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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 March 2026

by **E Pickernell BSc MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24 March 2026

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### Appeal Ref: 6001754

#### Little Brook, Lower Pennington Lane, Pennington, Hampshire SO41 8AL

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
  - The appeal is made by Mr & Mrs Jones & Moulder-Jones against the decision of New Forest National Park Authority.
  - The application Ref is 25/00355FULL.
  - The development proposed is proposed loft conversion with dormers.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for proposed loft conversion with dormers at Little Brook, Lower Pennington Lane, Pennington Hampshire SO41 8AL in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 25/00355FULL, and the plans submitted with it, 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 drawing nos 12141 PL 01, 12141 PL 04, 12141 PL 05 and 12141 PL 06.
  - 3) The external materials of the extension hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing dwelling.

### Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
  - whether the proposed development would accord with local planning policy which seeks to limit the size of extensions in order to protect the locally distinctive character of the built environment and to avoid an imbalance in the range and mix of housing stock; and
  - the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the area.

### Reasons

#### *Planning policy*

3. The appeal site comprises a relatively large, detached dwelling set in a generous plot located within the New Forest National Park, albeit near to the boundary. The property was once two smaller cottages which were combined to create a single dwelling.

4. Policy DP36 of the New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016 – 2036 (Adopted August 2019) (LP) relates to extensions to existing dwellings. The supporting text to the policy defines 'existing dwelling' as it existed on 1 July 1982, or as the dwelling was originally built or legally established, if the residential use post-dates 1982.
5. The evidence indicates that the conversion from two dwellings to one occurred after 1 July 1982. The Authority accepts that this was lawful. In this instance and for the purposes of this appeal, I am satisfied that it is appropriate to consider the 'existing dwelling' to be that which was legally established when the two properties were combined. The resultant dwelling had a floor area in excess of 80 square metres. In such circumstances, where the dwelling is outside a defined village, Policy DP36 states that the extension must not increase the floorspace of the existing dwelling by more than 30%.
6. The appellant has calculated that previous extensions to the property in addition to the floorspace that would be generated as a result of the loft conversion would amount to less than 30% of the floorspace of the existing dwelling. I have no reason to dispute these figures.
7. The proposed dormer windows represent relatively minor additions to the overall mass and bulk of the dwelling which would not increase its footprint. As such they would not significantly change the character of the building or its contribution to the locally distinctive character of the built environment in the New Forest.
8. Furthermore, the appeal site already comprises a relatively large property benefitting from four en-suite bedrooms. The proposal would not increase the number of bedrooms. As such it would not result in the loss of a smaller dwelling and there is little evidence before me which demonstrates that this minor enlargement to the floorspace would unbalance the housing stock in the area.
9. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would accord with local planning policy which seeks to limit the size of extensions in order to protect the locally distinctive character of the built environment and to avoid an imbalance in the range and mix of housing stock. It would therefore comply with Policies DP36 and SP17 of the LP which also seek to ensure that incremental changes do not erode the character of the National Park.

#### *Character and appearance*

10. The appeal site is an attractive brick and tile property with characterful features including its chimney, gables and decorative contrasting brick sections. It sits comfortably in its rural setting which comprises open fields with well vegetated boundaries. Along with other scattered rural dwellings in the vicinity, the appeal site contributes positively to the character and appearance of the area.
11. The proposed dormer windows would be relatively modest in scale, set slightly down from the main ridge of the dwelling and well in from the eaves of the roof. As such they would not be out of scale or have an awkward relationship with the host dwelling. The pitched roof design of the dormers would reflect other pitched roof elements elsewhere on the building and they would not appear incongruous in this context. Consequently, the proposed dormers would not result in harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling.

12. The dormers would be visible from the road and from surrounding fields. However, as modest, appropriately designed additions to an existing property, they would not result in an adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the immediate area or the wider landscape.
13. Although not within the reasons for refusal, the Officer Report refers to light spillage which would occur as a result of the proposal. However, there are already numerous windows within the dwelling, and it is unlikely that the proposal would result in a significant increase in light spillage from the property such that it would result in harm to the character and appearance of the countryside.
14. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) requires that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks. I also have a duty under Section 245 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 to seek to further the purposes of the National Park. Given my conclusions in respect of the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area I am satisfied that it would leave the natural beauty of the National Park unharmed.
15. I therefore conclude that the proposal would have an acceptable effect on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the area. It would therefore comply with Policies DP2, DP18 and SP17 of the LP which together seek to ensure that development is of a high standard of design, respects its setting and does not erode the character of the National Park.

### **Conditions**

16. Conditions in respect of the time limit and approved plans are required in the interests of certainty. A condition requiring the materials to match is necessary to ensure a satisfactory appearance
17. The Authority has suggested a condition which would remove permitted development rights in respect of alterations and enlargements. Planning Practice Guidance advises that such conditions may not pass the tests of reasonableness or necessity and the Framework states that planning conditions should not be used to restrict national permitted development rights unless there is clear justification to do so.
18. In this instance, limited evidence has been provided that exercising such rights, in addition to the proposed dormers would result in the dwelling becoming inappropriate to its location. As such, on the basis of the evidence before me, it would not be necessary for these permitted development rights to be restricted. In any event I note that a condition of this nature has already been imposed when permitting the single storey rear extension which has now been constructed.

### **Conclusion**

19. For the reasons given above the appeal should be allowed.

*E Pickernell*

INSPECTOR