



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 July 2025

by V Goldberg BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 01 August 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/D3830/W/25/3361883

Great Thorndean Farm Gables, Slough Green Lane, Warninglid, West Sussex RH17 5SL

- 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 D Bedford against the decision of Mid Sussex District Council.
 - The application Ref is DM/24/2072.
 - The development proposed is change of use of land to mixed use of residential and agricultural and for the construction of a garage/storage building.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The application form states the development started on the 1st January 2022. During my visit, I noted that the garage/storage building had been erected. However, the appeal proposes amendments to the building, I have therefore considered the appeal on the basis of the plans before me.
3. On 22 November 2023, all designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB's) in England and Wales became 'National Landscapes' (NLs). I have therefore specifically referred to the High Weald AONB as the High Weald NL.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on:
 - the character and appearance of the area, having particular regard to the effect on the High Weald NL; and,
 - the effect of the proposal on the significance of the Grade II listed Great Thorndean Farmhouse and Great Thorndean Barn through development in their setting.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

5. The appeal site is located within the countryside as defined in the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031¹(Local Plan) and the High Weald NL. The amended duty

¹ Adopted in March 2018

on relevant authorities in respect of their interactions with statutory purposes of National Landscapes, requires relevant authorities in exercising or performing any functions in relation to National Landscapes, to seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of these areas.

6. The appeal site contains Great Thorndean Farm Gables, a detached modern dwelling that replaced the workers cottage that was part of Great Thorndean Farm. The farm buildings that were part of the farmstead, have been converted to residential use, but maintain an agricultural appearance which positively contributes to the pastoral character and appearance of the countryside and NL.
7. Policy DP12 of the Local Plan seeks to protect and enhance the countryside. It details that development is only permitted if it maintains or where possible enhances the quality of the rural and landscape character of the district and is necessary for the purposes of agriculture; or it is supported by a specific policy reference either elsewhere in the Plan, a Development Plan Document or relevant Neighbourhood Plan.
8. The appellant advises that the building is required for domestic storage and to store equipment in conjunction with the maintenance and management of the wider agricultural parcel. As a result, most of the building is not necessary for the purposes of agriculture. This is because the proposed ground floor plan illustrates that two thirds of the building would have a domestic use. In addition, the evidence before me does not demonstrate the extent of the wider agricultural parcel, nor does it describe the tools or equipment that would be required to be stored, in connection with the agricultural use. Accordingly, it has not been sufficiently demonstrated that this building is necessary for the purposes of agriculture.
9. Reference is made to garden furniture, tools and equipment being left outside due to there being no storage and this being undesirable from a security perspective. Regardless of the need to comply with policy DP12, this level of storage would not demonstrate a need for the size of building erected.
10. Whilst garages and outbuildings to serve existing dwellings are typically considered appropriate, in this case, the appeal site is within the countryside and the High Weald NL whereby development is restricted to protect and enhance the countryside.
11. Despite being adjacent and subservient to the dwelling, built in materials to match it and screened by a proposed native hedgerow, this would not address the requirement for the proposal to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the NL.
12. The appellant details that the location of the building is the most appropriate on site as other areas would result in the significant alteration of the bank where the ground slopes. Given there are areas within the residential curtilage that are not on a significant slope, it has not been demonstrated that an alternative small storage building could not be installed elsewhere within the garden. In addition, whilst the position of the building would not significantly alter the field pattern more than the existing dwelling, this would not justify the erection of a large, detached building in this location.
13. For the above reasons, the proposed development would negatively affect the character and appearance of the area, having particular regard to the effect on the

High Weald NL. It would therefore be contrary to policies DP12, DP16 and DP26 of the Local Plan and Policy AS3 of the Ansty and Staplefield Neighbourhood Plan². Amongst other things these policies seek to restrict development in the countryside and ensure the proposals conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the NL.

Effect of the proposal on the significance of the Grade II Listed buildings

14. Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the decision maker, in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, to 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.
15. The appeal site is located to the northeast of the Grade II listed Great Thorndean Farmhouse and Great Thorndean Barn. The listed buildings and nearby curtilage listed buildings form part of the historic Great Thorndean Farmstead. The significance of the listed buildings derives from their architectural value based on their design, historical value as part of a post-medieval farmstead and aesthetic value based on the use of local natural materials. Additionally, they have a group value as a farmstead, whereby the rural setting makes a strong positive contribution to the special interests of the heritage assets.
16. Most of the farmstead is clustered around the farmhouse, whereas the appeal site lies beyond its historic boundary as the former farmers cottage was erected as a 20th century addition and extension to the farm. The plot is positioned away from the main group of traditional farm buildings and is accessed independently from a private driveway.
17. Given that the appeal site is positioned away from the listed buildings in the former farmstead and the building reflects the character of Great Thorndean Farm Gables and is positioned close to it, it is not read as part of the setting of the farmstead. As a result, I do not consider that the building domesticates the setting of the historic farmyard and therefore it would preserve the setting of the listed buildings.
18. For the above reasons, the proposal would have an acceptable impact on the significance of the Grade II listed Great Thorndean Farmhouse and Great Thorndean Barn through development in their setting. It would therefore be compliant with Policy DP34 of the Local Plan which requires proposals to protect listed buildings and their settings. The proposal would also comply with the aim of objective S3 of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2024-2029.

Other Matters

19. Although I understand from representations that there is support for the appeal scheme and the owners have made positive improvements to the property, I am required to determine the appeal based on the individual merits of the proposal and the evidence before me.

² Adopted in February 2017

Conclusion

20. The proposal conflicts with the development plan and material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

V Goldberg

INSPECTOR