Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 June 2025

by Victor Callister BA(Hons) PGC(Oxon) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 03 July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/Z3825/D/25/3365217
The Paddocks, Stane Street, Five Oaks, West Sussex RH14 9AG

- 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 Coombes against the decision of Horsham District Council.
- The application Ref is DC/25/0153.
- The development proposed is the erection of a single storey rear extension, conversion of loft into habitable living space, replacement of front flat roof with a pitched roof, replacement of hipped roof with a gabled roof with glazed screen, installation of 6no. rooflights to front roof, installation of solar PV panels to the south facing roof, and alterations to fenestration.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. For the description of development, I have used that from the Council's decision, as this is a concise and accurate description that has also been used by the appellant for their statement.

3. Some of the elements of the proposed development appear to have already been completed with others at the time of my site visit being under construction. The application is retrospective concerning the completed elements and I have considered the appeal accordingly.

Main Issues

4. The main issue if the effect on the character and appearance of the appeal dwelling.

Reasons

5. The appeal dwelling is a two storey detached house set back from Stane Street and is accessed by a driveway between other properties that front onto the street. To the rear is a large garden that opens out onto surrounding fields and the open countryside. The original roof of the appeal dwelling is complex, with a series of hips and gables over various elements. This complexity assists in breaking down the apparent scale of a large dwelling, which has the appearance of a substantial farmhouse.

6. Concerns have been raised by third parties in relation to the overall height of the proposal as partly implemented; however, I concur with the Council's conclusion

that there does not appear to be conclusive evidence of the original height of the appeal dwelling. I have therefore considered the proposal on the basis of the heights given on the plans submitted with the application.

7. The partly implemented appeal proposal involves the creation of habitable space at loft level, including by the addition of a flat roofed dormer extension within the rear roof slope. Planning permission[1] was previously issued for a similar proposal but without a dormer extension to the rear roof. However, a dormer extension has been partly implemented, which at the time of my site visit, was without windows, and does not accord with the approved plans of this previous permission. The appellant submitted the application to which this appeal relates with the intention of regularising that situation. It is only the dormer extension element of the appeal proposal to which the Council's reason for refusal relates.

8. The dormer is tile hung to match the existing first floor cladding, is approximately 6 metres wide and is marginally set up from the eaves of this part of the roof, with its flat roof aligning with the bottom of the roof ridge tile to the original house. The flat roof and concomitant box like massing of the dormer does not reflect the design of the original roof of the appeal dwelling, with its complex hipped and gabled roof form.

9. This box like massing combines with the extent, scale and bulk of the dormer to give the appearance of an oversized and incompatible addition in relation to the rear roof slope and the roof of the appeal dwelling as a whole. As such, it does not appear to sit within the rear roof slope or to reflect the design and proportions of the original roof, but rather it appears as a disproportionate, bulky and dominating addition.

10. The proposed windows for the dormer extension do not follow the proportions, positioning or rhythms of fenestration in the original house. As such they would appear as dissonant elements in relation to the original house, further detracting from the original, convincing and harmonious character and appearance of the appeal dwelling as a large farmhouse in an open countryside setting.

11. Therefore, in views of the rear and side of the appeal dwelling, from neighbouring properties and the open countrysides, the rear dormer does not appear as a complementary or subordinate addition but rather appears as an unduly prominent and incongruous addition to the appeal dwelling.

12. For these reasons I find that the proposed development as a whole would result in substantial harm to the character and appearance of the appeal dwelling and that of the local area. This would not accord with Policies 28 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and Policy BILL 2 of the Billingshurst Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2019-31 (2021). Collectively these seek development, including by extension, that is of high quality design, proportionate and in keeping with the scale and character of the existing dwelling.

Conditions

13. The appellant has suggested that the design of the windows of the dormer could be changed from that in the proposal. Whilst this could be achieved through the attachment of a suitable condition to an approval, this would not overcome the

[1] Planning ref: DC/23/2327

harm that I have found that results from the design, bulk and massing of the dormer. The attachment of such a condition would not, therefore, meet the requirement of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) for making an unacceptable development acceptable.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

14. The proposal would enlarge the appeal dwelling, providing a dwelling with more living space. This is however substantially a private rather than public benefit. Consequently, I find that the benefits do not outweigh the harm that I have identified. Dismissal of the appeal is, therefore, a proportionate response in this instance.

15. The appeal is dismissed.

Victor Callister

INSPECTOR