
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 March 2022

by David Reed BSc DipTP DMS MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4th April 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/U1430/D/22/3291630

Ravynsden, 76 London Road, Hurst Green TN19 7PN

- 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 Nicholas Meurice against the decision of Rother District Council.
 - The application Ref RR/2021/1174/P, dated 10 May 2021, was refused by notice dated 9 November 2021.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a double garage and domestic workshop with home office over.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the proposal on the setting of the host property Ravynsden, a Grade II listed building; and
 - the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the street scene.

Reasons

Listed building

3. The proposal is for a detached double garage/workshop (three bays wide) with a home office in the roof space to one side of Ravynsden, a Grade II listed building on the southern outskirts of Hurst Green. The home office would be accessed by an external flight of steps and lit by three front facing dormer windows and three rooflights to the rear.
 4. Ravynsden is a modest 17th century two storey tile hung and tile pitched roof dwelling, with casement windows, gabled porch and catslide roof to the rear. Five front windows, two staircases and two fireplaces suggest it may originally have been two cottages before conversion. Contrary to the heritage statement submitted with the application, the building has significance as a typical small Sussex/Kent cottage of its period, relatively unspoilt by later alterations.
 5. The proposed garage/workshop would be located to one side of the listed building, facing towards it, but partly set forward of its front elevation to allow
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the necessary vehicular access. Whilst the appeal statement claims it would be 10 m away, this is not supported by an accurate large-scale plan showing the width of the hedgerows along the site frontage and southern boundary which would be retained for screening. As a result, the building may well be located less than 10 m from the dwelling. In addition, whilst eaves and ridge heights at 3.2 m and 6.5 m would be lower than the dwelling, without the equivalent figures for the listed building it is not clear this would sufficiently reduce its impact. The garage/workshop building facing the dwelling would also be wide, 9.3 m, perhaps half of this projecting forward of the front elevation.

6. Taking these factors into account, the proposal would appear unduly bulky when seen alongside the main frontage of the listed building. There is already an existing double garage set back behind the dwelling on one side, and the garage/workshop would appear to encroach upon the property from the other, showing insufficient subservience to it. Being a relatively modest dwelling, a large scale three bay outbuilding with dormer windows set at right angles alongside would appear out of place, adversely affecting its setting. Whilst the level of harm to the heritage asset and its appreciation as a typical small-scale Sussex/Kent cottage would be less than substantial, the public benefit of the proposal would be negligible.
7. For these reasons the proposal would adversely affect the setting of the host property, Ravynsden, a Grade II listed building, contrary to the legislative requirement to have special regard to the desirability of preserving its setting. The proposal would also conflict with Policies EN2 and EN3 of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 (RLPCS) and Policy DHG9 of the Development and Site Allocations Local Plan 2019 (DSALP). These seek to preserve the setting of locally distinctive vernacular building forms, require new development to contribute positively to the character of the site, and require outbuildings to existing dwellings to respect their scale, particularly when historic buildings.

Street scene

8. The garage/workshop building would be sited gable end to the road. Whilst 6.5 m to the ridge, it would be clad with sympathetic materials and set back behind a close boarded fence, hedge and several tall roadside trees. Given this substantial level of screening and the built-up frontage opposite, the building would not significantly affect the character and appearance of the street scene. The proposal would not therefore conflict with RLPCS Policies OSS4 and EN1 or DSALP Policies DEN1 and DEN2. These seek to ensure development protects the character and appearance of the locality, the landscape generally and the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Conclusion

9. In addition to garage/workshop space, the proposal would provide storage for bins and a desirable home office. Whilst it would not adversely affect the character and appearance of the street scene, the proposal would unduly harm the setting and appreciation of the listed building. The appeal should therefore be dismissed.

David Reed

INSPECTOR