



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 June 2025

by **C Coles MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 09 JULY 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/D3830/D/25/3360617

Springfield, Rashes Farm, Selsfield Road, Turners Hill, West Sussex RH10 4PR

- 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 Rick Verbeeten against the decision of Mid Sussex District Council.
 - The application Ref is DM/24/2101.
 - The development proposed is a two storey front extension with storm porch at ground floor level.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of Springfield (the NDHA¹) and the setting of Rashes Farmhouse (the listed building).

Reasons

3. The appeal site comprises a narrow, two-storey detached former dairy building converted into residential use with associated garden to the rear and parking in an open courtyard to the front. The property is located adjacent to the gated entrance to the former farmstead at the end of a long access road that is shared by surrounding residential properties and is situated within a countryside location. The host property was identified as an NDHA through the planning application process. I consider on the evidence before me and following my own observations on site that such a classification is justified, given its current form and historic association with the listed building.
4. The NDHA forms part of a former farmstead of house and farm buildings, including the listed building, which is a two-storey, red brick and tile hung, Grade II Listed building² with a part tiled and part slate roof, where the west range dates from the eighteenth century (possibly earlier) and the east range dates from the nineteenth century. It is an agreed position between the main parties that the former farm buildings are not curtilage listed and in the absence of substantive evidence to the contrary, I have little reason to disagree with this view. The listed building is situated to the north of the NDHA and the approach to the NDHA from the access road provides views of both the listed building and the NDHA together. The NDHA is sited within the setting of the listed building, where its rural setting and association as a former farmstead make a positive contribution to the special interest of the listed building. Overall, I find the significance of both the listed

¹ The non-designated heritage asset

² List Entry Number:1182623

building and the NDHA derive from them having an agricultural character through their rustic appearance and origins.

5. The proposed development is for a two-storey front extension with storm porch at ground floor level. The proposal would be located centrally on the front elevation of the NDHA and would appear as a suspended first floor extension with an open porch below to access the front door. The materials proposed would be sympathetic to those on the NDHA and the proposal would have a pitched roof with eaves to match the height of the NDHA with a lower ridge height.
6. Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the LBCA) states that where planning permission for development affects a listed building, the decision maker shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.
7. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) requires great weight to be given to the conservation of a heritage asset, irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance. Paragraph 215 of the Framework establishes that any harm to a designated heritage asset should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. Paragraph 216 of the Framework requires that the effect of an application on the significance of a NDHA should be taken into account when determining the application.
8. Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan (March 2018) (MSDP) requires development to be of high-quality design that addresses the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape. Policy DP34 of the MSDP requires development to protect listed buildings and their settings and to ensure alterations or extensions to a listed building respect its historic form, scale, setting, significance and fabric. Special regard should also be given to protecting the setting of a listed building. These principles are reiterated in Policy THP7 of the Turners Hill Neighbourhood Plan (March 2016) (THNP).
9. Principle DG49 of the Mid Sussex Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2020 (SPD) requires extensions to use simple, uncomplicated building forms to compliment and coordinate with the scale, form and massing of the original dwelling. Principle DG50 of the SPD states that front extensions are less likely to be acceptable where there is a strong consistent building form as they risk disrupting the underlying order. Where front extensions are considered acceptable, they should normally be limited to a modest single storey or porch type extension that reflect the character of the existing building.
10. The NDHA is a narrow, two-storey linear building with no additions to the front or rear, located in a prominent position at the entrance to the courtyard of converted farmstead buildings and with views to the listed building. There would also be views from the listed building to the front of the NDHA. The proposed development would have a substantial height, width and depth which would dominate the front elevation of the NDHA. It is noted that the additional internal floor area of the proposal would be approximately 8sqm, however, the additional floor area would be located at first floor level on the front of the building and would not be discreetly located or subservient to the main dwelling due to its prominent location.

11. Due to the above features, the proposal would appear out of scale with the NDHA and would detract from and cause a high level harm to its simple character and appearance. The proposal would be viewed from the listed building and would, due to the modest separation distance, form part of its immediate setting.
12. In light of the above, I find that the proposed development would cause harm to the setting of the listed building and its significance, contrary to the requirements of the LBCA. In relation to designated heritage assets, the Framework states that any harm to significance should require clear and convincing justification. In addition if less than substantial harm is caused to the significance of any such asset, as is the case in this instance, that harm should be weighed against the public benefits. Concerning the effect on the significance of the NDHA, the Framework requires a balanced judgement, having regard to the scale of any harm and the significance of the asset.
13. The appellant considers that the proposed development would amount to sustainable development, with resultant economic benefits generated through construction employment. This would benefit the local economy, but only in the short term. While this may ultimately be a public benefit, I do not consider the other benefits put forward amount to public benefits. In any event, the benefits attributed to the proposed development, either public or otherwise, when taken individually or combined do not outweigh the harm I have identified to the heritage assets.
14. For the reasons above, I conclude that the proposed development would fail to preserve the setting of the listed building and would adversely affect the character, appearance and significance of the NDHA. Consequently, the proposal would conflict with policies DP26 and DP34 of the MSDP; Policy THP7 of the THNP and the SPD. Together these policies and guidance seek to preserve the setting of listed buildings and ensure development is appropriate in terms of scale, form and massing of the character and appearance of the existing building. The proposal would also fail to accord with the requirements of the Framework and LBCA.

Other Matters

15. The site lies within the High Weald National Landscape. The primary purpose of National Landscapes is to conserve and enhance natural beauty. The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act (LURA) 2023 creates a new duty on relevant authorities to seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area. The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan and Policy DP16 of the MSDP also align with the ethos of the LURA. With regard to the effect of the proposal on the High Weald National Landscape, due to the overall containment of the proposal within the confines of the farmstead, the proposal is considered to align with the purposes of National Landscapes and the LURA.
16. I note that no objections have been received from neighbours or the Parish Council. However, the lack of objections to the proposal does not equate to an absence of harm, but these factors and the absence of other harm does not alter my assessment above. I have considered the proposed development on its own merits and concluded there would be harm for the reasons set out above.

Conclusion

17. The proposed development would not accord with the development plan when considered as a whole and there are no material considerations that indicate that a decision should be made other than in accordance with it.
18. For the reasons given above, I conclude the appeal should be dismissed.

C Coles

INSPECTOR