
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 February 2017

by Michael Moffoot DipTP MRTPI DipMgt MCMI

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

Decision date: 23rd February 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/M9496/W/16/3160979

Land to the east of Taddington (Approx Grid Ref - 414849/371133) SK17 9UF

- 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 Steve Smith against the decision of the Peak District National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref: NP/DDD/0716/0602, dated 25 May 2016, was refused by notice dated 31 August 2016.
 - The development proposed is described as 'agricultural building retrospective'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The site address on the planning application form states 'Taddington, Derbyshire'. For clarity I have used the address on the decision notice together with the postcode.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the Peak District National Park and the Taddington Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site comprises a long, narrow rectangular field set in open countryside to the east of the village and adjacent to the Taddington Conservation Area. The disputed building lies at the southern end of the field with frontage and access to a secondary road which connects the village to the busy A6. The surrounding landscape is characterised by undulating open farmland rising to plateaux and a patchwork of strip fields and pastures contained by dry stone walls and mature trees, consistent with its 'Limestone Village Farmlands' landscape character type in the White Peak¹.
5. The footprint of the building is about 6.2m x 5.9m. It is enclosed on two sides by blockwork and vertical timber boarding under a profiled steel monopitch roof rising to some 3.2m. Railings enclose the other sides. At the time of my visit the building contained about six cattle. A tractor, various trailers, agricultural

¹ *Landscape Strategy and Action Plan of the Peak District Landscape Character Assessment (2009),*

machinery and equipment and silage bales were amongst the items sited on the adjoining hardstanding.

6. One of the statutory purposes of National Parks² is to conserve and enhance their natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage. National Park authorities also have a duty to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within their administrative areas. Paragraph 115 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* ('the Framework') states that great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty.
7. These objectives underpin relevant development plan policies I have been referred to. Policy LC13 of the Local Plan³ favours new agricultural buildings subject to, amongst other things, detailed design requirements regarding siting, screening, design, scale and local building traditions. Policy LC4 contains similar criteria in order to achieve a high standard of development which respects, conserves and where possible enhances the landscape, built environment and other valued characteristics of the area. Policies GSP1, GSP2, GSP3 and L1 of the Core Strategy⁴ include similar objectives which prioritise the conservation and enhancement of the National Park and its landscape character.
8. The building is of modest size and is located on lower lying land and partly screened by walling and trees. Nevertheless, its proximity to the road renders the structure highly prominent. It is also visible from a minor road to the south and an elevated public right of way beyond which follows the contours of the hillside. In addition, views of the building are possible from an elevated public footpath to the north of the A6, albeit at some distance and against a backdrop of trees and rising land.
9. I acknowledge that the building accords with a number of the siting and design guidelines in the Authority's SPG for agricultural development⁵. However, its squat proportions, shallow pitched roof and utilitarian design result in a structure that is wholly out of keeping with its sensitive and prominent rural setting, where agricultural buildings of a similar size in the wider area tend to be of a more vernacular design and appearance and employ more traditional materials. As such, the building is a discordant and intrusive feature which is harmful to the open agricultural landscape in this part of the National Park. The appellant's willingness to finish the blockwork walling in paint, render and dash or natural stone as advocated in the SPG does not overcome these concerns.
10. The building immediately adjoins the Conservation Area on the eastern approach to Taddington. Here, the setting of the Conservation Area is informed by open fields, stone walls, and mature trees flanking the road, which give way to built development comprising substantial two-storey dwellings and converted farm buildings. The rural approach to the village from the minor road to the south is also enhanced by this setting. Within this context, the subject building is an incongruous feature which draws the eye and detracts from the setting of the Conservation Area as a heritage asset.

² Environment Act 1995

³ *Peak District National Park Local Plan* (2001)

⁴ *Peak District National Park Local Development Framework: Core Strategy Development Plan Document* (2011)

⁵ *Supplementary Planning Guidance: Agricultural Developments in the Peak District National Park* (2003)

11. The Authority has also questioned the agricultural need for the building with reference to the SPG. The appellant advises that the holding comprises 8.18ha of owned and rented land in various parcels to the south and east of the village, and at the time of the planning application he had 13 cows (with two in calf) and a bull. He adds that the building is the only one on the holding and is required for TB testing, isolation of sick cattle and winter shelter for animals in accordance with a vet's recommendations.
12. Although this evidence satisfies a number of the requirements of Appendix 2 of the SPG, it does not include predicted building requirements by stock type or other usage and the stock density/hectare. Furthermore, whilst the building may be accessible and suitable to serve other land the appellant farms, there is limited evidence to show why this other land is less suitable in operational and landscape impact terms. Overall, I find the submitted information rather generalised and therefore of limited weight in support of the proposal. In any case, even if compelling justification were provided for the building in this location, it would not outweigh the harm arising from the proposal's failure to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the National Park.
13. I therefore conclude that the proposed development seriously harms the character and appearance of the Peak District National Park. As such, it conflicts with Policies LC4 and LC13 of the Local Plan, Policies GSP1, GSP2, GSP3 and L1 of the Core Strategy and paragraph 115 of the Framework. It also compromises the setting of the adjacent Conservation Area, the significance of which, as a designated heritage asset, should be safeguarded under the provisions of the Framework.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the proposal is unacceptable and the appeal should fail.

Michael Moffoot

Inspector