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## Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 14 March 2017

**by Roger Catchpole DipHort BSc(hons) PhD MCIEEM**

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

**Decision date: 28 April 2017**

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### **Appeal A: APP/H1033/W/16/3162348**

**Appletree Barn, Whittle Fold, Whittle Bank Road, New Mills SK22 4EF**

- 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 and Mrs Ash against the decision of High Peak Borough Council.
  - The application Ref: HPK/2016/0299, dated 23 May 2016, was refused by notice dated 11 August 2016.
  - The development proposed is an extension to an existing building to provide additional living accommodation and entrance and internal alterations to remove stud partition walls.
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### **Appeal B: APP/H1033/Y/16/3162352**

**Appletree Barn, Whittle Fold, Whittle Bank Road, New Mills SK22 4EF**

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
  - The appeal is made by Mr and Mrs Ash against the decision of High Peak Borough Council.
  - The application Ref: HPK/2016/0327, dated 23 May 2016, was refused by notice dated 11 August 2016.
  - The development proposed is an extension to an existing building to provide additional living accommodation and entrance and internal alterations to remove stud partition walls.
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## **Decisions**

### *Appeal A*

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### *Appeal B*

2. The appeal is dismissed and listed building consent is refused for works described as an extension to an existing building to provide additional living accommodation and entrance and internal alterations to remove stud partition walls.

## **Preliminary Matters**

3. 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).

## **Main Issues**

4. As the appeal site is within the Green Belt the main issues are:

- whether the proposal is inappropriate development for the purposes of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (the Framework) and the High Peak Local Plan 2016 (LP);
- the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area bearing in mind the special attention that should be paid to the desirability of preserving a Grade II listed building, Three Barns to Bower House Farm, and the extent to which it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Whitle Conservation Area.

## **Reasons**

5. The appeal building is situated in an isolated hamlet in the open countryside to the north of New Mills. The building is one of three barns that have been converted for residential use. The proposal comprises a single storey extension to the principal, western elevation of the property. The roof would have a single pitch to give the appearance of a lean-to structure that would be joined to the main building via a glazed link. It would extend across just over a third of the principal elevation of the building and have a living, 'green roof'. A new stairway and first floor bedroom would be created above the existing living room which is currently the full height of the building. Two new windows would be inserted in the north-western gable end and a new rooflight would also be inserted in the north-eastern roof slope.

### *Green Belt*

6. Paragraphs 89-90 of the Framework set out those categories of development which may be regarded as not inappropriate, subject to certain conditions. One of the exceptions is the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building. An original building is defined in Annex 2 of the Framework as a building as it existed on 1 July 1948 or as it was originally constructed if it was built after this date.
7. In this instance I note from the cartographic evidence that the existing projection on the south eastern elevation is part of the original building. The Council have noted that the proposal would lead to a 17% increase in the footprint of the building and that this would not be in excess of a 30% 'rule of thumb' that it uses to determine whether or not additions to buildings in the Green Belt are disproportionate.
8. Consequently, a valid exception under paragraph 89 of the Framework and policy EQ4 of the LP is present and I therefore conclude that the proposal would not amount to inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

### *Character and appearance*

9. The Whitle Conservation Area (CA) was designated in 1994 and is tightly defined around the hamlet which occupies an elevated and highly prominent position with expansive views of the surrounding countryside and nearby settlements. The surrounding agricultural land encapsulates the settlement giving rise to a strong agricultural character which is further re-enforced by the

architectural form of its buildings, dry stone walls and the informal surface of White Bank Road. The predominant building material is millstone grit with roof materials mostly comprising either stone slate or Welsh slate. This consistent use of materials gives rise to a highly cohesive and pleasing appearance. Although the majority of buildings have been converted to residential use, its agricultural origins remain clearly apparent from the dominant vernacular architectural form of its buildings. Given the above, I find that the significance of the CA, insofar as it relates to this appeal, to be primarily related to its agricultural character and the authenticity of its vernacular architecture.

10. The appeal building was listed in 1977 and is one of three barns dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries that were formerly part of a farmstead associated with Bower House Farm. The building has coursed gritstone walls and a graduated stone slate roof on the main range which has a rectangular plan form. A lean-to extension, with a cat-slide, Welsh slate roof, projects from the rear elevation. Internally, the conversion has retained original roof trusses and purlins as well as part of an original central partition. The internal subdivision and adaptation of the central partition is such that little of the original layout remains. Given the above, I find that the special interest of the listed building, insofar as it relates to this appeal, to be primarily related to its external vernacular architectural form, traditional materials and the legibility of its past use.
11. I observe from the plans and my site visit that the proposal would cause significant disruption to the principal elevation of the building, introduce starkly contrasting alien materials and partially obscure an original door opening. It would also erode the historic fabric and legibility of the building through the introduction of three new openings, as shown on the elevational drawings. Bearing in mind the number of additional openings that have already been created, this would lead to an unacceptable cumulative impact. It would also lead to a loss of historic fabric which would be significant as far as the roof light is concerned because of the large size of the stone tiles nearer to the eaves. This would disrupt the graduated tiling pattern and reduce the extent of uninterrupted roof slope, as can be seen from the effect of the existing roof lights. This would lead to an unacceptable, cumulative impact on the listed building as a whole.
12. I accept that the glass connector would enable the original form and fabric of the building to be appreciated and clearly delineate the new structure as an honest addition. However, its massing would nevertheless cause significant disruption to the simple rectangular form of the principal elevation and lead to a considerably more restricted view of an original doorway. The extensive glazing and living 'green roof' would also be highly incongruent when viewed against the backdrop of the building itself as well as the wider CA. This impact would be clearly apparent when entering the CA from the footpath to the southwest to the detriment of this heritage asset. I acknowledge the findings of the visual impact assessment but do not find the zone of influence realistic given that more than just the appeal property would be clearly visible from the footpath. Moreover, the connector would have a higher degree of prominence and incongruity during the hours of darkness when the internal lighting would highlight this structure.
13. The appellant has suggested that a condition requiring the use of stone tiles on the proposed extension would be acceptable and that the new openings in the

north-western gable end would not be harmful given their limited visibility. I have considered the use of a condition, but bearing in mind the proposal as a whole, I do not find that this would adequately mitigate all of the adverse effects and make it acceptable in planning terms. Turning to the visibility of the proposed gable end windows, listed buildings are safeguarded for their inherent architectural and historic interest irrespective of whether or not public views of the building can be gained. As such the limited visibility of the proposed change carries little weight.

14. Given the above, I find that the proposal would fail to preserve the special interest of the listed building and the significance of the CA. Consequently, I give this harm considerable importance and weight in the planning balance of this appeal.
15. 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 disruption that would be caused, 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.
16. The appellant is of the opinion that the proposal would be beneficial because of it would meet the needs of a growing family and enable the installation of a ground source heat pump that would help to reduce the carbon footprint of the property. However, the continued viable use of the building 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. Whilst I accept that carbon reduction is a public benefit and that this weighs in favour of the proposal, it would not be sufficient to outweigh the harm to either the listed building or the CA.
17. Given the above I conclude that, on balance, the proposal would fail to preserve the special historic interest of the Grade II listed building and the character and appearance of the White Conservation Area. This would fail to satisfy the requirements of the Act, paragraph 134 of the Framework and conflict with policies EQ3, EQ6 and EQ7 of the LP that seek, among other things, to ensure that all development contributes positively to an area's character, history and identity and protects designated heritage assets as well as the appearance and integrity of the historic and cultural environment. As a result the proposal would not be in accordance with the development plan.

### **Other Matter**

18. I acknowledge the pre-application advice that the Council provided in support of the glazed link. However, advice is just that and the Council is entitled to reach a decision on the basis of all the available evidence. 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**

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

*Roger Catchpole*

INSPECTOR