



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 April 2022

by J E Jolly BA (Hons) MA MSc MCIH MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11th April 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/U1430/D/21/3284802

Burghfield, Sheepstreet Lane, Etchingam TN19 7AY

- 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 & Mrs M Hargrave against the decision of Rother District Council.
 - The application Ref RR/2021/1106/P, dated 1 May 2021, was refused by notice dated 3 September 2021.
 - The development proposed is a resubmission for a two-storey side extension with extended decked area.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The Government published a revised *National Planning Policy Framework* (the Framework) in July 2021. All references to the Framework in this decision relate to the updated document.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling, including the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Reasons

4. 'Burghfield' is located in the AONB and is a two-storey brick and tile dwelling that is set back from Sheepstreet Lane behind mature hedging and trees. The surrounding area is typified by a range of brick and tile dwellings, some of which appear to have been extended.
5. The host property is set to one side of a generous 'wrap-around' plot that slopes down towards woodland and the fields of the AONB beyond. The front of the dwelling faces towards the south boundary on Sheepstreet Lane, with the main entrance of the property being accessed from the eastern elevation which has a single gable end. The western elevation of 'Burghfield' has a pair of gable-ended extensions. One of the gables has a single-storey 'lean-to' attached, while the gable at the northern end of the property has a small timber patio area.

6. The northern elevation of the host dwelling is reached from the garden by a set of timber steps that lead up to a raised decked area and a set of glazed patio doors from which there are views to the host garden and the wider countryside. At first-floor level on this side of the property there is a Juliet balcony. The property is further characterised by bay windows and a number of dormers at roof level.
7. The proposal is to demolish the existing 'lean-to' and to construct a two-storey side extension to the west elevation in similar materials to the host dwelling to create a walk-through bedroom and a larger living space including an open-plan kitchen. There would be an extended decked area to its northern flank.
8. The development would be in the AONB. Therefore, for planning purposes the proposal is located in the countryside. As such, the development should conserve and enhance the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB as required by Paragraph 176 of the Framework, which aims include that the scale and extent of development within the AONB should be limited, to which I attach great weight. Moreover, the development must comply with the relevant development plan policies to be permitted.
9. I acknowledge the previous application on this site¹, for a similar proposal to the one before me that was refused by the Council. Subsequent changes have been made to the scale and mass of the proposed extension before resubmission for planning approval.
10. However, while I note that the revisions to the proposal are appreciated by Etchingham Parish Council, and that the development would have a sufficient separation gap to the neighbouring dwelling of 'Woodview', the fact remains that the scale and mass of the bulky proposal, that includes an expansive area of decking, would erode the relative symmetry of the gabled extensions and the property as a whole.
11. Moreover, while the appellant contends that the mixed roof-scape design is not uncommon and would blend with the wider roof-scape of 'Burghfield' in a pleasing and subordinate manner, I find to the contrary; that the hipped-roofs of the proposal would be substantially at odds with the attractive gable-ends of the host property. Indeed, notwithstanding the limited views to the property from Sheepstreet Lane or the current ownership of the surrounding land, I concluded at my site visit that the large and protruding extension would be accentuated by its mixed roofscape.
12. Furthermore, while the type of bay and dormer windows of the proposal would broadly accord with the style of the host dwelling, the proposed arrangement of the fenestration to the rear of the property would be incongruous with the layout and quantum of the existing windows on the somewhat plainer north elevation. The contrast is such that in the long views to the rear of the appeal site the proposal would be likely to appear as an additional dwelling rather than an extension to the host dwelling of 'Burghfield'.

¹ RR/2012/1782/P

13. As a result the proposed development would jar with the relatively modest extensions and simple roofscapes seen to neighbouring properties, and be highly conspicuous from within the surrounding AONB to the rear of the host plot.
14. In addition, while not determinative the extension would create an awkward 'infill' arrangement with the windows of the existing master bedroom en-suite and the shower room of the host dwelling, as well as creating, a less than appealing to most, walk-through type bedroom at first-floor level.
15. Therefore, notwithstanding ministerial guidance which is noted, when considered as a whole, I conclude that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the scenic beauty of the AONB.
16. Accordingly, the proposal would be contrary to Policies OSS4 (iii), RA1 (i), EN1, and EN3 of the Rother District Council Rother Local Plan, Core Strategy 2014, and Policy DHG9 (ii) and (iii) of the Rother District Council Development and Site Allocations Local Plan 2018, and Paragraph 130 (c) of the Framework which says that developments should be sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting.

Other Matters

17. I note that the appellant is attempting to extend the family home, and that there have been no objections to the scheme. Moreover, there would be a limited amount of economic benefit associated with the construction of the new extension. However, even in combination, these matters do not outweigh the harm I have found above.

Conclusions

18. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

J E JOLLY

INSPECTOR