



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 December 2025

by Guy Davies BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 09 December 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/C1435/D/25/3374831

2 Highlands Farm Cottages, Arlington Road West, Hailsham BN27 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 Ben White against the decision of Wealden District Council.
 - The application Ref is WD/2025/1310/F.
 - The development proposed is a rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed extension on the character and appearance of the building.

Reasons

3. Saved Policy DC19 of the Wealden Local Plan 1998 (the Local Plan) requires that, outside development boundaries, proposals for extensions and alterations to existing dwellings should, amongst other criteria, normally be of an appropriate size and character relative to the original dwelling, and not visually dominate or otherwise adversely change the character of the existing building.
4. Guidance on what is meant by an appropriate size is provided in the Wealden Design Guide 2008. This advises that refusal is likely where the proposed extension is in excess of 60% of the original floorspace of the original dwelling, where the extension over dominates and is without a sound design justification. Extensions in excess of 30% will normally only be permitted where there is no major change to the character of the building itself or its impact on its setting. Extensions of up to 30% should generally be acceptable.
5. For the purposes of Policy DC19, I take the 'original' dwelling to be the building as it existed on 1 July 1948, as that is how an original building is defined in the glossary to the National Planning Policy Framework. 2 Highlands Farm Cottages has previously been extended with a two storey side extension, and there are single storey additions to the rear. According to the submissions made with the appeal, these have increased the floorspace of the original dwelling by some 89%. The proposed extension, when taken cumulatively with these earlier extensions, would increase the floorspace of the dwelling by some 142%. That would clearly exceed what is envisaged as an appropriate extension in Policy DC19 and the Wealden Design Guide.

6. I note that when taken in isolation the proposed extension would represent a 53% enlargement of floorspace on the original dwelling. However, that ignores the existing substantial extensions that have been made to the dwelling and is not in my view a correct interpretation of the policy.
7. The extensions would be sited at the rear of the dwelling and therefore not be visible from the road or readily visible from public vantage points. However, the lack of public visibility is not an overriding consideration as that would undermine the purpose of Policy DC19, which is to control dominant extension of dwellings.
8. The design of the extension includes flat roofed sections between the gabled roof projections. These are somewhat clumsy features which have been used to keep the ridgelines of the extension below that of the main range. While I do not consider that shortcoming in the design of the proposal is determinative of the appeal by itself, it does indicate that the size of the extension is somewhat forced in relation to the existing building. Criticism is also raised of the proposed pattern of fenestration on the rear elevation, but as the rear elevation is already somewhat irregular in form and layout, I do not consider that to be a negative feature.
9. The Council considers that the dwelling is a non-designated heritage asset. That may apply to 3 Highlands Farm Cottages, which exhibits traditional features such as chequerboard brickwork and some flintwork at the rear, but the same does not apply to 2 Highlands Farm Cottages. It would appear to have been built at the turn of the 20th century and consists of a more modern range in stretcher bond with little in the way of distinctive detailing or architectural features. While it may historically be associated with the earlier cottage and farm holding, I do not consider that by itself is sufficient to warrant being recognised as a non-designated heritage asset.
10. I conclude that the proposed extension would conflict with Policy DC19 of the Local Plan because, taken cumulatively with the existing extensions, it would visually dominate and adversely affect the character and appearance of the dwelling. It would also conflict with Policies GD2 and HG10 of the Local Plan, which set more general criteria for development outside development boundaries and for the extension or alteration of existing dwellings.
11. Other policies are also referenced in the Council's decision notice. For the reasons set out above I do not consider that the proposal would materially conflict with Policy EN27 of the Local Plan which requires good design. Policy EN19 of the Local Plan relates to conservation areas and is not relevant to this appeal. Spatial planning objective SPO13 and Policy WCS14 of the Wealden Core Strategy 2013 set overarching planning principles but are of less relevance to the main issue I have identified as important to the determination of the appeal.

Conclusion

12. I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Guy Davies

INSPECTOR