
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 April 2017

by Martin Andrews MA(Planning) BSc(Econ) DipTP & DipTP(Dist) MRTPI

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

Decision date: 10th May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/J9497/D/17/3169583

Lower Drewston Barn, Moretonhampstead, Newton Abbot, Devon TQ13 8QQ

- 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 Ben Jones against the decision of the Dartmoor National Park Authority ('the NPA').
 - The application, Ref. 0564/16, dated 12 October 2016, was refused by notice dated 13 December 2016.
 - The development proposed is a two bedroom extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the extension on the character and appearance of the existing historic farmstead.

Reasons

3. In its refusal of the appeal application the NPA's has raised two main points of concern: (i) that the linkage between the two main buildings (the Barn Conversion and the Annex) formed by the proposed addition would not reflect the historic character of the farmstead, and (ii) that the design and external materials would be unsympathetic to the buildings and their setting.
 4. In respect of point (i), the linkage, the NPA argues that although there is evidence on historic maps of buildings in this location, their footprints and form are not reflected in the layout of the proposed scheme given its single rectilinear building. However, the 1884 OS map in the appellant's report prepared by Southwest Archaeology shows a strong link, albeit in the form of somewhat irregular building footprints, such that the principle of reinstating a horseshoe shaped courtyard with linked buildings on three sides is an historic feature that could be reasonably reinstated and carried forward.
 5. On that particular basis I see no objection to a new building roughly of the size and on the site proposed, especially one that incorporates the existing granite wall, as it would reasonably reflect the historic layout of the farmstead.
 6. However, turning to point (ii), the 2011 Dartmoor National Park's Design Guide chapter: 'Converting traditional farm buildings' advises of a need to work within
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the existing envelope of a building, with extensions not usually acceptable. The appeal proposal is an extension rather than a conversion. Whilst I consider that reinstating the third side of the original farmstead courtyard would justify an exception being made to this part of the Design Guide, I also consider that substantive references to its historic form are essential not only in the layout as previously mentioned but also in the design and materials.

7. In this regard the appellant has referred to the Design Guide's 'Sustainability-Contemporary Design including the comment '*Creating a clear visual contrast between historic fabric and a new building is a well established and appropriate response*'. However, the following paragraph advises that '*Contemporary Design needs to sit comfortably and complement the existing building and landscape*'.
8. In my view, the proposed building through its mostly overt contemporary approach excessively dilutes the historic agricultural character of the farmstead. I recognise that in some respects it would pick up on the more modern elements of the two main buildings. However, I nonetheless consider that in order to provide adequate historic references to the original farmstead and to be at ease with the adjoining buildings and landscape there needs to be more of a balance between traditional and modern elements.
9. The NPA has referred to large amounts of glazing, including the fully glazed links to the existing buildings, and to the balcony. These are examples of features that in my view do not strike the appropriate balance between traditional and contemporary. I appreciate that the building is being designed for living space and there is therefore an aspiration to make the most of the views over the open countryside to the north east. However, as an essentially new building rather than a conversion and therefore an exception to Design Guidance and policy, I consider that its character and appearance should lean rather more to reinstating the historic farmstead than creating a contemporary element with 'a clear visual contrast'.
10. Overall, I conclude that in its current form the proposal would not adequately preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the existing farmstead and would not sufficiently accord with Policies COR1, COR3, COR4, COR5, DMD1b, DMD3, DMD7, DMD8; DMD24; the NPA Design Guidance and Sections 7 & 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.
11. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

Martin Andrews

INSPECTOR