

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 February 2020

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

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17th March 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/L3815/D/20/3245825

Yew Tree Cottage, Fernhurst Road, Milland, Liphook GU30 7LU

- 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 Ms Leona Cobham against the decision of South Downs National Park Authority ('the NPA').
 - The application, Ref. SDNP/19/04837/HOUS dated 3 October 2019 was refused by notice dated 3 January 2020.
 - The development proposed is a two storey side extension including new front dormer.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a two storey side extension including new front dormer at Yew Tree Cottage, Fernhurst Road, Milland, Liphook in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref. SDNP/19/04837/HOUS, dated 3 October 2019, 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 No. Series PA-297: Plan Nos. 01; 02 Rev. C; 03; 04; 05 Rev. C; 06 Rev. C; 07 Rev. C; 08; 09;
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building;
 - 4) The development shall be carried out in full accordance with the recommendations for mitigation measures as set out in the Bat Survey Report (September 2019);
 - 5) The proposed rooflights shall be fitted with automatic closing blinds and thereafter permanently maintained with this facility.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are (i) the effect of the proposed extensions on the existing building and the spaciousness of the plot, and (ii) the effect on the rural character of the area.
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Reasons

3. On the first issue, the NPA's concern is that the proposed extension would dominate the existing building and negatively erode the space around the building, particularly the gap to the western boundary. However, the proposed increase of floor space of 28% does not suggest 'domination' and in terms of the extended building's appearance there are a couple of other factors to take into account.
4. Firstly, at just over 8m the width of the extended building across the plot when seen from Fernhurst Road would still be far less than the width of the built form of Durrants Cottages to the west and of each of the two houses to the east. The extension would add just 2m to an existing building width of 6.3m.
5. Secondly, any perception of additional mass and bulk would be reduced by the articulation of the extended front elevation and by the hipped roof. In addition, the legibility and functionality of the building would be enhanced through the creation of a new front entrance and porch. The pre-application amendment of the rear gable to single storey was also important to achieve an appropriate degree of subservience. And overall, the extensions would result in the building being an improved architectural composition with at the same time much enhanced family accommodation.
6. As regards any erosion of space, I understand the NPA's point in respect of reducing the gap between Yew Tree Cottage and Durrants Cottages to the west. However, a distance to the flank boundary of over 2.5m would remain, with a further gap of 2m - 2.5m between the boundary and the side gable of the nearest of the pair of Durrants Cottages.
7. Bearing this in mind, together with the fact that (i) Yew Tree Cottage is positioned further back from the road than its neighbours and (ii) that to the east and south the house is a considerable distance from the boundaries of the site, I consider that the appeal scheme would not materially affect the spaciousness of the plot.
8. Turning briefly to the second issue, the set back of the house from Fernhurst Road would mean that the 2m increase in its width would not be visually significant. As I have already made clear, the spaciousness of the plot would remain 'appropriate', and the vernacular character appearance of the building would be maintained and enhanced. The buildings to the east and west would remain the dominant features in this section of Fernhurst Road and I therefore see no basis to the NPA's concern that the rural character and appearance of the area would be adversely affected.
9. The Parish Council have objected to the proposal and commented that the floorspace annotated as 'open space' on the proposed first floor plan could become an additional bedroom in contravention of Policy H.1 of the Milland Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2030. However, the NPA's Local Plan policies indicate that a 'small / medium home' is one that has a floorspace of up to 120sqm, and with its existing floor space of 145sqm Yew Tree Cottage therefore falls within the definition of a 'large' dwelling.
10. The justification for Policy H.1 is to retain homes suitable for single people or couples without children. And given the size of the existing building as referred

to above and the fact that the extension would be within the 30% limit in SDNP Local Plan Policy SD31, I do not consider that the possible future development of the 'open space' floor area to comprise sleeping accommodation would in this case justify the withholding of consent.

Conclusions and Conditions

11. For the above reasons above I conclude that the appeal scheme would not harm the existing building and its setting, or the rural character and appearance of the area. There would therefore be no conflict with Local Plan Policies SD5 & SD31 or with the objectives of Policy H.1 of the Neighbourhood Plan. The appeal scheme would similarly be compliant with the purposes of the designation of the National Park and with Government Policy in Sections 12 & 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019. I shall therefore allow the appeal.
12. A condition requiring the development to be carried out will ensure certainty and is in the interests of proper planning, whilst a condition stipulating matching external materials will safeguard the appearance of the dwelling. A condition requiring bat habitat mitigation measures will protect this protected species and a condition requiring automatic blinds for the roof lights will prevent light pollution of the dark skies of the National Park. I have noted a couple of other possible conditions referred to in the officer's report but do not consider that they are necessary in this particular case.

Martin Andrews

INSPECTOR