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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 October 2023 by Thomas Courtney BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

**Decision by Martin Seaton BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30<sup>th</sup> January 2024

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**Appeal Ref: APP/V2255/D/23/3324619**

**Hill Crest, Dully Hill, Doddington, Kent, ME9 0BY**

- 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 Mrs Colbert against the decision of Swale Borough Council.
  - The application Ref 23/500529/FULL, dated 1 February 2023, was refused by notice dated 3 April 2023.
  - The development proposed is the erection of single storey front and rear extensions.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of single storey front and rear extensions at Hill Crest, Dully Hill, Doddington, Kent, ME9 0BY, in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 23/500529/FULL, dated 1 February 2023, 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 hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Drawing Nos. 01 Plans & Elevations As Existing, 02 Plans & Elevations As Proposed, 03 Site Location Plan, 04 Block Plan As Existing, 05 Block Plan As Proposed.
  - 3) 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.

### Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

### Procedural Matters

3. Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) have, since 22 November 2023, been renamed as National Landscapes. This change in terminology has not affected the reasons for their designation or the fundamental aspects of their special qualities. I have accordingly referred to the Kent Downs AONB as the Kent Downs National Landscape in my recommendation.
  4. The Government has published a revised National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023) (the Framework). I have had regard to this document in reaching my conclusions.
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Appeal Decision APP/V2255/D/23/3324619

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### **Main Issue**

5. The main issue is the impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding Kent Downs National Landscape (KDNL).

### **Reasons for the Recommendation**

6. The appeal dwelling comprises of a detached bungalow which lies in an elevated position on the side of a shallow sided valley within a cluster of properties located in a rural location in the KDNL. The dwelling lies within a small plot that is cut into the side of the hill such that there is a tall brick wall along the northern boundary of the site which practically reaches the same height as the roof ridge. The southern and western boundaries of the site are well-screened with mature vegetation.
7. The Council asserts that the proposed extensions would be disproportionate when viewed in conjunction with the previous single storey extension referred to by both parties in the appeal documents. However, it is evident that the resultant dwelling would not appear excessively large or bulky due to its low height, position set partially within the hillside, and screening by mature vegetation.
8. The rear extension would fill in the area to the side of the previously extended part of the dwelling, essentially squaring off the footprint of the property. This would appear as a logical and reasonably scaled addition which would not unbalance the underlying architectural form of the dwelling. Although the dwelling is partially visible from the south-west on Faversham Road, the proposed rear extension would not be easily discernible. Similarly, the roof of the proposal would not feature prominently when seen from the open countryside and public footpath to the north. Overall, the modestly sized extensions would not feature prominently in the surrounding area.
9. I note that that the proposal would exceed the limitations set out in the '*Designing an Extension – A Guide for Householders*' Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) document which states that extensions to dwellings in the rural area are normally limited to a maximum of a 60% increase in floorspace from the original.
10. In this instance, however, I have had regard to the very modest original size of the dwelling. The stated aims of the SPG are to ensure extensions are appropriately scaled and do not lead to smaller properties becoming larger houses. In this case, the resultant dwelling would still be relatively small in terms of floorspace and footprint. It would have a low profile given its single storey height and would continue to be read as a modestly sized bungalow. There would not therefore be a reduction in the amount of smaller properties in the area.
11. In light of the very limited views of the site and the subdued appearance of the resultant dwelling, the development would conserve the landscape and scenic beauty of the KDNL, and would not result in an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the host dwelling.
12. Given the above, the proposal would not conflict with Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework, Policies CP4, DM11, DM14, DM16 and DM24 of the '*Bearing Fruits 2031: The Swale Borough Local Plan*' (2017) as well as the

Appeal Decision APP/V2255/D/23/3324619

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guidance contained within the SPG which together seek to ensure proposals are well-designed and extensions in the rural area are of an appropriate scale, mass and appearance in relation to their location.

#### **Conditions**

13. In addition to conditions related to the timeliness of the commencement of development and adherence to the approved plans, a condition requiring the use of matching materials for all external surfaces would be necessary in the interest of the character and appearance of the development.

#### **Recommendation**

14. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be allowed, subject to the attached conditions.

*Thomas Courtney*

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

#### **Inspector's Decision**

15. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's recommendation, including the suggested conditions, and on that basis the appeal is allowed.

*Martin Seaton*

INSPECTOR