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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 March 2025

by **H Nicholls MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025

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**Appeal Ref: APP/C1435/D/24/3355351**

**1 Tappington Cottages, Station Road, Wadhurst, East Sussex TN5 6QA**

- 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 Peter Barnett against the decision of Wealden District Council.
  - The application Ref is WD/2024/1148/F.
  - The development proposed is two storey side extension.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host building and surrounding area, including the High Weald National Landscape.

### Reasons

3. The appeal dwelling is situated to the north side of Station Road, to the north west of Wadhurst and lies within the High Weald National Landscape (NL) (formerly known as the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). It is a two storey dwelling, constructed of red brick under clay tiled roof and is the western half of a semi-detached pair. The principal elevation of the two adjoining cottages is relatively balanced and symmetrical despite the adjoining dwelling having a two storey side extension which is set back from the front wall and down from the main ridge height. Both dwellings have rearward additions of varying heights, forms and ages.
4. The proposal is to add a two storey extension to the side and rear of the dwelling to provide additional living space. The extension would follow the same front building line and extend the ridge height across, with a hipped roof. The side and rear parts of the extension would link into the front under a crown roof form.
5. Owing to its scale and design, the extension would fail to appear subservient to the host dwelling and would undermine the ability to appreciate the original form of the attractive pair of dwellings. Unlike the neighbouring two storey extension, the proposal would be as wide as the main dwelling and would share the same front building line and ridge height, competing with the primacy of the original dwelling. Additionally, the various components at the rear, and in particular the roof form, would appear clunky and poorly designed relative to the distinctive character of the host dwelling.

6. Whilst there is sufficient space within the appeal site to accommodate the extensions, the poor relationship with the dwelling would still be apparent. Given that the dwelling is sited prominently on the main route to Wadhurst from Tunbridge Wells in a sensitive landscape setting, this would be a highly visible change. Therefore, despite the small scale of the proposal, there would be an erosive effect on the quality of the NL. Whilst I note that extensions have been added to the neighbouring dwelling and these are also visible, these appear respectful of the original form and character of that particular dwelling and maintain the quality of the NL, which distinguishes it from the scheme before me.
7. In view of the above, the proposal conflicts with Policy WAD3 of the Wadhurst Neighbourhood Plan (2024) which seeks to ensure that proposals emulate the best of locally distinctive architecture and demonstrate how they have complied with the Wadhurst Design Code (2022), such as requiring extensions to fit in and feel part of the original building, with a pitch of roof to match that of the original building. For similar reasons, the proposal fails to accord with Policies EN6, EN27 and DC19 of the Wealden Local Plan 1998 and Policy SPO13 of the Core Strategy (2013). These policies collectively require that development is respectful in terms of scale, form, design and materials and conserves or enhances the natural beauty of the landscape.

### **Other Matters**

8. The Council's decision indicates that worked positively and proactively with the appellant prior to refusal of the scheme; a point which the appellant refutes. Though it appears that better communication may have been beneficial, this is not determinative of the scheme before me based on its specific planning merits.

### **Conclusion**

9. The harm that would be caused to the character and appearance of the host building and surrounding area, including the NL, bring the scheme into conflict with the development plan when taken as a whole. Even taking into account that no harm would be caused to neighbouring occupiers, there are no considerations of sufficient materiality that indicate that a decision should be made other than in accordance therewith.
10. For the foregoing reasons, the appeal is dismissed.

*H Nicholls*

INSPECTOR