
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 July 2021

by Nicola Davies BA DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20 July 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/L2250/W/21/3271468

The Granary, Densole Lane, Densole, Kent CT18 7BL

- 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 Claire Olsen against the decision of Shepway District Council.
 - The application Ref 20/1459/FH, dated 13 October 2020, was refused by notice dated 18 December 2020.
 - The development proposed is proposed detached garage with holiday let over.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues raised in respect of the appeal are the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area, the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (the AONB) and the North Downs Special Landscape Area (the SLA).

Reasons

3. The site is partially within the settlement boundary of Densole with the grounds extending beyond. The residential development within Densole Lane and The Paddocks comprises two-storey properties and chalet style bungalows with accommodation in the roof space. The appeal site is at the terminus of the street. The site with its pond and paddock has a rural character. The existing dwelling is two-storey and is of modest size.
4. The proposed garage area would cover a small percentage of the overall site and the living space within the holiday let would be less than that contained within the main house. The proposed structure would have a ridge height approximately 0.3m lower than that of the host dwelling and the eaves would be lower than those of the existing house. Notwithstanding this, the proposal would have an extensive footprint, larger than that of the host dwelling, and be a large sized building of openly urban design and appearance. Given its overall size it would not be a structure that could be said to be subservient to the existing dwelling at the site. Indeed, it would be a structure that would visually compete with the dwelling in both footprint and overall size. It would also be a large building given the context of the existing development within Densole Lane and The Paddocks.
5. Consequently, the proposal would have the appearance of being a visually over dominant structure within the context of the host dwelling and, for this reason,

- it would be visually harmful within the context of the host property and that of existing development within Densole Lane and The Paddocks. Its location within the site and distance from the host property would not mitigate the visual impact of the size of the resulting development.
6. The National Planning Policy Framework indicates that "*Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads, and AONBs, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues*". Despite being at the edge of the settlement the site is mostly rural in character. I accept that the structure would be close to the site entrance, and, in part, the siting of the proposal would overlap that of the existing stable structure that would be removed. Furthermore, it would not encroach into the open undeveloped parts of the wider site. Nonetheless, the visual harm arising from this large urbanising structure of domestic design with its five garages, six roof dormers and glass balcony to one end, would have a negative visual impact upon the countryside character and appearance of the site and the AONB and SLA designated landscape in which this site is located. Its construction utilising brickwork and black weatherboarding would not obviate the visual harm of the proposed development.
 7. I have been directed to a planning permission granted in 2018 relating to the creation of a holiday lodge tourism site with reception and store buildings, fishing lake, tennis courts, children's play area, putting green and car park at a site southeast of the appeal site. A comparison has been drawn between the size of the holiday lets relating to that scheme and that proposed here. I have been provided with a floor plan and front elevation relating to one of those tourism site's holiday lets. Notably the details show a single storey unit with a simple pitched roof. The form and design of that holiday unit is markedly different to that of the development that is before me and, therefore, offers little support in favour of the proposal.
 8. The holiday let would allow people from the UK and overseas the opportunity to visit and enjoy the Kent Downs AONB and North Downs SLA. Furthermore, with the proposed accommodation being at first floor, occupiers would be able to take in the open, rural character of the surrounding landscape. Whilst these would be benefits and attractions of the proposed scheme, these factors do not overcome the harm I have identified or justify the proposed development.
 9. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area, the Kent Downs AONB and the North Downs SLA. The proposal would, therefore, conflict with Policies HB1 and NE3 of the Folkestone & Hythe District Places and Policies Local Plan 2020 that seek, amongst other matters, development to make a positive contribution to its location and surroundings, enhance integration while also respecting existing buildings and land uses, particularly with regard to layout, scale, proportions, massing and form (amongst others), as well as to protect the natural beauty of the Kent Downs AONB and the North Downs SLA.

Conclusion

10. Having regard to the above findings, the appeal should be dismissed.

Nicola Davies

INSPECTOR