



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 June 2023

by Stewart Glassar BSc (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 JUNE 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/R3650/W/22/3312571

Land at Holdfast House, Holdfast Lane, Haslemere GU27 2EU

- 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 Mrs S & Mr R Howard against the decision of Waverley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref WA/2022/02284, dated 9 September 2022, was refused by notice dated 3 November 2022.
 - The development proposed is the change of use and alterations to former agricultural/equestrian barn to provide a dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the change of use and alterations to former agricultural/equestrian barn to provide a dwelling at Land at Holdfast House, Holdfast Lane, Haslemere GU27 2EU in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref WA/2022/02284, dated 9 September 2022, subject to the conditions in the schedule below.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have taken the address and description of development from the Council's decision notice and appellants' appeal form as they are more accurate and succinct.
3. Between the Council's decision and the appeal coming before me, the Waverley Borough Local Plan Part 2 (LPP2) was adopted and so replaced all the remaining saved policies in the Waverley Local Plan 2002. In regard to this appeal the Council indicated that Policies D1 and D4 of the WLP were superseded by Policy DM4 of the LLPP2. The appellants were aware of the change and made comment in relation to Policy DM4. I have taken the adopted development plan into account in reaching my decision.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

5. The appeal building is an existing brick built, single storey structure with corrugated metal pitched roof. It sits to the southeast, and within the grounds, of Holdfast House, a large, detached dwelling. The site is located within the open countryside and offers expansive views of the undulating land to the west as well as views towards the nearby property of Brackenbury to the south and of Holdfast House itself.

6. The site is within the Green Belt, the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and an Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV). The Council accepts that the proposal is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt and has not raised harm to either the AONB or AGLV in its reason for refusal. I have no substantive evidence before me to reach different conclusions on these points.
7. The proposal would entail a re-use of the building. There would be some alterations in its external appearance, with new openings and timber cladding being the most noticeable. The existing rear lean-to, which is in a poor state of repair, would become a flat roof rear projection, albeit occupying a similar footprint and maximum height as the existing lean-to. There would be a new residential curtilage created which would include a dedicated parking area. This could lead to a greater preponderance of domestic paraphernalia around the building.
8. However, whilst the resulting building would appear more as a dwelling than an agricultural building, its overall shape, size, form, prominence and visibility within the wider landscape would remain relatively unchanged. Similarly, whilst the appeal site would be more readily apparent as a separate residential plot, it is already largely delineated from the main garden to Holdfast House by post and rail fencing. The overall visual effect would therefore be relatively limited and localised.
9. The new dwelling would be served by an existing access from Holdfast Lane, which is separate from the access serving Holdfast House. Given the existing hedges and alignment of the highway itself, the access offers reasonable visibility onto Holdfast Lane.
10. The alignment of the access road into the site has a slight curve and gentle rise in level towards the appeal building. These factors together with the existing hedging alongside the access road inhibit direct views of the building from the entrance. Were the hedge to be removed then this is likely to change but there seems little reason why this would occur given that the hedge is within the grounds of Holdfast House and provides screening to its tennis court and garden.
11. I acknowledge that the resulting dwelling and curtilage would be smaller than that of Holdfast House and its immediate neighbours. However, there are dwellings just to the north, along Holdfast Lane, which are different again to that of Holdfast House. Variety and difference do not necessarily lead to harm. In this particular instance, the appeal building is not positioned such that it would create an awkward juxtaposition with other buildings, nor would it be prominent within the street scene or manifestly at odds with the surrounding landscape.
12. The change of use would inevitably result in an intensification of the site and additional comings and goings would be noticeable to those regularly using Holdfast Lane. However, given the small scale of the proposal, such changes would not be unduly harmful to the nature of Holdfast Lane or the established character of the area.
13. Overall, I do not find that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area. As such, it would comply with Policy TD1 of the Local Plan (Part 1) 2018, Policy DM4 of the LPP2 and Policy H6 of the Haslemere

Neighbourhood Plan 2013- 2032 which, amongst other things, seek to ensure that developments are of an appropriate nature and scale, respond positively to their surroundings and that the character of an area is protected

14. Insofar as the Council's Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (2010) might apply to the proposal and in particular the rear projection, I find no conflict with the document's overall objectives.
15. The proposal would also accord with Paragraph 130 of the Framework, which amongst other things, seeks to ensure developments are sympathetic to local character, including landscape setting.

Planning Balance

16. The absence of a five-year housing land supply engages paragraph 11(d) of the Framework. Consequently, planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of the proposal would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the scheme, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.
17. However, I do not find the proposal to be harmful. I find that it accords with the development plan when taken as a whole and that material considerations do not indicate that the determination should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. The proposal should therefore be approved.

Conditions

18. In addition to the standard time limit, a condition is required in the interests of certainty that lists the approved plans. I note that the application form indicates that the precise details of the external materials are to be agreed and a condition to secure them is therefore necessary.
19. The proposal has been considered and its effects assessed on the basis of it being a reuse of an existing building. As such, further extensions or alterations would need to be carefully considered as to their effects on the building and wider area. It is therefore reasonable and necessary for permitted development rights to be restricted in relation to additions or changes to the building and its curtilage. For similar reasons, details of any means of enclosure around the site and any hardstanding should be first agreed with the Council.
20. A condition relating to the provision of car parking would be in the interests of good planning of the site. The provision of car charging facilities would accord with the Framework's objectives for sustainability and climate change.

Conclusion

21. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be allowed, subject to the conditions in the schedule below.

Stewart Glassar

INSPECTOR

Schedule of Conditions

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans listed below:

Drawing No. 010 – Site Location Plan (Dated 05/05/2021)

Drawing No. 101 – Proposed Block Plan (Dated 05/05/2021)

Drawing No. 200 – Proposed Plan View (Dated 30/04/2021)

Drawing No. 201 – Proposed Roof Plan (Dated 30/04/2021)

Drawing No. 300 – Proposed Elevation 1 (Dated 06/05/2021)

Drawing No. 301 – Proposed Elevation 2 (Dated 30/04/2021)
- 3) Other than demolition, no development above slab level shall commence until details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the dwelling 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.
- 4) Prior to the occupation of the dwelling hereby permitted, the means of enclosure shall be implemented in accordance with details submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The permitted means of enclosure shall thereafter be retained.
- 5) Prior to the occupation of the dwelling hereby permitted, any hardstanding shall be implemented in accordance with details submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The permitted hardstanding shall thereafter be retained.
- 6) Prior to the occupation of the dwelling hereby permitted, a scheme (including timescale) for the provision of facilities to enable the charging of one electric vehicle to serve the permitted dwelling shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and shall be retained as such thereafter.
- 7) The dwelling hereby permitted shall not be first occupied until space has been laid out within the site in accordance with drawing no. 101 for vehicles to be parked and that space shall thereafter be kept available at all times for the parking of vehicles.
- 8) Notwithstanding the provisions of Schedule 2, Part 1, Classes A, B, C, D, E, F and G of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no development permitted by those Classes, other than that expressly authorised by this permission, shall be carried out to, or within the curtilage of, the dwelling hereby permitted.

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