



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: 10th December 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/C1435/D/25/3374313

Hesmonds Farm Cottage, Waldron Road, East Hoathly, East Sussex, BN8 6QH

- 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 Wendy Grisham against the decision of Wealden District Council.
 - The application Ref is WD/2025/1301/F.
 - The development proposed is a rear second storey 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 and the East Hoathly Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The East Hoathly Conservation Area covers the historic core of the village along the High Street as well as sections to the north and south. The part of the conservation area in which the appeal site is located is characterised by large houses set within extensive grounds containing a range of ancillary domestic and farm buildings. Some of those buildings have now been converted to separate residential uses with the grounds subdivided, but the significance of the former relationship between buildings and their uses is still apparent.
4. One example of that relationship is Hesmonds Farm Cottage, formerly associated with Hesmonds, a large country house dating from the 19th century. The country house lies some distance away, but the cottage is flanked by other former estate buildings including an oast house to the west and former farm buildings to the south. The original part of the cottage dates from the mid to late-19th century and consists of a double piled, gabled range in white painted brick and render under a slate roof. It has a symmetrical front of four windows and central entrance flanked by end chimney stacks. Its significance lies in its pleasingly simple form and historic association with Hesmonds. In my view, those characteristics justify it being considered as a non-designated heritage asset.
5. Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires me to pay special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area. Policy EN19 of the Wealden Local Plan 1998 (the Local Plan) and Policy 4 of the East Hoathly with Halland Neighbourhood Plan 2024 (the Neighbourhood Plan) have similar objectives.

6. Policy DC19 of the Local Plan requires that for extensions and alterations to existing dwellings, the proposal should 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.
7. The Wealden Design Guide 2008 provides further guidance that all applications for residential extensions will be assessed on their individual merits, taking into consideration the cumulative impact of previous extensions. It suggests that extensions in excess of 30% of the floorspace of the original dwelling will need particular justification, and that extensions in excess of 60% are likely to be refused, although I do note that this guidance does not apply within designated conservation areas. For buildings within designated conservation areas, the acceptability of proposals for extensions will be measured against the degree to which they would enhance or maintain the essential character and quality of such areas.
8. The original cottage was a modest sized building. While the footprint of the building on historic maps shows small wings at either end of the building it is not clear how large these were or their function. In any event they are no longer there. For planning purposes I therefore consider the original building to be the current white painted double piled range.
9. The building was substantially enlarged in 2008 with a two-storey extension added to one end and a single storey extension added across the rear under a catslide roof. Some smaller, single storey additions were removed at the same time. Notwithstanding the observations of both of the main parties on the design quality of those extensions, they do at least retain the form of the original double piled range and the integrity of the symmetrical front elevation. Taken together, the extensions are however of a size that verges on overwhelming the modest scale of the original building.
10. The proposed first floor extension would further increase the size of the building, and in particular would change it from a double piled to a triple piled range, with the addition clearly visible from the farm drive above the boundary hedge. I acknowledge that the proposed extension has been well designed, with the form and materials echoing that of the original building. Nevertheless, I consider it would dilute the form of the cottage making it more difficult to appreciate those elements which are original. Also, when taken cumulatively with the extensions that have already been added, they would together visually dominate and adversely change the character of the existing building.
11. The proposal would as a consequence cause harm to the character and appearance of the building and the conservation area. That harm would be less than substantial but nevertheless attracts great weight by virtue of national planning policy as set out in paragraph 212 of the National Planning Policy Framework. I recognise the benefit that additional living accommodation would provide to the appellant, but that would be a private rather than a public benefit and therefore carries less weight. I also recognise the modest benefits that would accrue from changes to some of the fenestration and cladding on the existing extension, but those do not outweigh the harm I have identified above. The property would continue to have all the facilities necessary for domestic use without the proposed extension, and therefore its residential use would not be compromised.

Other Matters

12. The Council's reason for refusal makes reference to spatial objectives in the Local and Neighbourhood plans, Policy WCS14 of the Wealden Core Strategy relating to achieving sustainable development, Policy EN8 of the Local Plan relating to landscape, and Policy EN27 of the Local Plan relating to design. Other than the aspects of design I have noted in my reasoning, I do not consider that any of these objectives or policies directly bear on the main issue in this appeal. The objectives establish general themes or principles but do not have the focus required for planning policies. Furthermore, I do not consider that the proposal would have any material effect on the wider landscape.
13. Hesmonds is a grade II listed building. While part of the significance of the cottage derives from its historical association with the estate, there is no suggestion by the Council that the proposed extension would directly affect the setting of that listed building, which lies some distance away. I agree with that view.

Conclusion

14. I conclude that the proposed extension would conflict with Policies EN19 and DC19 of the Local Plan, and Policy 4 of the Neighbourhood Plan, and would therefore conflict with the development plan when taken as a whole. There are no other material considerations, including public benefits, that would outweigh that harm. Consequently, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Guy Davies

INSPECTOR