



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 April 2025

by **A James BSc (Hons) MA MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 8th May 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/C1435/D/24/3354176

Huggetts Farm, Stonehurst Lane, Hadlow Down, East Sussex TN20 6LL

- 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 Lee and Lauren Graham against the decision of Wealden District Council.
 - The application reference is WD/2024/0588/F.
 - The development proposed is two storey side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for two storey side extension at Huggetts Farm, Stonehurst Lane, Hadlow Down, East Sussex TN20 6LL in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref: WD/2024/0588/F and 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 0307/3.001-A: Proposed Site Location Plan; 0307/3.002-A: Proposed Site Plan; 0307/3.201: Proposed Elevation Sheet 01; 0307/3.202: Proposed Elevation Sheet 02; and, 0307/3.103: Proposed Roof Floor Plan.
 - 3) The external materials of the extension hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing dwelling.

Preliminary Matters

2. Since the Council issued its decision notice, the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) has been revised, with the latest version published on 12 December 2024 and updated on 7 February 2025. Those parts of the Framework most relevant to this appeal remain broadly the same. As a result, I have not sought further submissions on the revised Framework, and I am satisfied that no party has been prejudiced by my approach.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property and the area, having particular regard to the High Weald National Landscape.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a two storey, detached dwelling, which was constructed towards the end of the 19th century. It appears from the evidence before me and my site visit that the building was historically a pair of rural workers' cottages, which have been converted into a single dwelling. The appeal property has been subject to numerous alterations and extensions, including a central porch on both the front and rear elevations, a modern two storey side extension on one side and a single storey projection on the other side. A modern veranda spans the majority of the elevation that faces the lane.
5. The appeal property forms part of a collection of Abergavenny Estate cottages, which were constructed in the 19th and 20th centuries by the Earl of Abergavenny as part of the Eridge Park Estate. This is depicted by the presence of the letter 'A' on some of the gable ends. The historic and architectural significance of the appeal property as a non-designated heritage asset derives from its connection with the Abergavenny Estate and its distinctive architectural features, such as its gable roof form with central valley, decorative bargeboards and finials. Although the appeal property is not listed, it is of some age and contributes towards the social and agricultural history of the locality.
6. The appeal site lies within the High Weald National Landscape. The Framework requires that great weight is given to conserving and enhancing the landscape and scenic beauty of National Landscapes. The appeal property sits within a predominantly agricultural landscape, close to a historic farmstead. The landscape gently undulates and consists of irregular shaped fields, which are typically bound by hedgerows and trees. While the appeal property has been altered and extended, the historic core of the building, including its distinctive architectural features and its connection with the Abergavenny Estate remain legible. Consequently, the appeal property makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area and the National Landscape.
7. The proposed extension has been designed to reflect the two storey extension on the opposite side of the building. The proposal by reason of its size, architectural detailing (including decorative bargeboards and window surrounds) and external materials would complement the detailing and materials found on the host building. When viewed from the lane, the proposed extension would be set back behind the existing single storey projection. It would also be set back slightly behind the elevation that faces towards the access track, in line with the existing two storey extension. The proposal would have a catslide roof, which minimises the bulk of the extension at roof level. Given the set back of the extension and its roof design, I do not find that it would visually dominate the host building.
8. Given the size, design and siting of the proposal, it would not be unduly prominent or cause harm to the character and appearance of the host building on its own or in combination with the existing extensions. As the roof of the proposed extension would mirror that of the existing two storey extension, I find that the proposal would create a balanced roofscape and building. The proposal would retain the historic features of the host building, including its prominent gables, central roof valley, finials and decorative bargeboards. Accordingly, the architectural features that contribute towards the significance of this non-designated heritage asset would be retained.

9. The Council raises concerns that the proposed extension is excessively wide. However, it is a similar width to the existing two storey side extension. While the Council's Conservation Officer raises concerns that the fenestration would not respect the historic character of the building, it is not clear from the evidence before me, where this harm arises. The proposed fenestration seeks to match the design of the existing fenestration. While some of the windows and doors on the proposed extension would be more modern than those found on the historic core of the building, they would not be dissimilar to those found on the existing two storey extension. Consequently, I do not find that the proposed fenestration would appear out of place on this building.
10. Overall, the proposed extension would preserve the character and appearance of the host property, which is a non-designated heritage asset and it would preserve the landscape and scenic beauty of the National Landscape. The proposal would comply with saved Policies GD2, EN6, EN27 and DC19 of the Wealden Local Plan December 1998 and Spatial Planning Objectives SPO1, SPO2 and SPO13 of the adopted Wealden Core Strategy Local Plan February 2013. These policies among other things require that proposals conserve or enhance the natural beauty and character of the landscape; protect the intrinsic quality of the historic environment; and, are of good design that is appropriate in size and character relative to the original dwelling and does not visually dominate or adversely change the character of the existing building.

Conditions

11. In addition to the standard time limit condition, in the interests of certainty, I have included a condition specifying the approved plans. To ensure the development assimilates well with the existing dwelling, a matching external material condition is required.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above, having regard to the development plan as a whole, the Framework and all other relevant material considerations, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed, subject to conditions.

A James

INSPECTOR