
Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 22 October 2019

by Nick Fagan BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4 November 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/D3830/W/19/3234247

Rashes Farm House, Selsfield Road, Turners Hill, West Sussex RH10 4PR

- 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 Dan and Katie Venn against the decision of Mid Sussex District Council.
 - The application Ref DM/18/4807, dated 26 November 2018, was refused by notice dated 10 May 2019.
 - The development proposed is the construction of a partially-buried ground and lower ground floor extension to the rear and side elevations, incorporating the existing brick outbuilding. Minor internal alterations to facilitate access into the proposed extension. Associated minor hard and soft landscaping works.
-

Appeal Ref: APP/D3830/Y/19/3234243

Rashes Farm House, Selsfield Road, Turners Hill, West Sussex RH10 4PR

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mr and Mrs Dan and Katie Venn against the decision of Mid Sussex District Council.
 - The application Ref DM/18/4814, dated 26 November 2018, was refused by notice dated 10 May 2019.
 - The development proposed is the construction of a partially-buried ground and lower ground floor extension to the rear and side elevations, incorporating the existing brick outbuilding. Minor internal alterations to facilitate access into the proposed extension. Associated minor hard and soft landscaping works.
-

Decision

1. Both appeals are dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposed extension would preserve the special architectural and historic interest of this Grade II listed house.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a former farmhouse located in the open countryside and High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) just to the south of Turners Hill accessed from a long track. It has two parallel ranges, the front range dating from the 18th century and the rear range from the 19th. Attached to the latter is a single-storey element, also 19th century and immediately beyond it is a detached dual-pitched 19th or early 20th century outbuilding currently used as a tool/garden shed. The land falls away sharply from the rear

of the house to a field that leads down to a stream alongside which are woods screening this bucolic valley from Turners Hill to the north.

4. The proposal is to utilise the fall of the land to provide a deep rear extension on two levels, at ground floor level to provide a new master bedroom and en-suite bathroom, with another bedroom and lounge at lower ground floor level. It would be approximately the same width as the 19th century kitchen extension and would encompass and retain parts of the existing detached outbuilding. It would be clad in timber at ground floor level with brick at the lower level and its pitched roof would be in standing seam zinc. Its gable elevation facing the field to the east would be predominantly glazed. The architect/designer has endeavoured to maximise the space by using the adjoining land levels whilst minimising the impact of the extension on the listed building. But this has not been successful for several reasons.
5. The depth and overall bulk of the extension would be excessive and have a disproportionate effect on the appearance of the listed house, particularly on its rear elevation. It would mask the historical progression of the house by screening the existing single-storey 19th century addition and the detached outbuilding. I understand the reasoning of a clearly contemporary design, including the cantilevered oriel windows, but such an approach only serves to emphasise the excessive bulk of the extension compared to the modest existing easterly extension to the building.
6. I disagree that the zinc roof would be reflective because it would be matt but its sheer expanse compared to the existing building's roof would draw attention to it. There is no public right of way in the vicinity of the house and it appears to be screened from Turners Hill by the mature trees in the valley bottom. Nonetheless, the impact of the extension on the architectural and historic features of the listed building, including evidence of its historic progression, would be seriously harmful and would fail to preserve its historic farmhouse character within its rural setting and its significance as a listed building.
7. Such harm would be 'less than substantial' as set out in paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). But paragraphs 193 and 194 make clear that great weight should be given to any harm to designated heritage assets and any such harm should require clear and convincing justification. Less than substantial harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. In this case the benefits would be confined to providing additional living accommodation, but these do not amount to public benefits, especially given the generous existing residential space in the house. The proposal would fail to comply with NPPF policy and the statutory test to preserve the listed building or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, as mandated by statute¹.
8. The most relevant policies in the development plan are Policy DP34 of the Mid-Sussex District Plan and Policy THP7 of the Turners Hill Neighbourhood Plan, which together require the significance of listed buildings to be preserved. The proposal would fail to comply with these Policies. For the above reasons I dismiss these appeals.

Nick Fagan, INSPECTOR

¹ S16(2) & 66(1) Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990