The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 January 2025

by Megan Thomas K.C. Barrister-at-Law

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 January 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/C1435/D/24/3348522
4 Wannock Gardens, Lower Willingdon, East Sussex BN26 5PA

- 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 Checkley against the decision of Wealden District Council.
- The application ref. is WD/2024/0724/F.
- The development proposed is the erection of a part two storey and part single storey rear extension.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in the appeal is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and wider streetscene.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is a two storey four-bedroomed detached dwelling with an existing garage to the rear located within a block of garages. It is located, along with 2 Wannock Gardens, near the junction of Wannock Gardens and Wannock Lane. It has a large rear conservatory. In the immediate area, there is predominantly a mix of bungalows and two storey detached dwellings.

4. The proposal is for a part single storey and part two storey rear extension, which would involve removal of the conservatory. The addition would, for the most part, be two storeys. It would be part width, not full width, of the rear elevation. It would have a front hip in the proposed roof which would reduce the roof bulk when viewed from the south west or north east. It would have ground floor aluminium bi-fold doors facing south west and a window above. It would have further windows in its south-facing (end) elevation. Its first floor would step back from the ground floor end elevation by about 1.2m.

5. Of particular relevance to the appeal is an extant planning permission dated 18 January 2023 (ref.WD/2022/2557/F) for a reduced-size part single storey part two

storey rear extension. This is about 4.68m wide, about 6.6m deep and has a projection at first floor level of about 4.3m. The appellant indicates that there is a realistic prospect of this 'fallback scheme' occurring on the site if the appeal is unsuccessful.

6. The proposed depth of the appeal scheme at first floor level would be about 5.4m. This is the main difference between the appeal proposal and the fallback scheme – the first floor element would be deeper with the appeal proposal.

7. Whilst the appeal proposal's ridgeline would be lower than the ridgeline of the main roof, the overall dimensions of the proposal made up of its height, depth and width combined, would result in a bulky disproportionate addition to the main dwelling. It would overwhelm the modest character of the original dwelling. I consider the proposal would appear overly dominant and not subservient to the host dwelling. It would conflict with the Wealden Design Guide which I do not treat as prescriptive but as containing guidance.

8. I have borne in mind the fallback scheme (WD/2022/2557/F). I consider that would be a proportionate extension which would appear subordinate to the host dwelling and not in competition with it. In contrast, the appeal scheme would be more dominant, less harmonious and have a more harmful impact on the character and appearance of the host dwelling.

9. Turning to the streetscenes, although the roof would have a receding roof hip, the appeal proposal would be visually prominent from Wannock Gardens (from the south west). In that area there are a number of vantage points within the public realm where the first floor and its roof would not be seen against a backdrop of built development, thus rendering the proposal more prominent. Current public views of the rear elevation of the appeal site embrace the whole of the large conservatory roof and parts of its elevations. Whilst visual prominence is not always harmful, in this case I have concluded that the proposal would be harmful, given the close proximity of the proposed extension to those public views and the ability to recognise that the extension would be oversized and disproportionate to the host dwelling. In contrast, I do not consider that the fallback scheme would have these detrimental impacts on the streetscene. It would be more sympathetic to the local context and streetscene.

10. My site visit confirmed that, given the reasonably generous separation distances between the appeal proposal and Wannock Lane and the slightly lower ground level of Wannock Lane, the proposal would not unduly detract from the character or appearance of the Lane's streetscene.

11. I have weighed the benefits of approving the appeal proposal including (but not limited to) economic benefits such as employment of tradespeople during construction and the improved living space benefits, against the harm I have identified above. I have done that in the light of the tilted balance in paragraph 11(d)(ii) of the NPPF. Some (but not all) of these would flow from implementation and use of the fallback scheme in any event, but notwithstanding that, I have concluded that the harm I have identified from the appeal proposal would not be significantly or demonstrably outweighed by the benefits of the proposal when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole.

12. I therefore conclude that the proposal would unduly harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling and Wannock Lane streetscene. It would be contrary to saved policies EN27 and HG10 of the Wealden Local Plan (adopted 1998), policy SPO13 of the Wealden Core Strategy Local Plan (adopted 2013) and the Wealden Design Guide.

Conclusion

13. Having considered all representations made, including those in relation to the planning history of the property, for the reasons given above, I dismiss the appeal.

Megan Thomas K.C.
Inspector