

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 March 2017

by Graeme Robbie BA(Hons) BPI MRTPI

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

Decision date: 20 April 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/E2734/W/16/3165451
Marsland Barn, Back Lane, Sharow HG4 5BP

- 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 & Mrs D Brown against the decision of Harrogate Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 6.32.42.G.FUL, dated 13 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 7 September 2016.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a detached garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The appellants have drawn my attention to a proposed housing allocation and revisions to the development limits for Sharow as set out in the emerging Harrogate Local Plan (LP). However, this document has yet to be subject to formal public consultation or submitted for examination and in accordance with paragraph 216 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) this limits the weight that can be attached to its provisions in coming to my decision.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character, appearance and setting of Marsland Barn, and Sharow village, and on the character of the surrounding countryside.

Reasons

4. The appeal site comprises a rectangular parcel of land located to the north of Marsland Barn, part of a group of converted former agricultural buildings located at the eastern end of the village of Sharow. The site is enclosed by a stone wall on three sides, and a post-and-rail fence on the fourth side, separating the site from the driveway, parking and turning area associated with Marsland Barn and the adjoining residential property. Although the group of buildings lie within the Sharow's development limits, the appeal site lies in the open countryside beyond.
 5. A steep embankment within the site encircles a deep depression in the land, within which a brick headwall and outlet pipe are clearly visible. I am advised that the site was previously laid out as a surface water drainage lagoon in connection with the residential conversion of the former barns to residential units in 2007. I note that the Council have not disputed the appellants'
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- submissions that, despite the lagoon having been created, later highways drainage improvements have subsequently rendered it redundant. At the time of my visit the bottom of the depression was dry with little evidence of water having stood here for any length of time.
6. The appeal site lies within a landscape described in the Council's Landscape Character Assessment¹ (LCA) as 'East of Ripon Farmland', a rolling, open landform of arable fields beyond the main settlements which include Sharow. Indeed, Sharow is noted as being particularly sensitive to further development and extension where and the LCA aims to integrate development with landscape pattern to ensure that new residential development respects both vernacular and settlement pattern.
 7. The proposed garage would be sited within the depression at the base of the former drainage lagoon whilst the grassed flat roof of the proposed garage would sit below the level of the embankment top. Although relatively large providing garaging for up to four vehicles, its presence would be largely unnoticed within the landscape from the more open and largely uninterrupted vantage points from Dishforth Road and Copt Hewick Lane, across the fields to the north and east respectively, and from the path that continues from the end of Back Lane, to west.
 8. However, the southern side of the existing embankment would be largely removed in order to create a sloping driveway entrance to the garage block. Here, the neatly contained parking area for Marsland Barn, and access to the adjoining property would be opened up by the removal of the existing post-and-rail fence and embankment. Whereas the inwardly-focused form of development at Marsland Barn is presently complemented by the neatly contained parking area and access immediately to its north, the expanded residential curtilage around the proposed garage would be a somewhat sprawling addition to what is currently a limited but well defined area.
 9. Moreover, the flank elevation of the proposed garage would be clearly and immediately visible from the end of Back Lane. Notwithstanding the visual background to the garage's flank elevation provided by the remaining embankment sides, the substantial gap between the existing group of buildings and the proposed garage would be such that it would read as a clearly separate structure incongruously detached from the otherwise well contained group of buildings. This would blur what I found to be an otherwise clear distinction between the built up extent of Sharow and the open countryside beyond.
 10. Thus, I conclude that the proposed garage and extended residential curtilage would be an incongruous detached building and a sprawling extension to the existing, neatly defined extent of Marsland Barn. As such, it would relate poorly to the main group of buildings of which Marsland Barn is one, to other properties on Back Lane and to Sharow village as a whole, causing harm to their setting, character and appearance. This would be contrary to Harrogate District Local Plan (HDLP) policies C2, C16, C18 and HD20 and Harrogate Local Development Framework: Core Strategy (CS) policies SG4 and EQ2. Together, these policies seek to ensure that development respects the character and appearance of the surrounding area and buildings, and the settlements in which they are situated.

¹ Harrogate District Landscape Character Assessment (2004)

11. I have been referred to a draft housing allocation on land immediately to the west and northwest of the appeal site and to a revised development limit for Sharow as set out in the emerging LP. However, as has been confirmed above, the LP is at a very early stage and is not due for formal public consultation until later in the summer. I therefore give the LP very little weight and I have, in any event, considered the proposed development in the context of the surrounding landscape as it currently exists.
12. I have noted the reasons behind the proposal, including the appellants' stated desire to provide additional amenity space to resolve an indicated shortfall in such provision and to provide a garage and improved access for the appellant's three cars. However, the basis for the calculations regarding amenity space has not been provided, nor has the significance of the figure set out in submissions been explained. I have not been directed towards any development plan policy to support the claim that the existing amenity space associated with Marsland Barn falls short of acceptable standards and I therefore give this matter limited weight. Neither this, nor the other matters that I have noted are sufficient to justify the proposal in the face of the harm that I have identified above.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons set out, and having considered all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Graeme Robbie

INSPECTOR