
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 September 2025

by R Lawrence BSc (Hons), PGDip (TP), MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30th September 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/C1435/D/25/3370625

Woodland House, Mayfield Lane, Wadhurst, East Sussex TN5 6JE

- 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 Mrs Valerie Mary Prom against the decision of Wealden District Council.
 - The application Ref is WD/2025/0895/F.
 - The development proposed is two storey extension and porch extension with minor external remodelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for two storey extension and porch extension with minor external remodelling at Woodland House, Mayfield Lane, Wadhurst, East Sussex TN5 6JE in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref WD/2025/0895/F, 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 24054-PL-06 (Plans & Elevations as Proposed) and 24054-PL-07 (Site Plans & Sections).
 - 3) The external materials of the extension hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing dwelling.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have taken the description of development from that set out on the planning application form. Although the Council amended the description, the evidence before me suggests that this was not agreed by the appellant.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the host property and area, including the High Weald National Landscape.

Reasons

4. The site lies within the High Weald National Landscape (HWNL), a designated area recognised for its exceptional landscape and scenic beauty. 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) now includes the duty on 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 in a National Landscape.

5. In addition, the Framework places great weight on the conservation and enhancement of landscape and scenic beauty in National Landscapes, which are afforded the highest level of protection in this regard. This part of the HWNL is valued for its distinctive rolling landscape, elevated ridges and mixed woodland¹.
6. The appeal site is located on a ridge within a gently undulating wooded landscape, characteristic of the High Weald National Landscape. Due to its elevated position, I recognise that there is some potential for long-distance views towards the site. However, in my view, the substantial woodland cover both within and surrounding the site significantly restricts visibility. As such, any views of the extended dwelling are likely to be limited, filtered, and not visually intrusive.
7. The proposed extensions would increase the overall scale of the dwelling, and I acknowledge have generated concerns from the Council in respect of massing. However, the extensions are focused on one side of the property, which would help to retain the original form and character of the host building. The alterations to the front elevation, including the introduction of additional gables and a more symmetrical arrangement, in my opinion, would enhance the architectural interest of the property and reinforce its Arts and Crafts character.
8. It is acknowledged that the extension would result in a greater depth than the existing dwelling. Nevertheless, the projections to the front and rear are modest relative to the overall footprint. The use of stepped elevations and minor projections, in my view, helps to break up the massing and prevents the building from appearing overly uniform or visually heavy. Although the extension continues the existing ridge line rather than stepping down, I consider this contributes to a cohesive and unified design, rather than creating a visually disjointed addition.
9. The proposed gables on the front elevation introduce some variation in ridge height, which the Council consider would result in a loss of the existing symmetry. However, I find that there is sufficient consistency in style, form, and detailing, and that the central gable provides a clear focal point which enhances the legibility of the building's design.
10. The proposed chimney is of a substantial scale and may initially appear prominent. However, I consider that it reflects the proportions of the existing dwelling and replicates the height of the original chimney. In this context, I believe it would represent an appropriate and balanced architectural feature.
11. While the scale of the extensions would not be insignificant, I consider them proportionate to both the host dwelling and the generous plot in which it sits. The development would not, in my view, result in a dwelling that appears unduly bulky or dominant within its setting. Given the limited visibility from public vantage points and the careful attention to design and detailing, I am satisfied that the proposal would not result in harm to the character or appearance of the host property, nor to the wider landscape character or the natural beauty of the High Weald National Landscape, which I find would be conserved.
12. The proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policies GD2, EN1, EN6, EN27, and DC19 of the adopted Wealden Local Plan 1998, as well as Spatial Planning Objectives SPO1 and SPO13, and Policy WCS14 of the adopted

¹ The Integrated Landscape Character Appraisal (ILCA) May 2022

Wealden Core Strategy Local Plan 2013 and Policy WAD3 of the Wadhurst Neighbourhood Plan 2024. Collectively, these policies, insofar as relevant, seek to ensure that development in countryside locations is:

- proportionate to the existing dwelling;
 - reflective of local character, scale, and architectural detailing; and
 - protective and enhancing of the landscape character, particularly within designated areas such as the High Weald National Landscape (HWNL).
13. The proposal also aligns with the principles set out in the Wealden Design Guide 2008, which emphasises the importance of conserving and enhancing the distinctive character of the local landscape, especially within sensitive areas like the HWNL. The design reflects the Guide's encouragement of high-quality, locally distinctive architecture, and demonstrates a thoughtful response to its setting through careful massing, detailing, and materiality.
14. While the decision notice refers to Policies GD2 and HG10, which relate to development and extensions within defined development boundaries, it is understood from the evidence available that the site lies outside of such a boundary. Consequently, the relevance of these policies is limited, and they carry very little weight in the overall planning balance.

Conditions

15. The Council has suggested a number of conditions in the event of my allowing the appeal, I have considered these in accordance with the Planning Practice Guidance. A plan numbers condition together with a condition to limit the time frame are required in the interests of certainty. A matching materials condition is necessary in the interests of the character and appearance of the area.
16. The Council has also suggested a condition removing permitted development rights for the property for classes A-E, with their justification referring to the site's location within the HWNL. Additional restrictions are already imposed for houses within a national landscape, and there are no exceptional reasons before me as to why these limitations would not be sufficient. As such, I will not impose the condition if allowing the appeal.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons above, I conclude that the proposal would accord with the development plan and there are no material considerations which indicate that a decision should be made other than in accordance with it. Therefore, the appeal is allowed.

R Lawrence

INSPECTOR