



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 September 2022

by Philip Willmer BSc Dip Arch RIBA

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 06 October 2022.

Appeal Ref: APP/E2205/D/22/3296201

Nutshell Cottage, Bethersden Road, Smarden, Kent, TN27 8QF.

- 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 Mark Deacon against the decision of Ashford Borough Council
 - The application Ref 22/00075/AS, dated 18 January 2022, was refused by notice dated 23 March 2022.
 - The development proposed is the demolition of previous extension and erection of single storey extension
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. I consider the main issue to be the effect of the proposal on the architectural integrity of the host property.

Reasons

3. Nutshell Cottage is a modest detached single storey dwelling. It has a narrow frontage with a hipped roof facing the road, but it extends into the rear garden with a double gable roof. There is a long single storey garage set back from the road close to the common boundary to Vine Cottage next door.
4. The appellant proposes the demolition of an earlier rear extension and the erection of a single storey contemporary addition. It would comprise a large irregular shaped single storey room, that would extend almost across the full width of the existing cottage and close to the south-west boundary.
5. The roof would be of a mono pitch design set behind a large, blank brick parapet wall facing the south-west boundary. In contrast to the existing brick façades the rear and other side elevation would be clad with vertical boarding. In line with the extension's contemporary appearance the pattern of fenestration would also contrast in proportion and shape with the existing.
6. A contemporary contrasting design can very often be a legitimate design solution for the extension of a small traditional dwelling such as this. However, in this case, I consider that due to the extensions overall size, plan shape, together with what would be an awkward and unresolved relationship between the mono pitched roof to the existing twin gables that, on balance the extension would appear as an incongruous addition that would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the existing cottage.

7. I therefore conclude in respect of the main issue that the proposed addition would cause significant harm to the architectural integrity of the host property. To allow it would be contrary to the objectives of Policies SP1 and HOU8 of the Ashford Local Plan 2030 (Adopted February 2019) and the National Planning Policy Framework as they relate, along with other things, to the quality of development.

Other Matters

8. The appellant has suggested that the proposal would be smaller than one designed to accord with that allowed under permitted development/prior approval legislation. However, as this would be subject to separate consideration and as there is limited evidence to suggest that the impacts described by the appellant would come to pass, this consideration has minimal weight in my decision.
9. I have had regard to the fact that it is intended that proposed development would be energy efficient and as identified by the Council it would be unlikely to impact on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers. I also appreciate that the proposed extension would have little effect on the street scene. However, the absence of harm is a neutral factor in my considerations and, as such, I have given these matters very limited weight in my decision.
10. The appellant has referred me to other contemporary extensions. Whatever the background to those cases, the existence of other contemporary additions on nearby sites is not an appropriate justification for permitting the proposed development here, which I have considered on its individual design and planning merits and its impact on Nutshell Cottage.
11. The appellant has drawn to my attention concerns relating to difficulties in engaging with the Council during its consideration of the original application for planning permission. This is however not relevant to my consideration of the planning merits of this appeal.

Conclusions

12. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Philip Willmer

INSPECTOR