
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 November 2016

by Roger Catchpole DipHort BSc(hons) PhD MCIEEM

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

Decision date: 09 December 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/M9496/16/3153869

Pedley Fold Farm, Pedley Hill, Rainow SK10 5TZ

- 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 Andrew Stringer against the decision of the Peak District National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref: NP/CEC/0216/0169, dated 22 February 2016, was refused by notice dated 19 April 2016.
 - The development proposed is the conversion of existing shippon to extend family accommodation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. As the proposal is in a conservation area and affects a listed building I have had special regard to sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act).
 3. For the purposes of the Act, a listed building includes any structure that is within its curtilage which has existed since before 1st July 1948. As a structure within the curtilage that has a principal and accessory relationship to the main building, the linked outbuilding is also consequently listed. This is the basis upon which this appeal has been determined.
 4. An appeal against the refusal of a listed building consent was submitted. It was subsequently confirmed by the appellant that the appeal relates to the refusal of planning permission and not a refusal of listed building consent. This is the basis upon which this appeal has been determined.
 5. Neither party express a view regarding any effect of the proposal on the setting of the nearby Grade II listed building, The Old Vicarage. Nonetheless, I have had special regard to the statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing its setting. In this respect, as the appeal building is not closely juxtaposed and the changes to the nearest elevations are limited, I am satisfied that it would preserve its setting.
 6. For reasons of clarity and brevity, I have shortened the description of development to remove unnecessary wording for the purposes of this appeal.
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Main Issues

7. The main issues are whether the proposal would preserve a Grade II listed building, Pedley Fold Farmhouse, and any of the features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses and the extent to which it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Rainow Conservation Area.

Reasons

8. The appeal building is situated on the margins of the small village of Rainow. The settlement is surrounded by open countryside and lies to the north east of the urban conurbation of Macclesfield. The proposed scheme comprises a series of alterations to a residential dwelling and the conversion of a linked agricultural outbuilding. The appeal building occupies a prominent, elevated position above a river valley.
9. The Rainow Conservation Area (CA) was designated in 1994 and covers an elongated area encompassing the historic buildings and open fields of the original settlement bordering the B5470. The buildings are characterised by the consistent use of materials with coursed sandstone walls and graduated stone roof tiles giving rise to a harmonious and pleasing colour palette. Whilst vernacular architectural forms associated with its former agricultural origins predominate, more polite architectural forms with ashlar detailing can also be found. These relate to a number of higher status buildings. A rolling, open landscape with stone walls and river valley woodlands characterises its setting and gives rise to a strong, rural aspect.
10. Given the above, I find that the significance of the CA, insofar as it relates to this appeal, to be primarily related to the historic legibility of its agricultural origins and its vernacular architectural forms.
11. Pedley Fold Farmhouse was listed in 1967 and dates from the early 19th century. It comprises farm buildings and a converted coach house that were formerly associated with the nearby Vicarage. The main house is constructed from coursed, squared sandstone and has a graduated stone slate roof. It comprises a single, rectangular range which is linked to an agricultural outbuilding situated on higher ground to the rear. The linking structure is of more recent origin and comprises a single storey with an enclosed courtyard. Its roof has both flat and pitched roofed elements with the former partially obscuring the eastern roof slope of the converted coach house.
12. The outbuilding is constructed from similar materials and retains its agricultural character despite being linked to the main house. Its historic plan form is also evident from the open loft that extends the length of the building and the enclosed parlour at the southern end of the ground floor, where the main loft access is situated. A small lean-to adjoins the southern gable end of the outbuilding. Most of its original openings remain intact with some historic fabric persisting in the doorways of the outbuilding as well as in the front and first floor gable end windows of the main house.
13. Given the above, I find that the special interest of the listed building, insofar as it relates to this appeal, to be primarily associated with the legibility of the internal layout of both the main building and outbuilding and how this relates to their past use as well as the vernacular architecture and utilitarian character of these structures. Whilst no internal features were identified as being of

interest in the list description, listings are primarily for identification purposes and do not provide an exhaustive or complete description of the special interest. Each case must, in any event, be determined on its individual merits.

14. I observed from the plans and my site visit that the proposal would lead to highly inappropriate alterations that would result in the loss of historic fabric and the introduction of wholly inappropriate, alien features. This impact would be primarily, but not exclusively, related to the conversion of the outbuilding. This would be caused by the introduction of a new oriole window in the southern gable end, insertion of three roof lights on the eastern roof slope, the creation of a first floor glass-balustraded doorway and the replacement of two external doors.
15. Whilst shutters were present on the rear elevation of the outbuilding it is unlikely that they were part of the original fabric. This is because the hinges are embedded in window frames of more recent origin and the iron retaining hooks in the nearby wall are insubstantial and unlikely to have persisted over a prolonged period in such an exposed situation. Consequently, the use of shutters would add to the highly incongruent and unsympathetic treatment of this structure.
16. The appellant has indicated that the proposed first floor doorway reinstates a previous opening into what was previously a hay loft. Whilst I observed some disturbance of the stonework around the hopper, below the proposed insertion point, there was no visible evidence of disturbance immediately below the first floor opening. Furthermore, the opening had an undisturbed stone cill and lintel, as is the case for the other first floor openings that characterise this elevation.
17. The subdivision of the first floor would also obscure its former functional role as a hay loft despite the presence of glazed doors between the proposed office and en-suite bedroom. I also note the inappropriate use of oak internally which would not have been present in a building of this period given its diminutive, utilitarian status. As such these materials, as well as the use of joist hangers represent further incongruent, unsympathetic and harmful elements.
18. I now turn to the effect of the scheme on the main building. I accept that the proposed changes to the more recent linking structure would not affect any historic fabric and that the reinstatement of an original opening into the outbuilding would be of some benefit, despite being encapsulated within an internal space. I also accept that no historic fabric would be lost through the replacement of any window frames or the two doorways on the northern elevation of the linking structure and main house. However, insufficient information has been provided concerning the exact nature of these replacements and the historical justification for the specific designs that would be used.
19. I also find this to be the case for the proposed alteration of the floor level above the dining area and the changes in the partitioning of the first floor rooms. Whilst I accept the relatively recent origin of some of the first floor partitioning, it is not clear how the proposed changes would relate to the historic layout of the main building, particularly at first floor level. The reason for the stepped levels above the dining area is also unclear as is the potential impact of the proposed works on any historic fabric that may have been

retained. Whilst I observed lath and plaster in a lower, adjacent ceiling to one side of the dining area, this was inconclusive and a more thorough evaluation of significance is required given the extensive alteration of this dwelling.

20. Paragraph 128 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (the Framework) places a duty on applicants to describe the significance of any heritage assets that may be affected by a proposal. It goes on to advise that the level of detail should be sufficient to understand the potential impact on their significance. As a minimum requirement, heritage assets should be assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Whilst some of the features of the building are clearly of recent origin, the extent and complexity of alteration that has occurred over time requires a more detailed assessment. As I have no contrary evidence before me from a suitably qualified and accredited heritage specialist, I find the alleged absence of harm to the original fabric of the main building unsubstantiated and any attempt to understand how the proposal might affect elements of the original layout distinctly lacking.
21. Given the above, and in the absence of any substantiated evidence to the contrary I find that the proposal would fail to preserve the special interest of the listed building.
22. Despite the harm that would be caused to the listed building I do not find that the proposal would be detrimental to the character or appearance of the CA. This is because the proposed changes would have only limited visibility from the public domain and would not adversely affect its significance. Unlike listed buildings, the significance of a CA is dependent upon how it is more widely experienced. Case law¹ has established that proposals must be judged according to their effect on a conservation area as a whole. Given the above, I find that the proposal would not be detrimental to the CA.
23. Returning to the harm that would be caused to the listed building, paragraph 132 of the Framework advises that when considering the impact of development on the significance of designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to their conservation. It goes on to advise that significance can be harmed or lost through the alteration or destruction of those assets. Given the extent of the proposed works, I find the harm to be less than substantial in this instance but nevertheless of considerable importance and weight. Under such circumstances, paragraph 134 of the Framework advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, which includes the securing of optimal viable use of listed buildings.
24. The appellant is of the opinion that the proposal would be beneficial because it would help to create a more usable, modern family home. I accept that the differences in floor level are inconvenient and that the arrangement of space could be rationalised. However, the continued viable use of the appeal property as a residential dwelling is not dependent on the proposal as the building has an ongoing residential use that would not cease in its absence.
25. The appellant has drawn my attention to the improved 'continuity' of fenestration that would result from the more cohesive design and materials of the replacement doors and windows. However, this is not necessary to ensure continued habitation of the dwelling as the existing windows are not in a parlous condition. I acknowledge the benefit derived from the restoration of a

¹ South Oxfordshire DC v SSE & J Donaldson [1991] CO/1440/89

doorway to the outbuilding. However, this would not outweigh the harm that I have identified.

26. Given the above and in the absence of any defined public benefit, I conclude that the proposal would fail to preserve the special historic interest of the Grade II listed building. This would fail to satisfy the requirements of the Act and paragraph 134 of the Framework. It would also conflict with policies GSP3 and L3 of the Peak District National Park LDF Core Strategy DPD 2011 and saved policies LC4, LC6, LC8 and LH4 of the Peak District National Park Local Plan 2001.
27. These policies seek, among other things, to ensure that all development proposals: conserve heritage assets; demonstrate how listed buildings will be preserved and where possible enhanced; do not adversely affect the character of converted historic buildings; conserve the valued characteristics of buildings and the built environment and complement the style and traditions of local buildings; and do not detract from the character, appearance or amenity of the original building when it is extended or altered. As a result the proposal would not be in accordance with the development plan.

Other Matter

28. I acknowledge the discussions that have taken place to resolve the disputed issues prior to determination. However, such discussions are informal and the Council is entitled to reach a decision on the basis of all the available evidence or lack of it. Similarly, I must consider all the evidence before me in reaching my decision. Consequently, this matter carries little weight in the balance of this appeal.

Conclusion

29. For the above reasons and having regard to all other matters raised I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Roger Catchpole

INSPECTOR