



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 27 January 2021

by H Miles BA(hons), MA, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 8th February 2021

Appeal A: Appeal Ref: D/4001776

Keepers Lodge, High Beeches Lane, Handcross RH17 6HQ

- 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 Penrose and Victoria Tackie against the decision of Mid Sussex District Council.
 - The application Ref DM/20/1591, dated 1 May 2020, was refused by notice dated 28 July 2020.
 - The development proposed is raise roof height by one metre to provide bedrooms in roof space with internal alterations to include conversion of garage to habitable space.
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Appeal B: Appeal Ref: APP/D3830/D/20/3263488

Keepers Lodge, High Beeches Lane, Handcross RH17 6HQ

- 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 Penrose and Victoria Tackie against the decision of Mid Sussex District Council.
 - The application Ref DM/20/3518, dated 17 September 2020, was refused by notice dated 10 November 2020.
 - The development proposed is raise roof by one metre to provide bedrooms in roof space with internal alterations to include conversion of garage to habitable space.
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Decision

1. Appeal A and Appeal B are both dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. As set out above there are two appeals on this site. They differ only in that Appeal A includes a poolhouse/garage building and Appeal B does not. I have considered each proposal on its individual merits. However, to avoid duplication I have dealt with the two schemes together, except where otherwise indicated.

Main Issue

3. The main issue for both Appeal A and Appeal B is the effect of the proposed developments on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

Appeal A and B – alterations to the main house

4. Keepers Lodge is part of a small cluster of houses accessed off High Beeches Lane, surrounded by open and wooded undeveloped countryside land. Its

character and appearance is notably different to the others in the group. Keepers Lodge is a single storey dwelling with some accommodation in the roof, set in generous grounds. I understand that it is a converted farm building and important features include its modest height, hipped roofs and low eaves height. It has a number of subservient additions which respect the original form of the building. These features contribute to the rural character at this site.

5. Although Keepers Lodge is within a collection of dwellings, this is not a settlement for the purposes of the development plan and it is therefore in the countryside. Policy DP12 of the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031, March 2018 (The District Plan) seeks to protect the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and maintain the rural and landscape character of the district amongst other things.
6. The proposals would raise the ridge height and eaves height of part of this property. This would create a two storey element which would undermine the traditional, attractive single storey characteristics including the low eaves height of the host property. It would therefore be a visually jarring extension out of keeping with the prevailing character at this site and consequently harmful to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Therefore, this is not high quality design.
7. Planning permission was granted in 2011 for alterations including a two storey extension to 3 Dairy Cottages and there is a 2 storey extension at 2 Dairy Cottages. However, the appearance of these properties are notably different to Keepers Lodge. My attention has also been drawn to Brantridge Forest Farm. This is not easily visible from the appeal site and as such does not form its immediate context. Therefore, although I accept there are two storey properties close by, and larger extensions have been permitted on other, different, properties, my concerns regarding the effect of the proposed developments on the character and appearance of the host property remain.

Appeal A – outbuilding

8. The proposed outbuilding would have a large footprint and height and would be set forward from the front building line. This would result in a dominant, bulky addition. For these reasons it would also not form a subservient addition and would be unduly prominent relative to the main house.
9. As a consequence of the design, which includes car ports and extensive fenestration, the outbuilding would not appear as a farm building. Due to its scale and permanence the proposed outbuilding would be more harmful to the character and appearance of the area than cars parking on the driveway.

Appeal A and B

10. The site is within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and I give great weight to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in this area, which has the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. However, I have considered the sizes, locations within the plot and that the proposed developments would extend an existing house within its curtilage within a cluster of buildings. As such I am not provided with evidence that persuades me that they would result in harm to the AONB.

11. Development proposals should not harm the intrinsic character or appearance of the area whether or not the proposal is prominent or in public view. In any case, both the proposed extensions and outbuilding would be highly visible from the semi-public views from the shared road access. Therefore, the harm described above would be experienced.
12. Consequently, the proposed developments would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area. As such, they would be contrary to Policies DP12 of the District Plan, the aims of which are set out above, and Policy DP26 of the District Plan which requires development to be of high quality design and includes a requirement to be sensitive to the countryside, amongst other things.
13. Policy DP20 of the District Plan relates to securing infrastructure and is therefore not relevant to this main issue.

Other Matters

14. The appellant was not satisfied with the pre application advice received. I have taken these comments into account. Nevertheless, they do not alter my view that the appeal proposals are unacceptable for the reasons set out above.

Conclusion

15. The proposals would not accord with the development plan and there are no other considerations to indicate that the appeals should be determined otherwise. Therefore, for the reasons set out above, Appeal A and Appeal B are dismissed.

H Miles

INSPECTOR