



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 November 2021

by Elizabeth Lawrence BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 6TH December 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/L2250/D/21/3279179

Bankside, Crete Road East, Folkstone, CT18 7EG.

- 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 Vinny Bryant against the decision of Folkestone & Hythe District Council.
 - The application Ref 21/0001/FH, dated 31 December 2020, was refused by notice dated 7 May 2021.
 - The development proposed is described as removal of garage and erection of extension to provide improved entrance, kitchen and home office, with alterations to roof and internal arrangements at first floor.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The first main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the pair of semi-detached dwellings. The second main issue is the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of the occupiers of "Cephas", with particular regard to visual impact.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The Appeal site is located within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Special Landscape Area (SPA). It occupies an elevated countryside location a short distance to the north of Folkstone and within an informal cluster of dwellings.
4. Bankside comprises one of a pair of uniformly designed semi-detached bungalows with hipped roofs and modestly detailed front elevations. The dwellings sit in an elevated position and are built into the slope of the land, which rises to the north and east. "Cephas" is located at a lower level to the southwest of the appeal property. All three dwellings are visually modest in form and scale and are served by a steeply sloping narrow access track.
5. The appeal dwelling has a dormer extension on its northeast side roof-slope and a two storey wing with a pitched roof on its south-westerly side. The lower floor of this extension sits below the ground floor of the main dwelling and there is a detached garage located just to the front of it. Both the dormer

extension and side wing are set back from the front of the host dwelling and as a consequence the symmetry and modest appearance of the front of the pair of dwellings is retained.

6. Together and amongst other things Policies HB1 and HB8 of the Folkstone & Hythe Places and Policies Local Plan 2020 (LP), require new development to make a positive contribution to its surroundings. Extensions should reflect the scale and proportions of the existing building and their materials should complement those of the existing building. To maintain the visual quality of the street scene extensions should not exceed half the width of the original dwelling and should be equal or less than half the depth of the garden. Extensions should be subordinate to the host building and should not have an adverse impact on the living conditions of existing residents.
7. LP Policy NE3 seeks to conserve and enhance the natural beauty and locally distinctive features of the AONB. Proposals should not undermine the integrity of the predominantly open and undeveloped rural character of the AONB and should protect or enhance the natural beauty of the SPA.
8. As stated by the Council, the proposed two storey extension would project more than seven metres to the front of the host dwelling, where it would be approximately 8.6 metres high. It would have a front facing gable and would be comparable in width to the front elevation of the dwelling. The proposed front elevation and gable would be fully glazed and would have a balcony at ground floor level, above a carport.
9. For these reasons, both on its own and together with the existing additions, the proposed extension would significantly increase the size and scale of the host dwelling. It would be prominent and would totally dominate the frontage of the host dwelling. The proposed extension would fail to reflect or respect the scale and proportions of the host dwelling and would be out of keeping with the modest form and design of the existing pair of dwellings. The resultant pair of dwellings would appear poorly proportioned and would detract from their immediate setting. As such it would conflict with the environmental objective of sustainable development, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.
10. The above concerns could not be satisfactorily addressed through the imposition of conditions. They would also outweigh the benefits for the appellant and their family that would result from the proposed improved and additional accommodation.
11. I conclude on the first main issue that the proposal would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the host building and its immediate setting, within the AONB and SPA. Accordingly, it would conflict with LP Policies BE1, BE8 and NE3.

Living conditions

12. The side wall of the existing dwelling is located in excess of 1.5 metres from the boundary with "Cephas". The detached garage located to the front of the appeal property at lower ground floor level is sited approximately one metre from the boundary with "Cephas". The dwelling and side garden at "Cephas" sit at a lower level to the appeal dwelling and the two properties are separated by a tall fence, tall hedge and some tall shrubs.

13. The submitted drawings indicate that the mature hedge located in the garden of "Cephas" would project above the eaves height of the proposed extension and would screen the flank wall and much of the roof of the proposed extension from the garden and dwelling at "Cephas". From my site visit it was evident that much of the planting adjacent to the proposed extension is much lower than this and comprises a range of deciduous and evergreen shrubs. Where there is a tall hedge, as pointed out by the appellant, it has to be maintained at a maximum height of 4.9 metres following a High Hedge complaint. In addition, I am concerned that the proposed evergreen screen proposed adjacent to the kitchen door and flight of steps may not be achievable or effective as a screen, due to the alignment of and need for access to the flight of steps.
14. For these reasons the flank wall of the proposed extension would be visible through and above the existing shrubs and hedge. Due to its combined, length, height, elevated position and proximity it would appear prominent and overbearing in the outlook from the east facing windows of the dwelling and the adjacent garden area at "Cephas". Any overlooking from the proposed kitchen steps and overshadowing caused by the extension would add to this overbearing impact.
15. I acknowledge that a number of dwellings in the locality have been significantly altered and/or extended, with some including large expanses of glazing. However, none of these examples are visually comparable to the appeal dwelling and the proposal. They serve to highlight the importance of assessing each proposal on its individual merits and in light of the prevailing planning policies.
16. Concern has been expressed that the construction works associated with the extension could result in harm to the planting within the garden at "Cephas" and damage to the access track. Also, that the construction of the proposed extension could result in parking on and damage to the access drive. These are private matters that fall outside the scope of this appeal.
17. I conclude on the second main issue that the proposal would unacceptably harm the living conditions of the occupiers of "Cephas", due to its overbearing visual impact. It would therefore conflict with LP Policies HB1 and HB8.

Other matter

18. The concerns raised by the appellant relating to the handling of the planning application are something that would need to be taken up with the Council. This is because they are not material to the merits of the appeal proposal.

Conclusion

19. Having regard to the conclusions on both main issues, the appeal is dismissed.

Elizabeth Lawrence

INSPECTOR