



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/25/3373437

1 Oak Cottages, High Street, Fletching, East Sussex, TN22 3TD

- 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 J Silva Carvelho against the decision of Wealden District Council.
 - The application Ref is WD/2025/0767/F.
 - The development proposed is removal of existing single storey projection and construction of two storey side/rear extension and alterations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the removal of existing single storey projection and construction of two storey side/rear extension and alterations at 1 Oak Cottages, High Street, Fletching in accordance with the terms of the application Ref WD/2025/0767/F and subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plan: 524/025/01 Rev C – proposed extension and alterations.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.
 - 4) The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the window at first floor level in the side elevation has been fitted with obscured glazing. Once installed the obscured glazing shall be retained thereafter.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposed extension would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Fletching and Splaynes Green Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. Fletching is a small village lying within the High Weald National Landscape, which consists of rolling countryside of small pasture fields with a preponderance of woodland. The village contains a number of farmsteads and scatter of older buildings grouped around the parish church, with later development infilling along the High Street. A lodge to Sheffield Park standing near the church indicates the historic links between the village and estate. There are many listed buildings along Church Street and the western side of the High Street. The special interest of the

conservation area derives from its historic development and the wealth of listed buildings of varying age and architectural design.

4. The appeal property forms one half of a pair of semi-detached houses facing the High Street but set back and at a higher level. The pair of houses, together with a similar pair alongside and another pair further down the High Street appear to be former local authority housing from the early to mid-20th century.
5. Following advice from Council officers, the 2-storey side extension has been designed with a lowered roof form to make it subservient to the main building. Because the side extension would be the full depth of the building, it necessitates a crown roof with an element of flat roof hidden behind a line of ridge tiles.
6. I note the view of the Council's Conservation and Design Officer that a crown roof is an unsympathetic roof form compared to the ridged roof forms on traditional buildings in the conservation area. However, I consider that a subservient height of roof is necessary to allow appreciation of the original building and prevent the side extension appearing overly dominant. It would also have the advantage of matching the height of a side extension on the other half of the semi-detached pair of houses, restoring the original symmetrical arrangement when viewed head on, which is a feature of these pairs of houses. It would match a very similar side extension to 4 Oak Cottages. An adequate gap would remain between the dwelling and the adjoining property at Peelers. Taking all of these factors into account, I consider that the design of the side extension is acceptable and would preserve the overall character and appearance of the conservation area.
7. The proposal also includes a 2-storey rear element that would be the same height as the side extension but set in. Although the set in is slight, it would help distinguish the rear projection from the main range. Given its position on the rear elevation, it would not in my view appear prominent or out of scale with the building, either on its own or in combination with the side extension. I consider it to be acceptable.
8. 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) has similar objectives. For the reasons set out above I conclude that it would preserve the character of the conservation area and would not conflict with Policy EN19.
9. Policies DC19 and HG10 of the Local Plan require 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. Policy EN27 requires that the extension should be well designed. I consider that the proposed extensions accord with these policies. Although listed as relevant guidance in the delegated report, I have not been referred by either party to more detailed design guidance. I have therefore reached my decision on the basis of the information in front of me.
10. The Council's decision notice refers to Policy EN6, which relates to development in the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (now the High Weald National Landscape). While acknowledging that the village is intimately associated with the

surrounding countryside, I do not consider that the proposed extension would have any material impact on the wider landscape.

11. The decision notice also refers to spatial planning objectives SPO2 and SPO13 and Policy WCS14 of the Wealden Core Strategy 2013. These set overarching planning principles but are of less direct relevance to the main issue I have identified above.

Other Matters

12. Near to the appeal site are the Grade II* Clinton Lodge, grade II 3 & 4 Corn Poor Cottages, grade II 1-4 Robins Cross Cottages and grade II Atherall's Farmhouse. These listed buildings lie on the opposite side of the High Street to the appeal site, or in the case of Atherall's Farmhouse separated from it by the other Oak Cottages. Other than for them all playing a role in defining the character and appearance of the conservation area, which I have addressed in my reasoning, I do not consider there is any additional impact on their settings or significance.

Conditions

13. A time limit condition and a condition identifying the approved plan are necessary in the interests of certainty. A condition requiring external materials to match with those used on the existing building is necessary in the interests of its appearance and the visual quality of the conservation area. I consider a condition is also necessary to ensure that the first-floor side window in the extension is obscured glazed, as shown on the approved plans, in the interests of the privacy of occupiers of the adjoining property.

Conclusion

14. I conclude that the proposed development would preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area. There is therefore no need for me to balance its impact against public benefits. It complies with the development plan and there are no other material considerations which lead me to a contrary view. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Guy Davies

INSPECTOR