



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 August 2021

by A Thompson BSc BTP MRTPI MRICS

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 September 2021.

Appeal Ref: APP/G2245/D/21/3273934

1 Farley Nursery, Westerham, TN16 1RR

- 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 Black against the decision of Sevenoaks District Council.
 - The application Ref 21/00623/HOUSE, dated 1 March 2021, was refused by notice dated 22 April 2021.
 - The development proposed is roof alteration to incorporate barn end gable, rear dormer and front roof lights.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The Council's decision notice refers to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). In July 2021, after the Council's decision was issued, the Framework was revised and accordingly the main parties were invited to submit comments on the impact of this revision on the decision.

Main Issue

3. The effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of No.1 Farley Nursery (the host building), the surrounding area and the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a semi-detached dwelling with a hipped roof. It forms one of a group of semi-detached dwellings on Farley Nursery which share similar design characteristics, including hipped roof profile. The proposed roof alteration would result in a substantial change in both the roof profile and overall scale of the roof. In addition to the provision of a barn end gable on the side elevation of the building, there would be a substantial flat roof extension across much of the rear elevation with Juliette balcony and French windows. A rooflight and further window would also be introduced on the front and side elevation building respectively at roof level.
5. I note that several of the properties opposite the frontage of the appeal property, on Westbury Terrace, have barn end gables, but these properties appear to date from an earlier period and have a number of material

- differences in design from the buildings on the other side of the road. Introduction of a barn end roof on the appeal property would upset the symmetry and harmonious appearance of the pair of semi-detached properties (Nos 1&2 Farley Nursery) and it would detract from the characteristic roof profile of the group of properties of similar design on Farley Nursery.
6. The overbearing dominance of the rear flat roof dormer would be accentuated by the provision of a Juliette balcony and French doors and these would not align with existing doors and windows in the original house, thus further detracting from the character and appearance of the host property. In addition, although located at the rear of the property, the bulky and discordant flat roofed dormer which extends almost to the ridge of the roof would be visible from Farley Nursery to the west and above the roof of the adjacent garage block to the east.
 7. My attention has been drawn to an appeal decision which allowed a dormer in a property in a nearby street also within the AONB. There is very limited evidence about this appeal decision in the papers in front of me.
 8. From my site visit it was evident that the properties fronting Glanville Road (where the earlier appeal property was located) have different roof profiles to the appeal property. In addition, although I noted a number of dormers in the vicinity of the current appeal site, including a substantial rear box dormer within the adjacent Westerham Conservation Area, most dormers near the appeal site are small scale and of traditional design.
 9. Having regard to these findings, I do not consider that a dormer of the design, scale and dominance proposed would be commonplace or characteristic of the roofscape in the area surrounding the current appeal site. Thus although I give weight to the previous appeal decision, I find that it does not outweigh the harm I have identified in this case. I must, in any event, also assess each case on its merits first against the prevailing policy background.
 10. In short, I find that the proposed development would be of a discordant scale and design which would harm the character and appearance of the host building and the surrounding area and not conserve and enhance the landscape of the AONB. Accordingly, the proposals would be contrary to the provisions of policies EN1 and EN5 of Sevenoaks District Council's (SDC) Allocations and Development Management Plan 2015, the SDC Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), the Westerham Design Statement SPD. These plans, policies, and documents amongst other things, seek to ensure proposed development responds to, and respects, the scale and character of the host property and surrounding area.
 11. Although the Framework has been updated since the Council's decision was taken, the revised Framework, in my view, places strengthened emphasis on the importance of delivering good design and thus, given my findings above, I conclude that the proposal would also be in conflict with the Framework published in July 2021.

Other considerations

12. My attention has been drawn to the Council's conclusion that the proposed development would not harm the character or appearance of the Westerham Conservation Area which is nearby. In my view, the impact of the proposed

development on the setting of the conservation area would be harmful because of the discordant scale and form of development proposed, although the scale of that impact would be less than substantial, given the scale and location of the garage building between the appeal property and the conservation area. This consideration adds further weight in favour of refusal of the proposal.

13. As there is no dispute the appeal property is located within an AONB, the scale of extension permitted by development order in areas outside the AONB does not alter my conclusion regarding the main issue.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons I have set out above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude the appeal should be dismissed.

Anthony Thompson

INSPECTOR