



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 August 2025

By SJ Desai BSc MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 August 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/U2235/D/25/3367586

Lake View Barn, Rectory Lane, Chart Sutton, Kent ME17 3RD

- 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 A Morris against the decision of Maidstone Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/500553/FULL.
 - The development proposed is single storey rear kitchen extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. Both main parties agree that Lake View Barn is a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA).

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the NDHA and the Greensand Ridge Landscape of Local Value (LLV).

Reasons

4. The appeal relates to a detached former barn, originally associated with the Grade II listed Rectory Farmhouse. Unlike the more typical timber-framed barns of the locality, this building is constructed in brick. Its rectilinear plan form and dominant catslide roof with a half-hipped end are defining features.
5. Although converted to residential use during the 1990s, the building has retained its essential appearance, rectilinear plan form and distinctive roof profile. These attributes, alongside with its age and relationship to the adjacent listed building, are fundamental to its architectural and historic significance. As such, it continues to make a positive contribution to the area's character and appearance.
6. The site lies within the open countryside and within the LLV. The Maidstone Landscape Character Assessment (2013) (LCA) identifies the LLV as an elevated landscape affording expansive views over the Low Weald, interspersed with traditional farmsteads, orchards and pasture. The LCA outlines an action for the LLV to conserve the rural setting of traditional buildings and settlements. The building, and its neighbours, personify a prevailing rural character that contributes positively to the LLV and reflects qualities identified in the LCA.

7. The Council's Supplementary Planning Document - Residential Extensions (2009) (the SPD) generally resists extensions to converted traditional rural buildings, recognising their sensitivity to change and the risk of undermining their essential form and character. Paragraph 5.20 is explicit that extensions will not be supported where they would have an unacceptable impact on the original building's form or character.
8. Both main parties have referenced Historic England's 'Adapting Traditional Farm Buildings' (2006). This guidance recognises that new structures may, in some circumstances, be considered if this will safeguard the significance of the main structure. It also sets out in section 3.5 that the roofs of farm buildings often have strong visual appeal.
9. The proposed extension, by reason of its siting, design and roof profile, would interrupt the continuity of the barn's long catslide roof and introduce a discordant roof junction that would appear contrived and visually awkward. It would unbalance the southern elevation and detract from the building's simple and robust rectilinear form, which is intrinsic to its character. The proposed partial removal of the rear wall, which would entail the permanent loss of original fabric, would further erode the architectural and historic integrity of the building.
10. Rather than reading as a sensitive rural adaptation, the extension would appear as a domestic addition, its form and proportions being at odds with the architectural language of the original building. While the use of sympathetic materials and traditional techniques is acknowledged, these measures would not overcome the harm arising from the inappropriate form, scale and detailing of the addition.
11. The building occupies a prominent position on high ground. While the appellant contends that views are generally filtered by vegetation and distance, based upon my own observations, there remain a number of public vantage points, including rights of way to the south, from which the southern elevation of the building is clearly appreciable. From these viewpoints, the long, unbroken catslide roof and the simple, well-proportioned form and massing, present a distinctive and positive feature within the landscape. The proposal, by contrast, would introduce an unsympathetic and discordant element that would erode the building's legibility, weaken the clarity of its profile, and as a result dilute its established contribution to the character and appearance of the LLV.
12. I acknowledge that the scale and design have been revised compared with earlier proposals. However, such amendments do not address the harm identified. The question of whether the building originated in agricultural use is not decisive given its significance derives less from provenance than from its surviving form, roof profile, materiality, and the role it plays in reinforcing the rural qualities of its setting.
13. The loss of original form and fabric, given their central importance to the building's significance, would result in harm to NDHA at the higher end of the spectrum of 'less than substantial harm' as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) (the Framework). Although the degree of wider landscape harm would be limited due to the nature of the views afforded, and localised, the proposal would nonetheless detract appreciably from the character and appearance of the LLV.
14. Accordingly, I conclude that the proposal would result in unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the NDHA and, albeit to a lesser degree, the LLV. In doing so, it would conflict with Policies LPRSP9, LPRQD4, LPRHOU11, LPRSP15,

LPRSP14(B) and LPRENV1 of the Maidstone Local Plan Review 2021-2038 (2024). Collectively, these policies require development to conserve or enhance heritage assets, relate sympathetically to existing buildings, respond positively to local distinctiveness and to safeguard both the rural character and appearance of the countryside and the distinctive landscape qualities of the LLV. The proposal would also be contrary to the guidance set out in the SPD, which emphasises the need to protect the character of rural buildings and the character and openness of the countryside from adverse impacts.

Planning Balance

15. The proposal would cause harm to the significance of the non-designated heritage asset. In these circumstances Paragraph 216 of the Framework requires that such harm be weighed in a balanced judgement having regard to the asset's significance and the scale of harm. I have also found additional harm, albeit of a more limited and localised nature, to the character and appearance of the LLV.
16. I have had regard to the benefit associated with improvements to the quality of accommodation and need for a larger kitchen. However, I am not persuaded that these benefits which are modest in scale are sufficient to outweigh the harm identified.

Other Matters

17. The appellant has highlighted two nearby planning applications¹. As I have not been provided with information to show that they have been approved, they have not been determinative matters in my decision.

Conclusion

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

SJ Desai

INSPECTOR

¹ References: 25/500111/FULL and 25/500499/FULL.