

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 June 2023

by Martin Andrews MA(Planning) BSc(Econ) DipTP & DipTP(Dist) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 06 July 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/D3830/D/23/3321453

The Meadows, Little Park Farm, Marchants Close, Hurstpierpoint, West Sussex BN6 9XD

- 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 Ms Emma Poland against the decision of Mid Sussex District Council.
 - The application, Ref. DM/22/3843, dated 16 December 2022 was refused by notice dated 10 February 2023.
 - The development proposed is a single storey porch extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a single storey porch extension at The Meadows, Little Park Farm, Marchants Close, Hurstpierpoint, West Sussex in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref. DM/22/3843, dated 16 December 2022 and subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development to which this permission relates shall be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this decision;
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Drawing Nos. SK-C-LP; SK-C-BP & C-01 (composite plan);
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are (i) the effect of the proposed porch on the rural character and appearance of the locality, and (ii) the effect on the setting of 'Little Park', a Grade II* Listed Building.

Reasons

3. On the first issue, the officer's report explains that the permission for the recently constructed and occupied building is subject to a condition withdrawing permitted development rights. Without this condition the appeal application would have been unnecessary.
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4. The Council argues that the more natural position for the porch would be at the door on the western facing elevation which is regarded as the front of the building. This door permits access to the courtyard parking area and is convenient for the integral garage; it also allows direct access into the kitchen and the main ground floor open plan living area. Conversely, the proposed position of the extension projects from the side of the building and is considered to be inappropriately positioned.
5. However whilst I can understand the point made, the design of the building is such that there is no particularly obvious front, side or rear. Furthermore, a porch located on the inside corner of the L-shaped building would be likely to have a cluttering effect against the clean lines of these elevations. And although the projection of the porch from the 'side' elevation in the appeal scheme is considered by the Council to be more harmful, I regard it as being of both a good design and modest scale.
6. As regards design, the porch would fit within the frame of the existing gable and together with the entrance's similarity to the existing combined door/window features, the addition would be fully reflective of the building's defining characteristics. In terms of floorspace the proposed porch's total area of under 12sqm is by any reasonable assessment a subservient addition of the building's footprint, as opposed to the Council's description of it being 'large', 'significant' and 'substantial'.
7. Nor do I consider that on this large plot, as shown by the red line on Drawing No. SK-C-LP, the addition would '*negatively impact upon the rural character of this edge of village site*' or '*fail to protect the character and beauty of the countryside area on the village boundary*' as claimed in the report. Instead the porch would be correctly perceived as a minor domestic addition, with any perceived visual disadvantage arising from its forward projection from the main structure mitigated by a design and external materials wholly in keeping with the host dwelling.
8. I also acknowledge the functional desirability of the addition. As mentioned above, the officer's report regards the existing door as the 'front' door, but such entrances rarely open directly into a kitchen, albeit open plan with living space. The report also refers to a ground floor toilet as being '*already available for the occupiers of the building, located in the ensuite shower room off Bedroom 1*'.
9. However, this is a patently unsatisfactory arrangement for visitors to the property as is entering the dwelling via the kitchen. In contrast, the proposed porch is directly adjacent to the reception room; would have a hallway to accommodate visitors' outdoor clothes and shoes, and would provide WC facilities without the need to go through a bedroom.
10. Turning briefly to the second issue of the effect of the porch on the setting of the listed Little Park, it would appear from the grant of permission for The Meadows that the main building itself was not regarded as having that effect. For the proposed porch to be so harmful as to now have that impact is not credible either in terms national and local policy to safeguard designated heritage assets or indeed plain common sense.
11. My assessment to this effect was confirmed on my visit by observation of the significant distance between The Meadows and Little Park; the lower site level of

the former, and the presence of substantial mature screening between the two buildings. The combination of these factors means that there is effectively no meaningful visual relationship between the buildings that could be reasonably said to result in this limited extension of The Meadows having a harmful effect on the setting of the Grade II* listed 'Little Park'.

Conclusions and Conditions

12. On both main issues my conclusion is that the appeal scheme would have no adverse effects as regards the rural character and appearance of the locality and the setting of the listed building. There would therefore be no harmful conflict with Policies DP12, DP26 & DP34 of the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 adopted 2018; Policy HurstC1 OF the Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2031 and Government policy in Sections 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021.
13. I shall therefore allow the appeal. A condition requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans is needed for the avoidance of doubt and is in the interests of proper planning. A condition requiring the porch having external materials to match those of the building will maintain visual amenity.

Martin Andrews

INSPECTOR