



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 May 2023

by David Wyborn BSc(Hons) MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26 May 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/L2250/D/22/3312838

285 Canterbury Road, Hawkinge, Folkestone CT18 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 Payne against the decision of Folkestone and Hythe District Council.
 - The application Ref 22/1327/FH, dated 2 August 2022, was refused by notice dated 30 November 2022.
 - The development proposed is a loft conversion complete with hip-to gable and rear dormer.
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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 host property, street scene and the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Reasons

3. The appeal dwelling is a detached property set at an angle within its fairly generous plot adjoining the Canterbury Road (A260). The design of the dwelling, including with generally pitched roofs with full hips, front bay window, and pattern of fenestration, provides a pleasantly proportioned and well-articulated building. The dwelling lies broadly south of the centre of Densole and in an area with a fairly verdant appearance, amongst a group of other properties and with woodland on the other side of the road.
4. The site and the surrounding area is located within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) requires that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in AONBs, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.
5. In terms of development plan policies, a key policy is HB8 of the Folkestone and Hythe District Places and Policies Local Plan September 2020 (the Local Plan) which requires that alterations and extensions should seek to reflect the scale, proportions, materials, roof line and detailing of the original building, and not have a detrimental impact on the street scene.
6. The proposal would include altering one of the hips of the roof to form a gable end. This would affect the pleasant, symmetrical proportions of the main roof and be a noticeable change to the design of the building. However, on balance,

the formation of the gable would still provide a traditional feature and is not objectionable in itself to this building in this location.

7. At the rear, the proposed enlarged roof form would incorporate a fairly sizeable flat roofed dormer. The dormer would extend across much of the roof and be constructed reasonably close to the side of the new gable, the ridge and the eaves. It would leave little sloping roof left on the rear elevation. With its boxy and angular shape, it would be an overly dominant feature that would appear to be a top-heavy addition to the rear elevation of the dwelling. Furthermore, the off-set position of the dormer in relation to the main vertical axis of the rear of the dwelling would add to the incongruous appearance. For these reasons, the dormer would not appear as a sympathetic and well-designed extension and would be at odds with the well-proportioned and pleasant character of the property.
8. Accordingly, the appearance of the dormer would not meet the with the design requirements of Policy HB8 of the Local Plan because the dormer would not satisfactorily reflect the scale, proportions and detailing of the original building.
9. I appreciate that the dwelling has an extensive flat roofed extension to the rear of the property. However, despite its floor area, this addition appears fairly subservient to the elevation and does not adversely affect its overall profile and main roof shape. I also saw in some parts of Canterbury Road properties with prominent flat roof dormers. I have taken into account the presence of these dormers with their often functional appearance and their effect on the character of the area. However, they do not convince me that another dormer, with the harmful design that I have identified, would be justified on this site.
10. The proposed dormer at No 285 would be visible from within the rear garden of the site and, in all likelihood, from an area to the rear of the neighbouring property. It is unlikely to be visible from the main road because of the angle and set back of the building and the intervening mature vegetation. However, the lack of public views does not remove the need for the proposal to meet with the policy requirements to achieve high standards of design and appearance.
11. The harm to the character and appearance of the host building and the area, which would result from the dormer, would be very localised. Nevertheless, the scheme would not conserve the landscape and scenic beauty in this localised area, which forms part of the AONB. This harm to the AONB, in accordance with the requirements of the Framework, is a matter that should be attributed great weight.
12. I have taken into account that Hawkinge Town Council has not objected to the proposal, as well as the appellant's case that the development would be permitted development if the site was not within the AONB. However, the property is, as a matter of fact, located within the AONB, planning permission is required for the proposal, and it is necessary to have regard to the policy tests for development in such an area when determining the appeal. I am also satisfied that planning conditions as part of any approval could not address the identified harm.
13. In the light of the above analysis, I conclude that the rear dormer would adversely affect the host building and AONB, although not the street scene for the reasons I have explained. The identified harm would conflict with Policies

HB1, HB8 and NE3 of the Local Plan which, amongst other things, seeks that development makes a positive contribution to its location and surroundings.

14. For the reasons given above, the harm that would be caused by the development would be such that the proposal would not comply with the development plan when considered as a whole. There are no material considerations that outweigh the identified harm and associated development plan conflict. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

David Wyborn

INSPECTOR