



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 July 2024

by N Perrins BSc (Hons), MSc, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9 August 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/C1435/D/24/3344845

Ware Grange, Bells Yew Green Road, Frant, East Sussex TN3 9BD

- 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 Mr Andrew Hairs against the decision of Wealden District Council.
 - The application Ref: WD/2024/0284/F.
 - The development proposed is a two storey side extension.
-

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 dwelling and the local area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is a detached two storey dwelling. The dwelling has a large two storey gable ended projection to the front. The rear elevation comprises two small dormer windows within the roof. The site is located in the High Weald National Landscape (HWNL) designation, which was formally known as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)¹.
4. Paragraph 182 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the framework) states that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape beauty in AONBs (now National Landscapes), which has the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. Policy EN6 of the Wealden Local Plan 1998 (WLP) includes similar provisions. The surrounding landscape in this case is mainly rural interspersed with pockets of development including the appeal site. The appeal site is visible within the street scene.
5. Policies EN27 and DC19 of the WLP seek to ensure that development respects the character of adjoining development, where appropriate promote local distinctiveness, not be intrusive in the landscape and be of an appropriate size and character relative to the original dwelling.
6. I acknowledge that the design seeks to mirror the front gable, which appears as a cohesive part of the property's overall design as it appears within the street scene. The existing front gable also does not extend beyond the side elevation of the property, which enables it to appear as an integrated part of

¹ On 22 November 2023 all designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty became "National Landscapes".

the dwelling. In contrast, the side extension element would add a bulky top heavy addition that would extend beyond its side elevation at first floor level appearing as an incongruous and overly prominent addition. The proposal would also introduce additional variety in roof form that together with the additional bulk at first floor would create a discordant change to the appearance of the existing property.

7. I note the appellant considers that the proposal would be smaller in scale than the front extension. However, from the information before me it would not be substantially smaller than the front gable, and due to its size and roof form would appear as a dominant, rather than subservient, addition to the property. The proposal and its unsympathetic design would be also visible from the streetscene, that would result in harm to the visual amenity of the HWNL.
8. Furthermore, the existing rear elevation of the property has a consistency in terms of its appearance with two small dormer windows and roof form. The appeal proposal would disrupt and unbalance this consistency by introducing a markedly different roof form at first floor level. The effect would be a rear extension element with excessive bulk to one end that would not appear as a sympathetic or subservient addition.
9. I acknowledge the appellant's need for enhanced living space but am not persuaded that this would justify the harm in this case, particularly given that the Council have highlighted there are potentially other less harmful options that could be explored such as continuing the existing roofline.
10. I also note the appellant considers that the proposal would protect private green space, not harm trees, landscape features or residential amenity and would incorporate sustainability measures. I also agree with the appellant that the proposed materials to match the existing dwelling are acceptable. However, as these would be expected outcomes for any scheme at the site, they are only neutral factors in this appeal and do not justify the harm identified.
11. To conclude, the proposal would be an unsympathetic and incongruous addition to the property contrary to Spatial Planning Objective SPO13 and Policy WCS14 of the Wealden Core Strategy Local Plan 2013 and Policies GD2, EN1, EN6, EN27 and DC19 of the Wealden Local Plan 1998. The proposal is also not consistent with guidance within the Wealden Design Guide 2008. Amongst other things these seek to ensure that development respects the character of adjoining development, is not intrusive in the landscape, not be visually dominant or adversely affect the character of the existing building and conserves or enhances the HWNL. The proposal would also not be consistent with Paragraphs 135 and 182 of the Framework.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above, the development is contrary to the policies of the development plan as a whole and there are no material considerations that would lead me to a different conclusion. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

N Perrins

INSPECTOR