

From: Emily Wade <Emily.Wade@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 17 January 2025 11:59:00 UTC+00:00
To: "Caroline Grist" <Caroline.Grist@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: DM/24/2910 and 2911 8 Newstone Cottages

Hi Caroline

Comments on the above planning and listed building consent applications.

8 Newstone Cottages is one half of a pair of semi-detached Grade II listed houses, forming part of a planned development of 5 similar pairs located to the north side of East Street, within the Turners Hill Conservation Area. The cottage pairs, which date from 1919, were designed in an Arts and Crafts style with faux timbered first floor elevations above snecked rubble masonry at ground floor, and hipped Horsham stone slab roofs. The development has a formal, symmetrical composition with house pairs set in a wide, shallow U around a central front garden area. Nos. 7 and 8 are the mirror image of nos. 3 and 4 to the west.

The current proposal, which follows on from pre-application advice, is for a single storey side extension. The bulk of the extension is slightly set off the main house by a solid link element to the frontage. It has a relatively complex roof form, with a pitched roof to front and side partly concealing a central flat roof, and has masonry elevations with fenestration to match the existing to the house.

At pre-application stage, a proposal for a single storey side extension of similar but not identical form to the current proposal was considered, and the following comments offered:

'In my opinion, the principle of a side extension raises concerns in terms of the impact on the special architectural interest of the house concerned, the cottage pair, and the wider group of which it is part.'

As above, the formal, symmetrical layout of the planned development at Newstone Cottages is very important to the significance of the listed buildings, in particular their architectural and aesthetic values. Although several of the buildings within the group have been altered and extended to the rear, and indeed no. 8 has an existing rear conservatory addition, none of the buildings has been extended to the side, with the exception of no. 5 which has a canopy link to an otherwise detached modern garage. This lack of side additions is important to the continued appreciation of the original symmetry of the villa pairs and the plan of the development overall. In my opinion, in this context the principle of a side addition, and in particular one which is set forward nearly to the front building line of the house, is likely to be considered contentious due to its adverse impact on the symmetry of the cottage pair, and of the wider group of listed buildings.

This will be contrary to the requirements of District Plan Policy DP34 (Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets), which states that development will be required to protect listed buildings and their settings, and that alterations or extensions to a listed building must respect its historic form, scale, setting, significance and fabric. In addition, it will be contrary to District Plan Policy DP35 (Conservation Areas), which requires that development in a conservation area should conserve or enhance its special character, appearance and the range of activities which contribute to it,

and that extensions should be sensitively designed to reflect the special characteristics of the area.

Furthermore, given the existing conservatory addition to the rear of the building, I would be concerned that a further extension of the footprint shown, even at a single storey, would result in an inappropriate relationship of scale between the original, modest cottage and the additions to it, such that the footprint of the original building may appear overwhelmed by the extensions. This will also in my opinion be contrary to the requirements of the above policies.

I understand the particular desire of the householders is to add facilities at ground floor level such as a WC and shower room. It may be that there would be more scope for this at the rear of the building, through sympathetic replacement and possible minor extension of the existing conservatory addition, which is not in itself of special interest.

As it stands however I would consider the proposal contrary to District Plan policy for the reasons set out above, resulting in less than substantial harm to 8 Newstone Cottages at around the mid-point of that scale, such that paragraph 208 of the NPPF will apply. The proposal will also result in less than substantial harm at around the same level, through impact on setting, to the remainder of the listed formal grouping.'

The current proposal is very similar to the pre-application scheme, with the only apparent difference being the introduction of a gap between the rear part of the extension and the side of the house. This does very little to reduce the bulk of the addition, and has no effect on its appearance from the front. In my opinion, the objections raised in respect of the pre-application scheme therefore remain pertinent. In addition, we now have a roof plan which demonstrates that this aspect of the design is overly complicated and does not relate appropriately to the simple, traditional roof form of the existing house.

I therefore remain of the opinion that the proposal is contrary to the requirements of District Plan Policies DP34 and DP35. In terms of the NPPF, the proposal will cause harm to 8 Newstone Cottages and the remainder of the listed group of which it is part at around the mid point of that scale, such that the balancing exercise set out in paragraph 215 (as it has been renumbered) will apply. The proposal also results in a low-mid level of harm to the significance of the Conservation Area.

It is also contrary to the requirements of the Council's adopted Design Guide, specifically Design Principles DG49 (General Principles for Extensions) which states that '*Extensions should respond to the design of the original dwelling and applicants will be expected to demonstrate how local character has informed the design proposal. Extensions should also normally be designed to be well-integrated with the existing scale, form and massing allowing the original building to remain the dominant element of the property whether it has one or several additions. Extensions should typically use simple, uncomplicated building forms to complement and coordinate with the scale, form and massing of the original dwelling*'. It is also contrary to DG50 which states that '*Front and side extensions are typically visible from the public realm and will be resisted where they have an adverse impact on the street scene or the appearance of a dwelling*'.

The applicant has made reference to a recently approved scheme at the neighbouring building 9 Newstone Cottages. However, notwithstanding that each case must be considered according to its own merits, the development at no. 9 is not comparable to the current application, as this is of a detached garage, set well back from the frontage of the house in question, and a glazed

rear infill extension (which unfortunately has not been constructed according to the approved drawings, and is the subject of a current enforcement enquiry). This approved scheme therefore does not represent a relevant precedent for the current proposal.

During our site meeting the applicant explained his personal situation and the reasons behind the current applications. Whilst I have every sympathy with his situation, I am afraid this does not alter the position in terms of the merits of the proposal in heritage terms. However, as we also discussed it may be that an alternative scheme which altered and/or extended the existing conservatory addition which sits across the rear of the building may go some way to meeting his requirements. I do understand that he is reluctant to make changes to this part of the building, which has been recently refurbished. However the rear of the building is likely to be the only area in which the additional downstairs footprint, including the desired WC, could be accommodated, as I understand from our conversation that there is no scope to do so internally within the historic core of the house, for example in the under stairs space. Whilst I do not think we could support a solid (as opposed to a largely glazed, as existing) addition sitting across the rear of the cottage, a revised rear extension could be partly offset to the side of the house, as was recently approved at no. 4 Newstone Cottages, where a part glazed/part solid extension was permitted in an offset position (DM/22/2540 and 2541). This would have the potential advantage of also leaving free the space to the side of the house which would allow for the construction of a detached garage, as already approved at no. 8, and as approved at no. 4 as part of the above permissions.

Thanks,

Emily

Please note that this advice is given at Officer level only and is without prejudice to the formal decision of the District Council.

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