



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 June 2024

by G Ellis BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22nd July 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/L3815/D/24/3337277

**Fridays Hill Cottage, Copyhold Lane, Fernhurst, West Sussex
GU27 3DZ**

- 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 Luma Zaki against the decision of the South Downs National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref is SDNP/23/04113/HOUS.
 - The development proposed is for the erection of a two storey side extension.
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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 and the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site lies in the open countryside and the South Downs National Park (SDNP). It is the only property to the south of Copyhold Lane and has a rural and relatively remote setting. It is situated on a hillside with views across the landscape to the southeast but is screened by trees from Haslemere Road.
4. The detached Victorian property is situated on lower ground than Copyhold Lane. The main elevation (south) has a central, pitched roof projection containing the entrance, and two-storey projecting bays to each side. An extension has been added to the eastern elevation with a catslide roof and dormer windows. The proposed extension would be to the other side, extending the full depth of that flank elevation.
5. The appellant advises that the extension equates to an increase in floorspace of 25.8%. It would therefore, on its own, be less than the limitation of an approximately 30% increase for extensions set out in Policy SD31 1(a) of the South Downs Local Plan¹(LP). However, compliance with any size threshold will not be sufficient in itself to secure planning permission. Policy SD31 also, as well as other policies and guidance, require that proposals are of a high standard of design and respect the character of the existing property.
6. The two-storey extension is designed with materials to match, including the first-floor fenestration, however, the proposed flat roof would contrast with the

¹ South Downs Local Plan: adopted 2 July 2019 (2014-33)

existing architectural style. I accept that modern forms and features can be integrated with older properties and their use is not precluded, which is acknowledged in the Fernhurst Neighbourhood Plan (FNP). Nonetheless, the SDNP Adopted Design Guide - Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) advises that the appropriate design of the roof is vital to any extension and would normally be expected to match the main property (section C.4.2.6), and that flat-roofed extensions at a first-floor level will normally be resisted (section C.4.2.7). The proposal fails to reflect this guidance.

7. Aligning with the eaves line the proposed extension would have a subservience, but visually it would create an abrupt horizontal plane and would appear incongruous. With the existing extension to the east, the property is no longer symmetrical, nonetheless, the original Victorian element predominates. Together with the existing alterations, which are of a differing style, the scale and form of the proposed extension would fail to create cohesion and balance to the detriment of the property as a whole.
8. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks. The extension would have a limited visual presence from Copyhold Lane and the immediate surrounding area. It would not significantly affect the overarching landscape and scenic beauty of the National Park, or impact upon key views or the dark skies. However, the absence of harm is a neutral factor and does not overcome the effect of the development on the integrity of the property.
9. In conclusion I find that the proposed development would cause harm to the character and appearance of the host property. Thus, it would be contrary to Policies SD1, SD4, SD5 and SD31 of the LP which require, amongst other things, to respect the established character of the local area, through sensitive and high-quality design that uses appropriate and sympathetic architecture and makes a positive contribution to the overall character and appearance of the area.
10. There would also be conflict with Policies DE1 and DE2 of the FNP, and the SPD which support the local vernacular and extensions which complement the scale, height, massing, appearance and character of the existing dwelling, and respect the local character and landscape.

Other Matters

11. The Council's decision also included a reason for refusal relating to insufficient information regarding the impact on trees. The area of the proposed extension is clear from trees with the nearest being part of the banking to Copyhold Lane. Trees around the development area would require protection during construction, however, having found against the proposal on the main issue this matter is not determinative and could be addressed through additional details.
12. The appellant has drawn my attention to the redevelopment of Copyhold along Copyhold Lane and other two-storey extensions in Fernhurst. The specific details of each of these developments are not before me, and each proposal is to be considered on its own merits. Nonetheless, there is no indication that these are flat-roofed, two-storey extensions and are directly comparable. Additionally, the Council has indicated that a different design of extension could

be acceptable with reference to planning permissions previously granted for an extension to the west.

13. I have also had regard to the supporting information in relation to bats and wider enhancements to the site, including the use of locally sourced materials, a lighting scheme and native planting. All these aspects are important in a sensitive landscape setting, but they are not direct, nor significant, benefits which justify the form of the extension proposed. The proposal conflicts with the development plan read as a whole and material considerations do not indicate a decision should be made other than in accordance with it.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons set out and having regard to all other matters raised the appeal is dismissed.

G Ellis

INSPECTOR