
Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 23 August 2021

by Mr S Rennie BSc (Hons), BA (Hons), MA, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4 October 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/U2235/D/20/3271647

Barnhall Lodge Gravelly Bottom Road, Kingswood, MAIDSTONE, ME17 3NS

- 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 Anton Manning against the decision of Maidstone Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20/500304/FULL, dated 21 January 2020, was refused by notice dated 26 March 2020.
 - The development proposed is a single storey extension with basement.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a single storey extension with basement at Barnhall Lodge, Gravelly Bottom Road, Kingswood, MAIDSTONE, ME17 3NS in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 20/500304/FULL, dated 21 January 2020, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Drawing No. P170-PL51A (site location plan); Drawing No. P170-PL52A (proposed site and basement plan); Drawing No. P170-PL53A (proposed floor plans); Drawing No. P170-PL54A (proposed elevation and roof plans).

Main Issues

2. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of this dwelling and the rural area.

Reasons

3. The proposal is for an extension to an existing house. The house is a large detached dwelling set within an extensive plot and generally well screened from both the highway and also from the nearby public right of way network. The existing house is of a modern design with flat roofs, which was itself a replacement dwelling.
4. The proposed extension follows the form and design of the existing dwelling and would not appear incongruous. Considering the size of the plot, the extension would not overdevelop the site. However, it is acknowledged that the house is already much larger than the 'original' dwelling.
5. Policy DM32 of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan (LP) considers that extensions to houses in the countryside should not overwhelm or destroy the

character and design of the original house. However, the original house has effectively already been replaced, with its original form already 'overwhelmed' by extensions. Moreover, the proposal of an extension of single storey height would not overwhelm the current dwelling, which is predominantly two storey, whilst being sufficiently subservient. It would also not be prominent in the landscape, given the proposed extension's scale and its screening from the surrounding woodland.

6. Whilst I note the wording of policy DM32, with reference to the 'original dwelling', in this case the proposed extension would be of a suitable scale in relation to the existing house, which is set within an extensive plot. In relation to this plot the proposed extension would not result in a 'sprawling' built form. The purpose of DM32 includes the protection of the intrinsic beauty of the countryside, which in my view is not harmed by the extension in this case.
7. The Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPD) also states that extensions to dwellings in the countryside should be limited and the cumulative extensions to a property should be considered when assessing its impact. However, in this case there would be no adverse visual impact from the proposed extension, with it having minimal intrusion into the landscape and the plot remaining largely open and undeveloped.
8. Whilst I understand the reasons for the wording of DM32 and the SDP on the matter of extensions in the countryside, in this case the character and form of the original dwelling has been largely altered already. The extension as proposed would not erode any particular appreciation of the original dwelling. Furthermore, the extension as proposed would not harm the visual qualities of the existing dwelling nor site, or the general openness of the countryside in this area. As such, whilst there is some technical conflict with reference to the cumulative size of the dwelling against the original bungalow, the proposed extension is not contrary to the general aims or objectives of either policy DM32 or the SPD as it is not harmful to the countryside setting.
9. Furthermore, the proposal is not contrary to policies SP17, DM1 or DM30 of the LP. These policies require that development be of a high quality design, will not result in harm to the character and appearance of the countryside, and would be of a scale which relates sympathetically to the existing building and the rural area, amongst other things.

Conditions

10. I have attached the standard time limit condition and a plans condition as this provides certainty.
11. The details of the materials are set out on the submitted plans in sufficient detail. There is no reason to impose a condition to ensure the extension is built using these materials.
12. Considering the scale of the extension proposed I do not consider it reasonable to require a landscaping condition. This is not necessary to make the development acceptable.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given I conclude that the appeal should succeed.

Mr S Rennie

INSPECTOR

