



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 September 2025

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

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24th September 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/C1435/D/25/3359305

Adams Farm, Sweethaws Lane, Crowborough, East Sussex TN6 3SS

- 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 Colin Abbott against the decision of Wealden District Council.
 - The application reference is WD/2024/1295/F.
 - The development proposed is erection of new garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for erection of new garage at Adams Farm, Sweethaws Lane, Crowborough, East Sussex TN6 3SS in accordance with the terms of the application, reference WD/2024/1295/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 numbers: 1316/P100: Proposed Site Location and Block Plans; 1316/P102: Proposed Car Port Details; and, 1316/P101/A: Site Plan.
 - 3) Prior to the commencement of above ground works, details of external materials, including roof tiles, specification of timber cladding (size, profile and finish) and rainwater goods (material and colour) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Preliminary Matters

2. As the appeal site forms part of the setting of a listed building, I have had special regard to section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act).

Main Issues

3. The main issues are whether the proposal would preserve the setting of a Grade II listed building, known as 'Adam's Farmhouse' (Ref: 1353486) and the historic farmstead, in which it forms part.

Reasons

4. Adam's Farmhouse is a detached, Grade II listed building, which dates back to around the 16th century. It is two storeys high and has a timber frame. Adam's Farmhouse is constructed of sandstone, red brick and features tile hanging and

weatherboarding. It has a clay tiled roof. The building sits in an elevated position, with views of the surrounding picturesque countryside. The appeal site forms part of a loose courtyard plan, medieval farmstead, which also includes a historic barn and the roundel of a former oast house.

5. Based on my site visit and the evidence before me, I find that the listed building's special interest, insofar as is relevant to this appeal is derived from its historic and architectural interest, as an illustration of domestic architecture from around the 16th century. The building's timber frame, use of traditional materials, its relationship with other buildings within the historic farmstead and the rural landscape in which it sits make important contributions in these regards.
6. The proposal seeks to construct a new three bay, detached garage, which would have a small lean-to. The proposal would be sited on an existing area of hard surfacing that is located close to the vehicular access to the property and is currently used for vehicular parking. The proposed garage would be sited between two existing outbuildings.
7. The proposed garage would have an oak frame, with timber cladding. Plain roof tiles are proposed, which seek to match those on the farmhouse. Given the size of the proposed garage, it would appear subordinate and ancillary to the listed building. The proposal would also utilise traditional, locally distinctive materials that would complement those present on the listed building and would harmonise with the rural character of the locality. Accordingly, I find that the proposal would comply with the Wealden Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document, November 2008.
8. It is clear from the evidence before me and my site visit that the historic farmstead has evolved over time. The proposed garage by reason of its design and materiality would be read as a new garage, as opposed to an agricultural building and would not confuse the historic legibility of the farmstead. While it would be sited slightly away from the historic core of the farmstead, it would be logically positioned adjacent to the vehicular access and in an area where there are existing outbuildings. The proposed garage would be largely screened from the public realm by the existing mature vegetation. Where glimpsed views would be available, given the design and materiality, I find that it would harmonise with the surrounding landscape and built form and would preserve the special interest of the listed building and the historic farmstead.
9. For the reasons given above, I find that the proposal would preserve the special interest of the listed building and the historic farmstead in which it forms part. The proposal would comply with Policies EN1 and GD2 of the Wealden Local Plan December 1998 and Policies SPO1, SPO2 and SPO3 of the Wealden District Core Strategy Local Plan February 2013. These policies among other things seek to ensure that the historic environment and landscapes within the District are protected and that the location, layout and design of development is considered.

Other Matters

10. The site lies within the High Weald National Landscape. The statutory purpose of National Landscapes is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area. Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (as amended) sets out a duty for relevant authorities that they must seek to further this purpose when

exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land within a National Landscape.

11. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) requires that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing the landscape and scenic beauty in National Landscapes, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The Framework explains that the conservation and enhancement of cultural heritage are also important considerations in National Landscapes. The Council raises no objection to the proposal in respect to the National Landscape. Based on my site visit and the evidence before me, I find that the proposal would conserve the cultural heritage, landscape and scenic beauty of the High Weald National Landscape.
12. Under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), the competent authority has a duty to ensure that any plans or projects that they regulate (including plan making and determining planning applications) will have no adverse effect on the integrity of a European site of nature conservation importance. The European site is the Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation. The Council advises that the qualifying features of the Ashdown Forest SPA are its breeding populations of Nightjar and Dartford Warbler. The conservation objectives of the SPA are to ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive¹.
13. Recreational pressure as a result of new development can result in damage to habitats through trampling, erosion and disturbance to ground nesting birds. The Council raises no objections in respect to this matter. As the proposed garage would not introduce new residents into the area or increase the recreational pressure on the protected site, I find no reason to reach a contrary conclusion to the Council on this matter.

Conditions

14. In addition to the standard time limit condition and in the interests of certainty, I have included a condition requiring that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans. Details of external materials and rainwater goods are also required in order to preserve the setting of the listed building and the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion

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

A James

INSPECTOR

¹ Directive 2009/147/EC

