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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 October 2015

by H Lock BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 26 October 2015

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**Appeal Ref: APP/V2255/D/15/3132675**

**1 Stuppington Cottages, Norton Road, NORTON, Kent, ME9 0HB**

- 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 And Mrs Lance Kennedy against the decision of Swale Borough Council.
  - The application Ref. 15/503257/FULL was refused by notice dated 10 June 2015.
  - The development proposed is two-storey side extension with front dormer.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Procedural Matter

2. The address of the appeal property varies between the application and appeal forms. The agent has confirmed that the address given on the application form is correct, albeit the submitted plans and appeal form identify the appeal property as No.1 Stuppington Cottages.

### Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the appeal property and its rural setting.

### Reasons

4. The appeal property is a semi-detached dwelling located in a group of four properties set within an open rural landscape. Although the four dwellings appear to have been built to the same design, each has been extended or altered, such that there are differences between the group in terms of materials and footprint. However, the narrow width and proportions of the original dwellings are still discernible, and extensions have not undermined the cohesion of the group.
  5. The proposed side extension would be wider than the original dwelling, with lower eaves and ridge height and a dormer window to the front roof slope. There is no objection in principle to the introduction of a dormer window to the property, there being a similar (albeit smaller) addition to the front roof slope of No.3 Stuppington Cottages. However, the overall scale and design of the proposed side extension, including its dormer window, would be out of keeping
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with the host dwelling. In particular, the excessive width of the extension relative to the main house and the alignment of the windows and doors would be disruptive to the property and the group as a whole.

6. The side elevation of the appeal property is highly visible and prominent in the street scene, and the discordant design of the proposal would be exacerbated by its asymmetric eaves. I accept the appellants' view that larch cladding is not an alien material, but it would be at odds with the brickwork of the original property. This mismatch between materials would be more noticeable as the cladding would be seen against the backdrop of the painted brickwork of the existing side wall.
7. As a dwelling in the countryside, Policies E6 and RC4 of the Swale Borough Local Plan 2008 (LP) allow for only 'modest' extensions to dwellings. LP Policy RC4 interprets this as being extensions of an appropriate scale, mass and appearance relative to the location. The Council's officer report advises that its Planning & Development Guideline document No.5, 'Designing an Extension: a Guide for Householders' has been adopted as supplementary planning guidance (SPG). That document specifies that an extension to a dwelling in a rural area should not result in an increase of more than 60% of the property's original floor space, although I note the appellants' view that the document does not make clear the role of the existing attached outbuildings in such calculations.
8. However, floor space is just one indicator of size, and a more meaningful assessment of visual impact includes the mass and design of the proposal. Notwithstanding the percentage increase in the floor space of the dwelling, the development would appear disproportionately large as outlined above. By any measure it would not be a 'modest' extension as sought by LP Policies E6 and RC4, and it would not accord with the aims to achieve high quality design set out in LP Policies E1 and E19. I do not share the appellants' view that the design of the proposal would follow the Council's guidelines, as although there may be some shared features, the resultant extension would appear markedly different to the examples given in the SPG.
9. I note the lack of objection from the Parish Council and local residents but this does not alter my assessment.
10. I therefore conclude that the proposal would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the appeal property and the rural setting, contrary to the aims of LP Policies E6, RC4, E1 and E19. I have placed limited weight on Policy DM11<sup>1</sup> included in the reasons for refusal as this is not an adopted policy and is potentially subject to change.
11. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

*Hilary Lock*

INSPECTOR

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<sup>1</sup> Bearing Fruits 2031: The Swale Borough Local Plan Part 1: Publication Version 2014