



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 February 2023

by C Hall BSc MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20th March 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/U2235/D/22/3309593

2 Fleet Farm Cottages, Chart Hill Road, Staplehurst, Kent TN12 0RW

- 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 C Ramsden against the decision of Maidstone Borough Council.
 - The application ref. 22/502761/FULL, dated 30 May 2022, was refused by notice dated 25 August 2022.
 - The proposed development is a part single storey and part two storey extension and a porch canopy.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site comprises a two-storey, semi-detached dwelling with off-street parking to the front and side. It is located in a rural area consisting of sporadic housing, farm buildings and open countryside.
 4. It would be evident from Chart Hill Road that the ridge height of the two-storey side element would be of a similar height to the ridge line of the existing property, and as such the addition would lack subservience. The set back from the front elevation of the principal building appears as a token gesture in this context, and would not alleviate the imposing scale of the extension, which would be in contrast to the existing dwelling.
 5. The use of timber cladding and differing window sizes and shapes would exacerbate the jarring appearance of the development, creating visual confusion and interrupting the diminutive proportions of the host dwelling. Overall, the scheme would represent a bulky and intrusive addition to the detriment of the character of the property, competing with the form of the original dwelling rather than complementing it.
 6. I appreciate that the proposal would improve the internal layout of the house, that a significant distance would be maintained to the side of the plot, that the existing pair of semi-detached units are of no specific merit, and they are not constrained by any other specific designations. However, none of these points would outweigh the harm that I have identified above.
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7. I also observed the farm house to the rear of 1 Fleet Farm Cottages, however this is a detached building and the relationship to no.1 is significantly different to that proposed by this appeal. As such I do not consider this to be a comparable situation that would otherwise weigh in favour of the development.
8. I acknowledge that alterations to semi-detached properties will inevitably result in an imbalance to an original pair, and with this in mind the principle of extending the property is likely to be acceptable. However, the specific development before me would result in a discordant scheme due to its scale and design as reasoned above.
9. I consider that the proposal would result in harm to the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and the surrounding area. It would be contrary to Policies SP17, DM1, DM30 and DM32 of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan October 2017 and the Council's Residential Extensions Guidelines Supplementary Planning Document (2009), which cumulatively seek to secure new development of acceptable scale and appearance. It would also be inconsistent with the advice in the National Planning Policy Framework, which states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.

Conclusion

10. Based on the foregoing and all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

C Hall

INSPECTOR