



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 December 2024 by E Street BSc (Hons) MSc

Decision by John Morrison BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22nd January 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/U2235/D/24/3349935

Hillcroft, Ulcombe Hill, Ulcombe, Kent ME17 1DJ

- 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 I Stewart against the decision of Maidstone Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/501296/FULL.
 - The development proposed is described as "two storey rear extension, single storey and first storey side extension."
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Preliminary Matters

3. A revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published between the determination of the planning application and this appeal. The substantive parts of the new 2024 version do not however differ from the previous insofar as they relate to the main issue. The case of the main parties will not therefore be prejudiced by my reference to the new version. I have proceeded on this basis.

Main Issue

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

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. The appeal building is a large detached two storey dwelling which has been extensively altered. The main section is on a roughly rectangular footprint with some single storey, patently subservient and recessive additions. It has a conservatory central to the rear, a single span hipped roof over the main section and a pair of forward projecting two storey elements flanking a centralised and covered front door. These factors, along with the placement and size of the windows and external treatment, create a pleasant symmetry, particularly as the building faces the road. The dwelling is part of a small enclave of other buildings in an otherwise open, undeveloped and distinctly rural location. The quality of the building's exterior and balanced detailing

contributes positively to the street scene and thus the character and appearance of the area.

6. The first-floor side extension, whilst set back from the front, would add detail which would compete for visual dominance with the existing dwelling. It would detrimentally affect the balance, symmetry and thus quality of the front elevation particularly through the use of a dormer style window, smaller window openings and an additional sideways projection. The further width created by the single storey extension to the side again, whilst being subservient, would exacerbate the visual incongruence of the unbalanced elevation by stretching it further sideways. The street frontage location of the building and its open countryside location would make the visual effect of the scheme very obvious.
7. Having been extended significantly in the past, the building has lost much of its original identity, albeit this is now something of a ship having sailed situation. It is now a large building, and the proposed works would not, in and of themselves, be so substantial as to be unacceptable in that context. The existing building, and those around it, present as large and detached and that situation would not materially change. The plot itself is sizeable and can comfortably accommodate a large detached building. The size of extensions are limited by the Council's Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) but this is a guide and beyond the design harm I have found, the size of the works alone would not be harmful in the existing context.
8. The rear section, whilst similar height to the eaves of the property, would be read as subservient on the whole and being centralised it would reflect the balance of the building. It would also be to the rear and thus less obvious. It would accordingly be read as a logical progression of built form. Notwithstanding this, the proposal would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the area in the above terms. It would therefore conflict with Policies LPRSP9, LPRSP15, LPRQD4 and LPRHOU11 of the Maidstone Borough Council Local Plan 2024 and the Framework which together seeks to ensure that development proposals are of a high-quality design and standard.

Conclusion and Recommendation

9. For the reasons given above, the appeal scheme would not comply with the development plan, and I have been given no other compelling reason, taking into account other material considerations advanced, to deviate therefrom. I therefore recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

E Street

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

10. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

John Morrison

INSPECTOR