
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 June 2024

by Robert Naylor BSc (Hons) MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 02 July 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/C1435/D/23/3333076

Puckstye Farm, Holtye Common, Holtye, Cowden, East Sussex TN8 7ED

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr & Mrs Henry Johns against the decision of Wealden District Council.
 - The application Ref is WD/2023/2258/F.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a two storey extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted for the erection of a two storey extension at Puckstye Farm, Holtye Common, Holtye, Cowden, East Sussex TN8 7ED in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref WD/2023/2258/F, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

Preliminary Matters

2. Since the appeal was lodged, a revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) has been published, however the changes do not materially alter the sections of the Framework most relevant to this appeal. Any references to the Framework hereafter in this decision are to the latest version.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA) and the surrounding area.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal site is a detached two-storey farmhouse located amongst barns and a small pond, close to the end of a narrow rural lane, providing a well secluded and somewhat remote location. The surrounding area is designated as the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (National Landscape) and is a pleasant open and verdant area providing a quaint countryside feel to the area in general. The appeal site is an NDHA and is located in an elevated position from the road, providing a prominent view of the rear as one approaches the site from the west. The proposal seeks to demolish the existing rear extension and provide a two-storey rear extension incorporating a double hipped roof treatment.
5. The National Planning Practice Guidance advises that NDHAs are identified by plan-making bodies via a number of processes, which can include being

designated as part of the decision-making process on planning applications¹. The Council appears to have identified the site, through a previous application process, as a NDHA.

6. From the evidence before me the farmhouse dates from the 17th Century as a three bay, two storey building, with central hall and staircase and gable end chimney stacks. The eastern elevation appears as the main frontage of the farmhouse where originally the farm activities would have taken place. The front elevation is most prominently visible when entering the site from the narrow rural lane, providing an attractive farmhouse typical of its period of construction. Nevertheless, the property has been subject to extensions at the rear in the past, which have provided unsympathetic additions to the original fabric.
7. Consequently, the significance of the NDHA is principally derived from the main eastern elevation and the use of traditional materials and construction techniques, which provide historical and architectural interest to the property. The appeal site therefore makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the surrounding rural area through its architectural value, accentuated by its relatively prominent position, when viewed from the roadside, within the pleasant rural landscape. As such the site contains a level of historical and architectural value that would be sufficient for this building to warrant being considered a NDHA.
8. Paragraph 209 of the Framework states that the effect of an application on the significance of a NDHA should be taken into account, and that a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm and the significance of the asset. The Framework further indicates that new development should be sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change.
9. The proposed development would mainly impact on the rear of the farmhouse which would be more visible from public vantage points outside the site. It is acknowledged that the proposal would be larger in scale and mass than the current extensions, however the respectful form, design and use of appropriate details would provide a sympathetic treatment to the host property.
10. In view of the positioning and size of the proposal relative to the host property, I am satisfied that the massing arising from the proposal would be acceptable in visual terms, not appearing visually intrusive or overly prominent within its context. The scheme provides a respectful, well-considered design response to the site. The traditional design and use of suitable materials, which can be secured by condition, would not harm the character and appearance of the house itself, an NDHA, and thus preserving its significance.
11. I therefore conclude that, the proposal would not be out of keeping with the character and appearance of the appeal property and would not cause harm to its significance as an NDHA and would also preserve the character and appearance of the surrounding area in general. There is therefore no conflict with Saved Policies GD2, EN1, EN6, EN27, DC17 and DC19 of the Wealden Local Plan, adopted December 1998; Policies SPO1 and SPO2, of the Wealden District Core Strategy Local Plan, adopted February 2013; and the aims and

¹ Paragraph: 040 Reference ID: 18a-040-20190723

objectives of the Wealden Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document adopted November 2008 which collectively seek good design, which conserves or enhances natural beauty and character, and provides respectful development appropriate to local distinctiveness and historical and cultural assets. The proposal would also be consistent with the Framework which seeks high standards of design that would conserve and enhance the historic environment, amongst other things.

Conditions

12. I have imposed the standard time condition and a condition to ensure the development is in accordance with the approved plans in the interests of certainty.
13. In the interests of highway safety and neighbouring amenity given the narrow nature of the access to the site, I have imposed a requirement for a Construction Management Plan which is necessary to submit prior to the approved development commencing. I have also imposed a condition in respect to the material specifications in order to ensure an acceptable visual effect in the interests of preserving the historic asset.

Conclusion

14. The appeal scheme would accord with the development plan, when read as a whole and the Framework. Having considered all material considerations and other relevant matters raised, I therefore conclude that the appeal is allowed.

Robert Naylor

INSPECTOR

SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with drawing nos: 22017-PL-01, 22017-PL-02 Rev A and 22017-PL-03 Rev C
- 3) No development shall take place, including any works of demolition, until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Statement shall include details of, but not limited to, the provision of:
 - i) the parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors;
 - ii) loading and unloading of plant and materials;
 - iii) storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development;
 - iv) the erection and maintenance of security hoarding, where appropriate;
 - v) a scheme for recycling/disposing of waste resulting from demolition and construction works;
 - vi) delivery, demolition and construction working hours;
 - vii) method of access and egress and routeing of vehicles during construction, including any temporary access where appropriate.

The approved Construction Method Statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period for the development.

- 4) No development shall take place, including any works of demolition, until details / samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details / samples.

END OF SCHEDULE