



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 June 2023

by A James BSc (Hons) MA MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 July 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/U1430/D/22/3309298

The Oast, Birchetts Green Lane, Ticehurst, East Sussex TN5 6HS

- 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 Philippa Wynn-Green against the decision of Rother District Council.
- The application Ref RR/2022/1103/P, dated 29 April 2022, was refused by notice dated 4 August 2022.
- The development proposed is demolition of the existing single-storey garage, conservatory and annexe. Two-storey extension to the main house and internal alterations. Bay window to replace the existing conservatory. Reconstruction of the annexe in a new location further back in the site. Relocation of the existing entrance gates and driveway alterations.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for demolition of the existing single-storey garage, conservatory and annexe. Two-storey extension to the main house and internal alterations. Bay window to replace the existing conservatory. Reconstruction of the annexe in a new location further back in the site. Relocation of the existing entrance gates and driveway alterations at The Oast, Birchetts Green Lane, Ticehurst, East Sussex TN5 6HS in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref RR/2022/1103/P, dated 29 April 2022, and subject to the following 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 following approved plans: 000/P2: Location Plan Existing; 001/P2: Site Plan Existing; 010/P2: Ground Floor Plan Existing; 011/P2: First Floor Plan Existing; 012/P2: Second Floor Plan Existing; 013/P2: Roof Plan Existing; 020/P2: South-West Elevation Existing; 021/P2: South-East Elevation Existing; 022/P2: North-West Elevation Existing; 023/P2: North-East Elevation Existing; 101/P7: Site Plan Proposed; 110/P9: Ground Floor Plan Proposed; 111/P6: First Floor Plan Proposed; 112/P5: Second Floor Plan Proposed; 113/P5: Roof Plan Proposed; 115/P1: Carport Proposed; 120/P5: South-West Elevation Proposed; 121/P5: South-East Elevation Proposed; 122/P4: North-West Elevation Proposed; and, 123/P5: North-East Elevation Proposed.
 - 3) The annexe building hereby permitted shall not be occupied at any time other than for purposes ancillary to the residential use of the dwelling known as The Oast, Birchetts Green Lane, Ticehurst, East Sussex TN5 6HS.

Preliminary Matters

2. The former agent's name is listed on the planning application form within the applicant details section. Nevertheless, the applicant's name is provided later on the application form and on the appeal form, which I have used in the banner heading of this Decision.
3. The Council raise no objections to the demolition of the conservatory and garage, reconstruction of the annexe, proposed car port, relocation of the entrance gates, driveway alterations and changes to windows and doors. Based on the evidence before me and my site visit, I have no reason to reach a contrary conclusion to the Council on these matters.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed extensions on the character and appearance of the host property, a non-designated heritage asset and the area, having particular regard to the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Reasons

5. The appeal property is a former oasthouse, which has been converted to a dwelling. The oasthouse forms part of a historic farmstead and is sited adjacent to Birchetts Green Farmhouse, which is a Grade II listed building, to which I return to below. The appeal property is set back from the highway behind a large, landscaped front garden. Nevertheless, the building is visible from the highway and its kiln and cowl are prominent features within the landscape.
6. The appeal site lies within the AONB. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) requires that great weight is given to conserving and enhancing the landscape and scenic beauty of AONBs. The landscape surrounding the historic farmstead is predominantly in agricultural use and characterised by irregular shaped fields that are bound by hedgerows and trees. The land slopes downwards in a south-easterly direction and there are far reaching views of the rolling countryside from the rear of the property.
7. The significance of the appeal property as a non-designated heritage asset derives from the simplicity of its rectangular shaped stowage and its square kiln, which has a sloping roof and cowl. Further significance is derived from its contribution within the historic farmstead and its relationship to the wider countryside. Whilst the oasthouse contains some modern domestic features, including conservatory, dormer windows, chimney and balcony, which are not sympathetic to the agricultural heritage of the building, overall, the building contributes positively to the social and agricultural history of the area and the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB.
8. The proposed 2 storey side extension would follow the existing front and rear building lines and have the same ridge and eaves height. The proposed dormers would respect those on the existing roof. The proposed side extension by reason of its size, design and materials would be in keeping with the existing building. Although, the extension would be the same height as the existing building, it would not be a significant addition, nor would it overly dominate the host property. Whilst the proposal would elongate the stowage, it would not unnaturally do so. The size of the proposed stowage would not be dissimilar to others in the area. The proposal would retain the key features of

the oasthouse, being its rectangular shaped stowage barn with attached square kiln and therefore the building's typology, form and agricultural character and appearance would be preserved.

9. The proposed 2 storey extension would not be significantly larger than the garage that it would replace. The garage is sited on higher level land and projects further forward than the principal front building line of the oasthouse. The removal of the existing garage would be beneficial as it currently obscures views of the front of the property.
10. The proposal seeks to demolish the existing conservatory and replace it with a bay window. The existing conservatory dominates the front elevation and given its size, siting and materials appears as an incongruous feature on this former agricultural building. The proposed bay window would be far more low key, simple in form and its materials would reflect that used on the existing building. As a result, it would not detract from or compete with the frontage and would be far less domestic in appearance than the existing conservatory that it would replace.
11. Overall, the removal of the existing garage and conservatory and proposed extensions and alterations would enhance the character and appearance of the host property, which is a non-designated heritage asset. The proposal would also enhance the significance of the building and its relationship with the AONB setting, by removing some of the existing domestic additions that detract from the building's agricultural character.
12. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the proposal would enhance the character and appearance of the area, the High Weald AONB and the host dwelling, which is a non-designated heritage asset. The proposal would comply with Policies EN1, EN2, EN3, OSS4, RA3 and RA4 of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy September 2014 and Policies DEN1, DEN2 and DHG9 of the Development and Site Allocations Local Plan December 2019. These policies amongst other matters require that development conserves and seeks to enhance the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB; that extensions respect and respond positively to the scale, form, proportions, materials and the overall design, character and appearance of the dwelling; that extensions and outbuildings maintain and do not compromise the character of the countryside and landscape; that developments preserve distinctive vernacular building forms; and that new development is of high quality design that contributes positively to the character of the site and surroundings.
13. The proposal would also comply with Objectives S2 and S3 of the High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024. These objectives amongst other matters require that developments protect the historic pattern and character of a settlement and that development reflects the character of the High Weald in its scale, layout, design and materials.

Other Matters

14. The appeal site forms part of the setting of the adjacent Grade II listed property, known as Birchetts Green Farmhouse. In accordance with the statutory duty imposed by section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, I have had special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of the listed building in the determination of this appeal. The group of buildings within the historic farmstead and the surrounding

landscape, which is within agricultural use contribute to the significance of this listed building. Given the intervening boundary treatment, the fact that the extension and annexe are sited on the opposite side of the oast to the listed building and the other alterations are fairly small-scale would ensure that there is no harm to the significance of this designated heritage asset, in terms of its setting.

Conditions

15. In addition to the standard time limit condition, in the interests of certainty, I have included a condition specifying the approved plans. Given the proposed materials are indicated on the plans, an external materials condition is not necessary.
16. Paragraph 55 of the Framework is clear that planning obligations should only be used where it is not possible to address unacceptable impacts through a planning condition. I agree with the Parish Council that it is necessary to restrict occupancy of the annexe. I am satisfied that the annexe can be tied to the dwelling by condition. Such a condition is necessary to ensure the annexe is not occupied as a separate dwelling.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons given above, having regard to the development plan as a whole, the Framework and all other relevant material considerations, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed, subject to conditions.

A James

INSPECTOR