



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 January 2025

by A Knight BA PG Dip MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28 February 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/C1435/D/24/3347562

The Lodge, Attwood Farm, Victoria Road, Bodle Street Green, Hailsham, East Sussex BN27 4AR

- 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 and Mrs Petrides against the decision of Wealden District Council.
 - The application Ref is WD/2024/0938/F.
 - The development proposed is a single storey extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted for a single storey extension at The Lodge, Attwood Farm, Victoria Road, Bodle Street Green, Hailsham, East Sussex BN27 4AR in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref WD/2024/0938/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 01 Rev. B, 02 Rev. B, 03 Rev. A.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have used the site address from the appeal form as it is more comprehensive and accurate than that used on the application form. I have removed the word 'proposed' from the description of development, as that is not a form of development.
3. Both main parties have drawn my attention to a previous appeal decision¹. This was determined relatively recently and addressed a broadly comparable proposal to that before me. It is a material consideration in this appeal, therefore.
4. A revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published on 12 December 2024. On the basis that the revisions have no material implications for the outcome of this appeal, I have not considered it necessary to request observations from the main parties.

¹ Appeal Decision APP/C1435/D/23/3319495

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the host property, a non-designated heritage asset, and on the natural beauty and character of the High Weald National Landscape (HWNL).

Reasons

6. The appeal site (the site) is outside of the development boundary in a rural area, largely comprised of open, agricultural land interspersed with belts of woodland. The site itself is part of a small cluster of built development along Victoria Road, and includes a traditional barn converted into a nursery (the barn) and a former stable building projecting rearward from it, converted into a dwelling (the dwelling). These two buildings in combination are a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA).
7. The site is within the HWNL. Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (as amended) places a statutory duty upon me to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of NLs. The Framework states that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in NLs, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.
8. Neither main party has disputed the findings of the previous Inspector that the significance of the NDHA includes the retention of the appearance of a large barn with stabling attached to the rear, both of traditional design, or that the site and surrounding area makes a positive contribution to the HWNL given the traditional, rural, agricultural, or equestrian nature of the buildings therein, and the views across the site of open countryside beyond. I find no reason to see these matters any differently.
9. The dwelling has an existing conservatory at its western end, and a porch on its northern elevation. The conservatory is made using an eye-catching, bright green metal frame and includes a glazed roof. These features are wholly at odds with the traditional materials and finishes in the NDHA, as well as with the appearance of buildings in the surrounding area. It is visible from within the site and from land around it, including neighbouring properties, and also from Victoria Road. Whilst, in the latter case, views of the conservatory are at an angle and over a distance, its bright colours nevertheless stand out against the open fields and dark treeline beyond. Overall, it is strikingly incongruous in the setting.
10. Whilst the porch is made using traditional materials, they do not match those used in the northern wall of the dwelling. This, along with its projection at a right angle from the main body of the dwelling, makes the porch prominent. It dilutes the linear form of the building, eroding the sense of its original rural function.
11. The proposed development includes the removal of the conservatory and porch and the erection of an extension westward and northward. The westward element would continue the existing height, form, and roof materials of the dwelling, maintaining its traditional character as a result. The northward element would be low enough to ensure subservience to the main body of the dwelling, particularly relative to its ridge, and also reinstate a linear form to the dwelling. The use of a shallow roof pitch would create an overall roof form of a rural character, drawing particularly upon the shape of barns to the immediate north of the site. In staying within the lines of the existing roof ridge and porch, the extension would maintain

the primacy of the barn within the NDHA. Overall, the proposed development would maintain the appearance of the NDHA as a large barn with stabling attached to the rear, both of traditional design and, in removing the conservatory and porch, enhance it.

12. The extension would project no further north than the existing porch and therefore, in the main, retain openness and views across the site. In this way, and in enhancing the traditional, rural character of the NDHA in the ways described above, the proposed development would conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the NL.
13. The proposed development would increase the size of the dwelling by a significant proportion, from a floor area of some 89m² to 143m². Even so, the relevant policies do not impose a mathematical limitation on extensions, requiring instead that they be of an appropriate scale, size and character relative to the original dwelling, avoiding visual dominance or adverse change to the host. Similar considerations are set out in the Wealden Design Guide (2008). For the reasons set out above, I find the proposed development to comply with these requirements, and its size and scale to be appropriate, therefore.
14. The proposed development would enhance the rural character of the host non-designated heritage asset and the natural beauty and character of the High Weald National Landscape. As such it would comply with Policies EN6, DC19 and HG10 of the Wealden Local Plan (1998) and Policy SPO13 of the Core Strategy Local Plan (2013), as well as with Chapters 10 and 11 of the Wealden Design Guide (2008).

Conditions

15. The Council has indicated that no conditions are required beyond the standard ones pertaining to expiry, compliance with approved plans, and the use of external materials that match those used in the existing building. I see no reason to impose further conditions.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given above, the appeal is allowed.

A Knight

INSPECTOR