



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 October 2022

by David Prentis BA BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21st October 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/M3645/D/21/3288928

Detillens House, Limpsfield High Street, Limpsfield RH8 0DP

- 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 Paul Charles against the decision of Tandridge District Council.
 - The application Ref TA/2021/1038, dated 28 May 2021, was refused by notice dated 21 September 2021.
 - The development proposed is erection of detached self-contained annex on land rear of Detillens House.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for erection of detached self-contained annex on land rear of Detillens House at Detillens House, Limpsfield High Street, Limpsfield RH8 0DP in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref TA/2021/1038, dated 28 May 2021, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:
 - 177/001/100A - site location
 - 177/001/102 - proposed block plan
 - 177/001/102 - site as existing
 - 177/001/103 - proposed plan
 - 177/001/201 - proposed annex elevations
 - 3) No development shall commence until details/samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the building hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details/samples.

Main issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the historic environment, including the settings of listed buildings and the Limpsfield Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The conservation area covers Limpsfield High Street, within the medieval settlement of Limpsfield. The Manor of Limpsfield was owned by Battle Abbey and it was the Abbey who set out the village with regular plots on either side of the High Street. These plots can be seen on historic maps from 1768 and 1840. The Council points out that formal planning of a settlement is rare in Tandridge and that, where plot widths survive, they are important both to the settings of individual listed buildings and to the special interest of the conservation area.
4. A heritage assessment was submitted with the application. This considered several listed buildings in the conservation area, concluding that the only designated heritage assets with the potential to be materially affected by the proposal are Detillens House (a Grade II* listed building), Nos 48 and 50 Detillens Lane (Grade II listed buildings) and the Limpsfield Conservation Area. No party has questioned this scoping exercise and I agree that these are the assets that need to be assessed in this appeal decision.
5. The listing description records that Detillens House is a timber framed hall house dating from the 15th century, with a front elevation dating from 1736. Nos 48 and 50 Detillens Lane are Grade II listed buildings, dating from the late 18th to early 19th century. Originally two cottages, they are now occupied as one. The listed buildings all have considerable historic and architectural interest, as good examples of these building types. The way in which Detillens House has developed over the centuries adds to its interest, illustrating how the needs of subsequent owners and architectural tastes have changed over time.

Effect on the setting of Detillens House

6. The setting of Detillens House, including its own extensive plot and the adjoining buildings in the conservation area, makes an important contribution to the significance of the listed building. The house can be fully appreciated as a free-standing building from within the front and rear gardens. Buildings along the High Street are generally set close to the road, creating a sense of enclosure. In contrast, Detillens House is set back behind a high wall with partial views of the 18th century front gained through gateways. This contrast emphasises the high status of the building and, even from the High Street, one gains an impression of the scale of the plot. These important ways in which setting contributes to the significance of the listed building would be unaffected by the appeal scheme.
7. Although the location of the proposed annex is described as being in a “service area”, it is important to appreciate that the way in which this area has served the house has changed significantly over time. Roques map of 1768 shows the house in the centre of an approximately square plot. The Tithe map of 1840 shows the plot subdivided, with a boundary running approximately north east/south west in line with the flank elevation of the house. This division appears to have separated a garden to the rear of the house from a service area which, at that time, included an L shaped barn and cottages fronting Detillens Lane. By the time of the Ordnance Survey (OS) map of 1895, the barn had been removed and the service area had been further subdivided.
8. The OS map of 1933 shows a building linking the flank elevation of the house to the back of the cottages, creating a courtyard to the north west of the

house. That building has since been demolished. More recently, the plot around Detillens House, as shown on the Historic England map, has been significantly reduced by the construction of Walnut Tree House, a modern detached house fronting Detillens Lane.

9. The site proposed for the annex falls partially within the footprint occupied by the L shaped barn during the 19th century. The annex would be located within a roughly rectangular parcel of land. The south west boundary of that parcel is a modern division, created by the construction of Walnut Tree House. The north west boundary is the frontage to Detillens Lane, which is currently enclosed with vegetation. The north east boundary adjoins Nos 48/50 Detillens Lane. The south east boundary is enclosed with a stone wall, which appears to align with the subdivision between the garden and the service area first shown on the Tithe map of 1840. These boundaries are firmly established. No further subdivision is proposed to accommodate the proposed annex. Moreover, it is hard to see why any such subdivision would be required.
10. The Council argues that the ability to appreciate the full width of the medieval plot would be compromised. However, on the ground the ability to appreciate the plot width has been almost entirely removed by the sequence of changes described above. The plot width is still readily appreciable as a desktop exercise, with the assistance of historic mapping. To the extent that the plot width can still be appreciated, either on the ground or through map evidence, I do not think that inserting a modest garden building into the existing boundaries of the land parcel in question would materially affect that ability.
11. The proposed annex would have a simple rectangular plan form, traditional timber weatherboarding and a clay tile roof. No objection has been raised to the design. There would be limited inter-visibility between the proposed annex and the house due to intervening structures and vegetation. There would be places within the grounds of Detillens House from which both the proposed building and the house would be in view. However, the proposal would be seen as a modest garden structure, of sympathetic design, at some distance from the main house. It would not compete with, or distract from, any views of the house. Nor would it affect the ability to appreciate the house in any other way.
12. I conclude that the proposal would not harm the setting of Detillens House, nor would it harm the significance or the special interest of the listed building.

Effect on the setting of Nos 48/50 Detillens Lane

13. Setting makes an important contribution to the significance of these listed buildings in that they form part of a coherent historic frontage to Detillens Lane. The proposed annex would be seen from the lane, to one side of the listed buildings. However, due to its sympathetic design and the degree of set back from the road frontage, it would not be an unduly dominant feature. It would sit between the detached garages serving Nos 48/50 and Walnut Tree House. Like the proposed annex, these buildings also have pitched roofs with gables facing the road. The proposed building would not look out of place in this context. Overall, there would be a minor change to the street scene but no harm to the setting or the special interest of the listed buildings.

Effect on the Limpsfield Conservation Area

14. The effect on views from Detillens Lane has been described above in relation to Nos 48/50. Insofar as the ability to appreciate the plot width of Detillens House contributes to the special interest of the conservation area, the comments above in relation to Detillens House apply.
15. The Parish Council has objected to the "*de facto subdivision*" of the plot. However, as discussed above, the land parcel where the annex is proposed has established boundaries. The proposal is for an extension to the living accommodation of Detillens House, not for a separate residential unit. The creation of a separate residential unit would be a material change of use, requiring a further planning permission. The Parish Council also comments that openness and mature vegetation define the edge of the conservation area. I consider that any impact on trees would be minor and would not change the general character of the site or the locality.

Conclusion

16. I conclude that there would be no harm to the settings of Detillens House or Nos 48/50 Detillens Lane. The settings of the listed buildings would be preserved. There would be no harm to the character and appearance of the Limpsfield Conservation Area, which would also be preserved. Overall, there would be no harm to the historic environment. The proposal would accord with Policy CSP18 of the Core Strategy, which seeks a high standard of design, with Policies DP7 and DP20 of the Tandridge Local Plan, which together seek to protect heritage assets, and with Policy LNP4 of the Limpsfield Neighbourhood Plan which seeks to preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area. The appeal should therefore be allowed.

Conditions

17. A condition requiring development to be in accordance with the plans is needed in the interests of clarity and certainty. Although a general indication of materials has been provided in the application documents, it is necessary to require submission of details and/or samples in the interests of the character and appearance of the conservation area. This is a pre-commencement condition because it involves design details that would need to be settled at an early stage.

David Prentis

Inspector