



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 June 2020

by J E Jolly BA (Hons) MA MSc CIH MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 June 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/C1435/D/20/3245199

Strood House, Wadhurst Road, Mark Cross TN6 3PB

- 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 J Woodhouse against the decision of Wealden District Council.
 - The application Ref WD/2019/1699/F, dated 30 July 2019, was refused by notice dated 29 November 2019.
 - The development proposed is the demolition of existing single-storey extension; proposed replacement single-storey extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. In January 2019 the Council submitted Stage 1 of the new Wealden Local Plan (NWLP) for examination. However, in December 2019 the Council was informed that the submission failed to meet a number of requirements for legal compliance. As a result, in February 2020 the Council decided to withdraw the NWLP with the intention to produce a new Plan. As such, the Council have relied upon Policies from the relevant adopted plans which are the Wealden Local Plan, 1998 (WLP), the Wealden Core Strategy Local Plan, 2013 (CS), and the Wealden Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document, 2008 (WDG). I have proceeded accordingly.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is located in the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The surrounding area is characterised by loose-knit development, including Strood House, that is set back from the road and surrounded by fields, trees and hedges. The appeal property is a traditional-style, two storey, brick and tile dwelling with a single-storey side extension that is found at the end of a gravel drive. A free-standing double garage can be seen to the right-hand side of the host property.

5. The proposal is to demolish the existing side extension and to replace it with a single-storey extension that would extend towards the garage. The courtyard style extension would be constructed in materials similar to the host dwelling. As such, the extension would accord with Strood House and other properties seen in the area, for example Strood Cottage which lies to the front of the gravelled entrance from Wadhurst Road.
6. Nonetheless, despite the subordinate ridge height and the relatively modest volumetric increase, the proposal would extend, in part, across the gravelled driveway/parking area, and hence beyond the front building line of Strood House. As such the proposal would create a prominent extension that would be seen on the approach to the property, and whilst I acknowledge that the garage is sited forward of the appeal dwelling, it does not form part of the main building. Consequently, the garage does not have the same visual relationship with the host dwelling as the proposed side extension. Indeed, notwithstanding the mature landscaping and trees, or that the extension would not be visible from the road, the width and bulk of the proposal would be overly conspicuous and incongruous with the host dwelling that has a linear front elevation.
7. I acknowledge that revisions have been made to the original submission that includes the removal of a laundry room. Nevertheless, the changes make little difference to the scale of the proposal, or the fact that the development would create a projected elevation. As such, the development would be at odds with the host dwelling which has a straight elevation that includes a single-storey side extension. I conclude therefore, that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of Strood House.
8. Therefore, the proposal is contrary to Policies DC19, EN1, EN6, EN27, HG10, of the WLP and Policies SP013 and WCS14 of the CS, which say amongst other things, that the extension and alteration of existing dwellings will only be permitted where the scale, style, design and materials are appropriate and sympathetic in relation to the existing buildings, as supported by Chapter 10 of the WDG.
9. For similar reasons, the proposal does not meet the aim of Paragraph 127(b) of the *National Planning Policy Framework*, which requires that development should be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping.

Other Matters

10. The Council has indicated that despite the failure of the NWLP that the proposal would not adversely impact the Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area. Therefore, I have not carried out a Habitats Regulations assessment related to the protection of European Sites.

Conclusions

11. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

J E JOLLY

INSPECTOR