



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 July 2024

by C Carpenter BA MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 2 August 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/C1435/D/24/3342439

Larkrise, Camberlot Road, Upper Dicker, East Sussex BN27 3QG

- 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 C Brady against the decision of Wealden District Council.
 - The application Ref is WD/2023/2762/F.
 - The development proposed is single storey extension at front to create family annexe.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for single storey extension at front to create family annexe at Larkrise, Camberlot Road, Upper Dicker, East Sussex BN27 3QG in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref WD/2023/2762/F, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the following 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: 13222.01 Existing; 13222.02 C Proposals; 13222.03 C Block Plan.
 - 3) The external materials of the extension hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.
 - 4) The extension hereby permitted shall not be occupied at any time other than for purposes ancillary to the residential use of the dwelling known as Larkrise.

Preliminary Matters

2. The appellant has submitted revised versions of drawing nos 13222.03 Block Plan (revision C) and 13222.02 Proposals (revision C) with the appeal. These revisions slightly amend the depth of the proposed extension shown on the Block Plan to be consistent with that already shown on the originally submitted detailed Proposals plan. There are also updated details about the existing hedge and pavement level. I note there is a slight inconsistency in the indicative height of the existing hedge shown on the north and south elevations on drawing no 13222.02 C. Notwithstanding this, the revisions do not involve a fundamental change to the proposed development and help clarify the proposal. I am satisfied no party would be prejudiced by my taking these revised drawings into account in my decision.
3. On 30 July 2024 the Government published a consultation on proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and other changes

to the planning system. The proposed revisions to the Framework are draft and therefore may be subject to change before the final Framework is published. In addition, the draft revisions to the Framework and other proposed reforms are not directly relevant to this appeal. Therefore, I am satisfied no party would be disadvantaged by not having the opportunity to comment on them.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area.

Reasons

5. The host dwelling is one of several houses in a ribbon on one side of Camberlot Road. These houses are mostly detached with two storeys, have a somewhat varied although generally traditional appearance, and are set back from the road behind hedges. The dwellings' principal frontages follow a broadly consistent building line. However, there are several substantial single storey buildings and extensions to the front of this line, the roofs of which are clearly visible above the hedges. Built elements forwards of the principal building line therefore contribute to the character of the street scene.
6. The Wealden Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2008 (WDG) states front extensions should generally be avoided because extending beyond the established building line can result in undue prominence to the detriment of the existing street scene. However, they may be acceptable where the property is a detached house in either an area of low-density building, sitting well back from the highway, or where there is an irregular building line. The WDG adds that where the principle of a front extension is considered acceptable, its design should be of an appropriate size, detail and materials.
7. The proposed extension would have a single storey and would be subordinate in scale and mass to the host dwelling. Its roof form with pitched elements would complement the roof form of the existing house. Matching materials could be secured by condition were the appeal to be allowed. A gap between the front elevation of the extension and the hedge would be retained. I therefore find the proposed extension would not be visually dominant.
8. The development would be comparable in height, depth and appearance to other front extensions and single storey buildings in this stretch of Camberlot Road. The ground level of the development would be somewhat lower than the level of the footway and hedge, so only the roof of the proposed extension would be visible from the public realm. This would be consistent with the other roofs visible above the hedges along the road. Overall, the proposal would not be unduly prominent in the street scene, with a neutral effect on its character.
9. Consequently, notwithstanding that the principal building line in the row is broadly regular, and whether or not existing single storey developments predate the WDG, I find the proposal would be consistent with the intention of the WDG guidance on front extensions.
10. For the above reasons, I conclude the proposal would not have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area. Accordingly, I find no conflict with Policy SPO13 of the Wealden District Core Strategy Local Plan 2013 or saved Policies EN27, DC19 and HG10 of the Wealden Local Plan 1998. Together, these Policies seek to promote local

distinctiveness through good design; ensure proposals respect the character of adjoining development; and require extensions outside development boundaries to be of an appropriate size and character relative to the original dwelling.

11. I also find no conflict with the Framework, which seeks to ensure developments are sympathetic to local character and gives significant weight to development which reflects local design policies, taking into account local design guidance and supplementary planning documents.

Other Matters

12. Part of the roof of the extension would be visible above the boundary fence from the neighbouring dwelling known as Forge Lodge. This would be seen from this house's rear garden and the side windows of its living room. However, the variation in levels between the two properties means the proposed development's effect on outlook from these perspectives would not be overbearing. In addition, the outlook from the living room's principal front window would be unaffected by the proposal. I am not persuaded that a flat and/or green roof would materially improve the effect on Forge Lodge's outlook and such a design could look incongruous in the street scene.
13. The Council has raised no concern with the effect of the proposal on light for the occupiers of Forge Lodge. On the evidence before me, I see no reason to disagree.
14. I therefore find the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers would be acceptable.

Conditions

15. I have considered the conditions put forward by the Council and have amended the wording where necessary in the interests of clarity and simplicity. In addition to the standard time limit condition, I have imposed a condition requiring that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans. This is in the interest of certainty.
16. The condition to secure matching materials is necessary for the reasons given above. The condition restricting use of the extension is necessary to ensure it is used for purposes ancillary to the residential use of the host dwelling.

Conclusion

17. For the above reasons the proposal accords with the development plan, read as a whole. Material considerations, including the Framework, do not indicate that a decision should be taken otherwise than in accordance with it. I therefore conclude the appeal should be allowed.

C Carpenter

INSPECTOR