



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 February 2025

by **A Price BSc MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 6th March 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/D3830/D/24/3350721

The Meadows, Little Park Farm, Marchants Close, Hurstpierpoint, West Sussex BN6 9UZ

- 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 Mrs E Poland against the decision of Mid Sussex District Council.
 - The application Ref is DM/24/1406.
 - The development proposed is described on the application form as 'proposed two-storey side extensions with juliette balcony to first floor also new and relocated dormers. Proposed two-storey part single-storey rear extension with juliette balcony to first floor.'
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The proposed development relates to the setting of a listed building. Accordingly, I have had special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it may possess, as required under section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act).
3. The Council appear not to have notified Historic England, as should have been the case where it considers that the proposed development would affect the setting of a Grade II* listed building. However, as I have concluded that the proposed development should be dismissed, little would be gained by delaying the decision to undertake that notification. However, had my decision been otherwise, I would have provided an opportunity for the notification to take place.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area; and
 - whether the proposed development would preserve the setting of Grade II* listed building, Little Park.

Reasons

Character and appearance

5. The existing building is an L-shaped structure. It is finished in traditional materials of dark timber cladding with a tiled roof over. The building is a relatively simple

structure, set within a large open and verdant plot. Its appearance and position relative to nearby built form and open fields beyond contributes to the rural character of this part of Hurstpierpoint.

6. The proposed development would introduce comparatively large additions relative to the original property, including to the south and east elevations, and at roof level. The overall bulk and projection of the extensions, in particular, would disproportionately increase the size of the existing building. The arrangement of the additions would also confuse the plan form of the original building. Ultimately, the proposed extensions, by reason of their position and scale, would compete with the visual dominance of the main structure and lack a sufficient sense of subservience.
7. This, in turn, would have a harmful effect on the rural character of the immediately surrounding area. The building currently features characteristics of a relatively modest agricultural building (albeit evidently modern and in residential use). The proposed development would erode this rural character, introducing bulky, highly prominent and overtly domestic additions.
8. I appreciate that the proposed additions would be finished in materials to match the existing building, and design details such as window openings would match those that already exist. I also appreciate the appellant's desire to extend the property to provide additional, and better quality, living accommodation. Nevertheless, the extent of changes proposed to the property is significant and, as set out above, would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area.
9. I accept that some screening exists along the boundary of the site, formed of mature landscaping. However, during my winter site visit, I observed that much of this was deciduous, allowing intervisibility between the site and nearby meadows. In any case, this landscaping cannot be relied on in perpetuity to provide the same level of screening as is currently the case.
10. Overall, the proposed development would fail to accord with the relevant provisions of Policies DP12 and DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 (DP, 2018). These policies, in summary, seek to achieve high quality design in development and to maintain or where possible enhance the quality of the rural landscape character of the district. This is in a similar vein to the provisions of the Policy Countryside HurstC1 of the Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common Parish 2031 Neighbourhood Plan (2015) which seeks to maintain or where possible enhance the quality of rural and landscape character.

Heritage – special interest and significance

11. Littlepark Farmhouse (hereafter referred to as Little Park) is a Grade II* listed building. It dates from the early-mid seventeenth century and is set within a large, landscaped plot. It is enclosed and largely obscured by high boundary treatments and more modern built form. Based on the evidence before me, the special interest and significance of the listed building is largely derived from its historic and architectural interest. Important contributors in these regards are its age, surviving historic fabric and the use of traditional materials and building techniques.
12. Pertinent to this appeal, the building's special interest and significance are also derived, in part, from its setting. The grounds of the house have an historic, visual and functional connection with the heritage asset. These grounds are clearly

defined by boundary treatments that separate it from the adjoining buildings and access roads. These grounds form the asset's immediate setting, and it is from here that the asset is best appreciated. This immediate setting contributes considerably to the asset's special interest and significance.

13. Beyond this, the surrounding area, of which the appeal site forms a part, is made up of a mixture of developed land and open landscape. Much of the built form to the north is indicative of the site's former agricultural use, featuring multiple agricultural style buildings, but also its evolution over time through the addition of residential development and conversions. Several interventions have occurred, including the severance of former agricultural buildings and land from the farmhouse. This has, to some extent, degraded the integrity and heritage merit of this wider setting.
14. Notwithstanding this, the historic agricultural character nonetheless remains discernible. The wider setting also allows an appreciation of the historic functional and physical relationship between the listed building and surrounding land. This wider setting contributes somewhat to the special interest and significance of the listed building.

Heritage – appeal proposal and effects

15. The position, scale and nature of the proposed development, together with the relatively limited intervisibility between the appeal site and the nearby heritage assets, would mean that the now visually and physically separate relationship between the appeal site and those assets would be maintained. The historic and architectural interests of the asset would remain unaffected. The retention of a reasonable separation distance and intervening landscaping features, in particular, would reinforce this. Ultimately, the immediate and most of the wider setting that contributes to the significance of the asset would remain undisturbed by the proposed scheme.
16. Taking these factors into account, I conclude that the proposed development would not compromise the setting of Little Park, rather it would have a neutral effect that would not determinably alter how the asset would be experienced and would not adversely affect the ability to appreciate the significance of the asset. Consequently, the setting of the listed building, and the contribution it makes to the significance of the assets, would be preserved. The proposed development would therefore be in accordance with the requirements of Section 66(1) of the Act and the relevant provisions within the Framework which seek to conserve and enhance the historic environment. The proposed development would also accord with the relevant provisions of DP Policy DP34. This policy, in summary, seeks to protect heritage assets.
17. As there would be no harm to the significance of this designated heritage asset, it is not incumbent on me to consider any wider public benefits that the proposals may bring in this respect.

Other Matters

18. I note the Council's reference to a condition on the original planning consent for the property, which removed permitted development rights. However, this does not mean that no development should take place here, as set out by a previous Inspector. Rather, any proposal must be submitted to the Council for consideration

against relevant local planning policies. In this particular case, I have found the proposals not to accord with the relevant policies.

19. I acknowledge the appellant's reference to development within the surrounding area, including to the north-east. I also note the reference to many examples locally of larger extensions having been approved, and note that the nearby Dutch barn has consent for use as a dwelling. Nevertheless, I have very limited information before me in respect of those developments. In any case, each proposal must be considered on the basis of individual site circumstances. I have reasoned above why I have identified harm based on the proposals before me and my observations on site. Ultimately, the existence of those other properties and developments does not lead me to change my conclusion in respect of the main issues.
20. I understand the frustration of the appellant with respect to the Council's communication, and in respect of the cost of submitting multiple planning applications and appeals. Nevertheless, this would be best dealt with by a costs application. This matter has not led me to an alternative conclusion in respect of the main issues.

Conclusion

21. For the reasons above and having had regard to the development plan as a whole and all other relevant material considerations, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

A Price

INSPECTOR