

---

# Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 July 2018

**by Martin Andrews MA(Planning) BSc(Econ) DipTP & DipTP(Dist) MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 17 August 2018**

---

## **Appeal Ref: APP/Y9507/D/18/3201537**

### **Pippins, The Street, Offham, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 3QE**

- 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 Eric Styles against the decision of the South Downs National Park Authority.
  - The application, Ref. SDNP/18/00689/HOUS, dated 6 February 2018, was refused by notice dated 19 April 2018.
  - The development proposed is a front extension.
- 

### **Application for Costs**

1. An application for costs was made by Mr and Mrs Styles against the South Downs National Park Authority ('the NPA'). This is the subject of a separate Decision.

### **Decision**

2. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a front extension at Pippins, The Street, Offham, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 3QE in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref. SDNP/18/00689/HOUS, dated 6 February 2018 subject to the following conditions:
  - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision;
  - 2) The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: OS based Location Plan; Site and Block Plan; Drawing Nos. S/1; S/2; S/3; S/4;
  - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

### **Main Issues**

3. The main issues are the effect of the extension on the character and appearance of the site and its surroundings and whether as a result, those aspects of the Offham Conservation Area would be preserved or enhanced.

### **Reasons**

4. I saw on my visit that the appeal building is a 2 bedroomed bungalow set well back from the road and accessed by a driveway that also serves a further property ('Old Wheelwrights') to the south east and out of sight around a
-

corner. Although the extension would be to the front of the bungalow, it would sit comfortably within a much larger gravelled and patio area and be separated from the landscaped front garden by the existing brick and flint retaining wall.

5. The Refusal Notice refers to the proposed extension having a scale and siting that would enlarge the existing property so that it could not be comfortably accommodated within the site without having a cramped appearance and resulting in a further loss of space around the building '*thereby exacerbating the incongruous relationship*' between it and neighbouring homes.
6. However, as regards 'scale' I consider the extension to be entirely proportionate to the host dwelling, whilst in terms of 'siting' the existing gravelled and patio area is easily large enough to accommodate the addition without any reasonable perception of it being cramped in this particular part of a good-sized garden. Furthermore, the garden in total has three parts, the one to the front that would accommodate the extension; a smaller area immediately to the rear of the bungalow that is still to be landscaped, and a third area also to the rear but offset to the south east where it shares a boundary with 'Old Wheelwrights'.
7. I am therefore at a loss to understand why the relationship between Pippins (both as existing and extended by the appeal scheme) and its neighbours is regarded by the NPA as 'incongruous'. This part of Offham has a varied pattern of development, typical of a village that has evolved over many years, but for the most part with the buildings being subservient to the landscape. And although much more recent, the appeal bungalow fits in well with its more established neighbours, being discreetly sited in relation to both the very limited public views and as regards the outlook from nearby properties.
8. The nearby dwellings are of different sizes and designs and include Woodcock Cottage, a listed building. However, the position and appearance of Pippins does not draw the eye as being unusual or harmfully at odds with its neighbours, and neither the siting nor the scale of the extension would make any difference. This includes the setting of Woodcock Cottage, which would not be materially affected, particularly given its higher site level and separation by a wall and planting.
9. In summary, the proposed extension would not have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the site and its surroundings, with those aspects of the conservation area thereby preserved. The Refusal Notice cites a range of policies in the Lewes District Local Plan Part 1 Joint Core Strategy 2016, of which Policy RES13: 'Extensions' retained from the Lewes District Local Plan 2003 is the most relevant. The appeal proposal fully complies with this policy and with Sections 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2018 regarding design and conservation respectively. This document also includes Government policy on the National Parks, but again I can see no possible conflict with this arising from the proposal.
10. The officer's report also refers to an issue of 'amenity' in respect of Woodcock Cottage, but there is insufficient detail to support the assertions made and this matter does not in any event form part of the reason for refusal. I have noted that objections to the proposal have been received from the Parish Council and some local residents. However, the matters raised either fall within the scope of the main issue or are not of sufficient weight for me to alter my conclusions.

11. I shall therefore allow the appeal. A condition requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans is necessary for the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning. A matching external materials condition will ensure the extension harmonises with the existing dwelling and safeguard visual amenity. The NPA has also suggested a condition restricting the hours of construction, but this would be unusual for a proposal as modest as an extension to a dwelling and I see no good reason to make an exception in this case.

*Martin Andrews*

INSPECTOR