeuvring space, would however urbanise the front of the site. It would reduce the amount of space available for landscaping and result in a frontage dominated by vehicles and hard surfacing. I fully share the Parish Council's reservations about this aspect of the proposal.
8. I note that a previous appeal for various developments including a 2 storey rear extension was dismissed in 2012¹. That decision related to a different design and I have considered this case on its own merits.
9. I conclude that although the proposed extensions would be acceptable on their own, the overall proposal would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the house and Graffham Common Road. It would likewise harm the landscape of the National Park. The proposal therefore conflicts with the aims of Policies BE11, BE12 and H12 of the Chichester Local Plan First Review, to ensure that developments do not detract from the rural character and appearance of the existing dwelling and/or the surrounding area. It would furthermore fail to conserve natural beauty and cultural heritage, in conflict with the first purpose of the National Park. In all these respects the proposal is also at variance with the National Planning Policy Framework's emphasis on high quality design that reinforces local distinctiveness, conserving the landscape and scenic beauty of national parks.
10. For the reasons set out above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should not succeed.

Les Greenwood

INSPECTOR

¹ APP/Y9507/D/12/2167861