



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 July 2015

by **Martin Andrews MA(Planning) BSc(Econ) DipTP & DipTP(Dist) MRTPI**
an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government
Decision date: 16 July 2015

Appeal Ref: APP/V2255/D/15/3015013

Swanton Croft, Swanton Street, Bredgar, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 8AS

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Clark Boulwood against the decision of Swale Borough Council.
 - The application, Ref. 14/504520/FULL, dated 26 September 2014, was refused by notice dated 22 January 2015.
 - The development proposed is a two storey rear extension to a residential dwelling to accommodate a new bedroom and bathroom and kitchen and dining room and the replacement of the existing timber fenestration with UPVC.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a two storey rear extension to a residential dwelling to accommodate a new bedroom and bathroom and kitchen and dining room and the replacement of the existing timber fenestration with UPVC at Swanton Croft, Swanton Street, Bredgar, Sittingbourne in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref. 14/504520/FULL, dated 26 September 2014 subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin before the expiration of three years from the date of this Decision;
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans SCB 1411.00; SCB 1411.01; SCB 1411.02; SCB 1411.03; SCB 1411.04; SCB 1411.05; SCB 1411.06; SCB 1411.07; SCB 1411.08;
 - 3) Other than the windows and doors, 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.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed extension on the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and surrounding countryside, with particular reference to the property's location within the designated area of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
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Reasons

3. Under reference SW/14/504592 a single storey rear extension was granted permission in January of this year. The appeal application has the same footprint (5.9m depth and 4.9m width) but now includes a first floor element. This would have the same width as that approved but a reduced depth of 3.8m. In the light of this I agree with the appellant's view that it is either the scale and design of the first floor addition or the extra floorspace compared to that already approved that should be the determining factors in assessing whether the Council's objection to the appeal scheme is justified.
4. The extension would be set well down from the existing ridge, would have a width of about two thirds of the existing house and at first floor level a depth of slightly more than a third of the building (excluding the front porch). I do not consider this scale to be disproportionate, especially as the hipped roofs, overall design and external materials would be in keeping with the host dwelling. However in the Council's view the appeal scheme would be an example of the statement in its Supplementary Planning Guidance: 'Designing an Extension – A Guide for Householders' ('the SPG') that '*Over-large extensions can destroy the appearance of the house and have a serious effect upon the area as a whole*'.
5. Although I acknowledge that the house at present has '*a simple rectangular form*', it seems to me that this judgement is not one that can be reasonably concluded in relation to a 15 year old family dwelling which with the adjoining 'Pear Tree Cottage' was the development that marked a step change in the original built form and the overall character and appearance of the site.
6. Furthermore as regards visual impact, the extension would be confined to the rear and only limited views of it would be available from Swanton Street. The Council attaches significant weight to the view of the extension from the public footpath some 70m to the south west and asserts that the extension would be 'eye catching' and 'seriously harmful' to the character and appearance of the AONB. However, I walked along this footpath (unaccompanied) on my visit and formed the view that the proposal would be unlikely to draw the eye and even if it did it would be read as an integral part of the pair of buildings that include a conservatory and the garages. The backdrop of the mature tree and hedge forming the north east boundary of Swanton Croft's garden would effectively mitigate any remaining impact. There would therefore be no adverse effect on the surrounding countryside and the landscape of the AONB.
7. As regards floorspace, Policies E6 and RC4 of the Swale Borough Local Plan 2008 ('the Local Plan') require extensions to be 'modest'. I am minded to agree with the Council that in relation to the existing property the extension would be a borderline case in terms of this requirement, albeit for the reasons explained I do regard it as being subservient to the host building. I acknowledge though that the addition would not be 'modest' when compared with the semi-detached demolished cottage originally on the site.
8. However, Policy RC4 does not set out a direct link between the size of an original building on a site and the amount that its replacement can be extended. To the extent that the Council argues that there would be harm to the objectives of Policy RC4, I have explained why I consider the proposal to be acceptable in terms of its effect on the host dwelling and the AONB landscape

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and adjoining countryside. I consider that I should also give weight to the direction of travel of Government policy towards a positive approach as regards housing proposals and extensions, as illustrated by the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 ('the Framework'), the Planning Practice Guidance 2014 and recent relaxations in permitted development for domestic extensions.

9. Overall, I conclude that the proposed extension would not have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the countryside and the AONB and would not therefore be in harmful conflict with Policies E1, E6, E9, E19, E24 & RC4 of the Swale Borough Local Plan 2008; the Council's SPG, and Government policy in the Framework.
10. In allowing the appeal I shall impose a condition requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the proposed plans for the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning. I shall also impose a condition requiring matching external materials to ensure that the extension is in harmony with the host dwelling. Given the description of the application I shall exclude windows and doors from this requirement.

Martin Andrews

INSPECTOR