



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 July 2017

by Philip Willmer BSc Dip Arch RIBA

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

Decision date: 8 August 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/C1435/D/17/3176130

1 Broomfield, Bells Yew Green, Tunbridge Wells, TN3 9AF.

- 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 Mark Graffin against the decision of Wealden District Council.
 - The application Ref WD/2017/0084/F, dated 6 January 2017, was refused by notice dated 10 April 2017.
 - The development proposed is described as addition of second storey to single storey portion of existing dwelling.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the addition of second storey to single storey portion of existing dwelling at 1 Broomfield, Bells Yew Green, Tunbridge Wells, TN3 9AF in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref WD/2017/0084/F, dated 6 January 2017, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the conditions listed in the schedule at the end of this letter.

Main Issue

2. I consider the main issue to be the effect of the proposed development on the village street scene and thereby the character and appearance of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Reasons

3. The property the subject of this appeal, 1 Broomfield, is a two-storey dwelling. It is one end of a short terrace of three similar properties facing the B2169. This terrace is part of a larger, relatively contemporary, residential development. It is located adjacent to Frant Station, in the village of Bells Yew Green that lies outside any defined development boundary but within the AONB.
4. The house has previously been extended by the addition of a single storey side extension. The appellants propose the construction of a first floor addition above this earlier extension.
5. The ridgeline would be an extension of that of the existing terrace. Accordingly, the proposed addition would have the effect of elongating the terrace when viewed from the street. However, the introduction of weatherboarding, as used elsewhere on the development, at first floor level would serve to reduce the visual impact of the house as extended on the street scene. In my judgement,

by reason of its scale and character, the proposed extension has been designed to reflect that of the host property as well as the terrace and the overall development at Broomfield of which it is part.

6. The neighbouring property to the south-east, Cedar House, is a two-storey house with a large detached garage. As well as being sited well back behind 1 Broomfield, it sits on a wide and visually open plot. The boundary between the two properties is defined by a high close-boarded fence and tree screen. There is a narrow gap between the original flank wall of the appeal property and the boundary to Cedar House above the ridge level of the existing single storey addition. However, given the open fronted appearance of Cedar House, I do not afford this existing narrow gap significant visual importance in the overall context of the street scene.
7. The proposed first floor addition would reduce this gap. However, it would not close down what I consider to be the more important gap to the neighbouring buildings. The existing trees are also an important feature. Accordingly, therefore, if I were minded to allow the appeal I could impose a condition to protect the trees both during and after the construction of the extension.
8. For these reasons and due to the well-mannered design of the proposed extension and its relationship with the neighbouring development, I am not persuaded that the proposal would serve to close down an important gap, urbanise the street scene, dilute the valuable role of the existing landscaping and skyline in the gap, and thereby cause material harm to the character of the village street scene.
9. I therefore conclude, in respect of the main issue, that the proposed development would not have a detrimental impact on the village street scene and thereby the character and appearance of the AONB. The proposal would therefore accord with saved Policies GD2, DC19, HG10 and EN27 of the Wealden Local Plan (Adopted December 1998) together with Policies SPO13 and WCS14 of the Wealden District (Incorporating Part of the South Downs National Park) Core Strategy Local Plan (Adopted February 2013), together with the guidance set out in the Wealden Design Guide – Supplementary Planning Document (November 2008) – Chapter 10 sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 as they relate to the quality of development and conserving the character of the landscape of AONB's, which includes village environments.

Conditions

10. The conditions follow from those suggested by the Council. To ensure a high quality development, I shall include a condition about the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the building.
11. In addition, and as originally suggested by the local planning authority, to protect the semi-rural character of the street scene I shall also add a condition to protect the trees to the boundary to Cedar House.
12. In the interests of certainty, I shall also impose a condition requiring the development to be undertaken in accordance with the approved plans.

Conclusions

13. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Philip Willmer

INSPECTOR

Schedule of conditions

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
- 2) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development as well as the style, material and profile of the windows and doors hereby permitted shall match those in the existing building.
- 3) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: drawings numbered: 2016-049- Location, Block Plan, Proposed Floor Plans and Proposed Elevations – all dated 4 January 2017.
- 4) No development, in respect of the first floor extension, hereby approved, shall be commenced until details of the form and position of fencing in accordance with BS5837: 2012 *Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations* (or in an equivalent British Standard if replaced) shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme for the protection of the retained trees shall be carried out as approved. The fencing shall be erected in accordance with the approved details before any equipment, machinery or materials are brought onto the site for the purposes of the development, and shall be maintained until all equipment, machinery and surplus materials have been removed from the site. Nothing shall be stored or placed within any fenced area, and the ground levels within those areas shall not be altered, nor shall any excavation be made, without the prior written consent of the local planning authority. No tree on the site, unless dead or dangerous, shall be felled, topped, lopped or destroyed without the consent in writing of the local planning authority. In this condition “retained tree” means an existing tree or shrub, which is not identified for removal in accordance with the approved plans and particulars.