

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 March 2017

by S J Lee BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 24th March 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/M9496/D/16/3162214

Station House, Station Road, Upper Padley, Grindleford S32 2JA

- 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 Michael Clark against the decision of Peak District National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref NP/DDD/0616/0559, dated 17 June 2016, was refused by notice dated 16 August 2016.
 - The development proposed is the extension to existing workshop/store/office
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. I saw on my site visit that the extension had already been built in accordance with the submitted plans. The Authority treated the application as retrospective and I have also considered the appeal on this basis.
3. I am aware from the appellant's evidence that a separate application was made to the Authority in relation to the remainder of the building. The red line of the application and the submitted plans identify the whole site and all of the alterations made to the building as a whole. The officer's report also includes reference to the alterations made to the remainder of the building. However, I am satisfied from the appellant's submissions that the application related only to the flat roof side extension. For the avoidance of any doubt, it is only this element that I am considering in this appeal.
4. I have noted that in some correspondence, the appellant has signed their name Dr Michael Clark. However, on both the planning application form and appeal form Mr Michael Clark is used and thus this is the name I have used in the header above.

Main Issue

5. The main issue in this case is whether the development would preserve or enhance the Grindleford Station Conservation Area (GSCA).

Reasons

6. The appeal site relates to a flat roof side extension to a large stone outbuilding within the grounds of Station House. This was ostensibly built around twenty years ago as a garage, stable block and store. The site is within the GSCA.
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7. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of Conservation Areas. This is also reflected in Paragraph 131 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which states that in determining planning applications, the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets should be taken into account.
8. The analysis of the GSCA provided to me by the Authority splits the area into three distinct character areas. The site lies within the 'The Railway' area and includes a number of buildings and structures associated with the station itself. This includes the Station House, which has a character and style more closely related to its former function associated with the railway, than the more traditional rural style and character associated with the Peak District National Park. The significance of the area appears to lie in both its historic connection with the railway and the traditional built form and rural character of the National Park. While not particularly old, the outbuilding was clearly designed to reflect the appearance of a more traditional stone agricultural outbuilding, rather than as a domestic building.
9. The extension has been built onto and projects from a smaller flat roofed block that was set well back from the front building line. There is a small flat roof element on the opposite end of the building to the appeal site, but this is itself quite narrow. Neither this, nor the original feature provides any form of justification for what has been constructed, which is considerably larger in scale and prominence than what existed before. Notwithstanding any alterations that may have been made to the host building, the extension does not complement its overriding character. The large flat roof contrasts sharply with the dual-pitched roof design of the majority of the building and constitutes an unsympathetic addition that significantly detracts from the more traditional non-domestic character and appearance of the host.
10. From the public footpath running behind the site, only the top of the flat roof and roof lantern can be seen. The extension is also screened to an extent by both garden landscaping and the verdant nature of the landscape in the vicinity of the site. However, it can still be seen in glimpsed views from medium and longer distances, including from the bridge over the railway and lower parts of the access road leading to the station. The sharp contrast in character between extension and remainder of the building is noticeable even from a distance. The extension can be clearly seen from the access road passing by the front of the site leading to Midland Cottages. While this is essentially a private road serving the site and these dwellings, the somewhat incongruous nature of the extension would still be readily apparent to any passers-by. The screening does not, therefore, provide adequate mitigation or justification for the unsympathetic design.
11. The use of stone in the external walls matches the materials of the original building and is appropriate to the character of the wider area. However, I am concerned that the use of the brown uPVC for the large double doors and roof lantern neither reflects the local vernacular nor the use of traditional materials in the external walls of the extension.
12. I observed the use of similar materials in the fenestration of the remainder of the building. The appellant states that these were installed in 2013 but it is not

clear from the evidence whether these were authorised alterations. I have therefore given these little weight in my decision. The appellant has also drawn my attention to the use of uPVC in the conservatory of Station House. I understand this was the subject of a planning permission by the Authority. However, I have not been provided with the full details of this permission and thus do not know the context or justification for the Authority's approach. Moreover, the nature and character of the two buildings are significantly different and, as such, I am not persuaded that the use of this material in Station House justifies its use in this extension. However, even if I were to consider the materials used appropriate, this would not affect or outweigh my overriding concern that the style of the extension has resulted in an inappropriate and unsympathetic addition to the host building.

13. In conclusion, therefore, I find the development materially detracts from the character and appearance of the host building and that of the surrounding area. Consequently, the development fails to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the GSCA. Accordingly, there is conflict with Core Strategy¹ (CS) policies GSP3 and L3 and saved Local Plan² (LP) policies LC4, LC5 and LH4. These seek, amongst other things, development to respect, conserve and enhance valued characteristics of sites and buildings, conserve or enhance heritage assets, and to not detract from the character of original buildings.
14. While published prior to the Framework, there is a broad consistency in these policies in relation to heritage assets. However, at paragraph 132, the Framework states that, '[when] *considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification*'.
15. The conservation area is a designated heritage asset. The significance of the conservation area is harmed by the development proposed within its setting, for the reasons I have outlined. The extent of that harm is less than the 'substantial harm' referred to in Paragraph 133 of the Framework. Accordingly, Paragraph 134 applies. This states, '*Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use*'.
16. From the evidence before me, it appears the extension is being used as a study, workshop or office for the occupants of the site. No other benefits have been identified by the appellant. As such, any benefits that do exist appear to be purely private in nature and thus do not outweigh the harm to the heritage asset I have identified.

Other matters

17. The appellant has drawn my attention to other examples of flat roofed buildings in the area. However, I do not have the full details of these developments and

¹ Peak District National Park Core Strategy Development Plan Document – Adopted October 2011

² Peak District National Park – Local Plan – Adopted March 2001.

thus I cannot conclude that they represent direct parallels to the development before me. I also noted that some of the examples given are outside the Conservation Area, and thus would not be comparable to the appeal scheme. In any event, I have considered the appeal on its own merits based on the evidence before me and my own observations of the area.

18. It appears that there has previously been a flat roof extension to the Station House itself, but this no longer exists. As such, I do not consider that this provides any justification or design context for the extension of the outbuilding, nor does it mean that a flat roof extension is acceptable in principle on the site.
19. The Council have referred to CS Policy RT2 and LP Policy LH6 in their decision notice. These relate specifically to the change of use of buildings and thus are not relevant to the consideration of this appeal. I have also not been provided with a copy of the Authority's design guide referred to in the decision notice. However, in light of my conclusions in relation to other development plan policies and the Framework, I do not consider this would alter my decision.

Conclusion

20. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

S J Lee

INSPECTOR