
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 April 2017

by Michael Moffoot DipTP MRTPI DipMgt MCMi

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

Decision date: 16 May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/B2355/W/17/3167307

Coldwells Cottage, Roundhill Road, Haslingden, Rossendale BB4 5TU

- 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 Bridgeman against the decision of Rossendale Borough Council.
 - The application Ref: 2016/0404, dated 1 March 2016, was refused by notice dated 22 November 2016.
 - The development proposed is change of use of domestic store into a dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site comprises a rectangular parcel of land containing a single-storey building of block construction under a concrete tiled roof. It is accessed from the B6236 Roundhill Road via a lane which also serves farmland and a small cluster of dwellings to the immediate south-west of the site and a timber shed to the north. The surrounding area is characterised by extensive tracts of open countryside punctuated by sporadic housing, scattered farmsteads and agricultural buildings.
4. The subject building is of modest scale and simple form and construction, and it sits unobtrusively within its rural setting. There is a large access door to the south-west side of the building and smaller openings to the other three sides. The proposal includes the erection of a single-storey extension to the north-west side to provide additional living accommodation. All walls would be externally clad in coursed rubble stone and the roofs finished in natural slate. New windows and doors would be introduced to all elevations. Parking and garden areas would be formed to three sides of the building and contained by field fencing. The scheme seeks to address concerns regarding the visual impact of a previous proposal which was dismissed at appeal¹.

¹ Ref: APP/B2355/W/15/3003826

5. The extension would be to the rear of the building and set back from the lane. Furthermore, it would not be excessive in respect of size; complying with guidance in the adopted *Conversion and Re-Use of Buildings in the Countryside Supplementary Planning Document* (SPD) which restricts extensions to 30% of the volume of the original building to be converted.
6. However, the proposal would result in a building which would be significantly different to the existing one in terms of form and proportions, and the impact would be compounded by numerous new openings to the elevations together with three rooflights. The unassuming form and rustic character of this simple agricultural building would be replaced by an overtly domestic structure. The associated residential curtilage, whilst smaller than that proposed in the previous scheme, would inevitably add to this residential character with parked vehicles, hardsurfacing, washing lines, garden furniture and other domestic trappings. The use of traditional materials to the external faces of the building and the introduction of tree planting and boundary fencing would not satisfactorily mitigate this impact.
7. The site is in open countryside and the proposal would be clearly visible from the lane and other public rights of way on elevated land to the north and west of the site. It would also be prominent from routes to the south. From these vantage points it would be an incongruous feature at variance with the rural landscape in which the building is located.
8. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would seriously harm the character and appearance of the area. As such, it would be contrary to Policies 1, 23 and 24 of the Core Strategy² which, amongst other things, seek to enhance the character of the District and its landscape, and promote high quality design which contributes positively to local identity. It would also conflict with similar objectives in the *National Planning Policy Framework* ('the Framework') and the SPD.

Other Matters

9. Whilst the Council may not be able to demonstrate a five-year supply of housing land, the proposal's very limited contribution of one additional dwelling to the potential provision of housing in the District does not outweigh the harmful effects of the development.
10. I acknowledge that the appeal proposal would involve the re-use of a redundant building and local services and facilities are accessible from the site. However, the scheme would not comprise sustainable development as described in the Framework as it would materially harm the character and appearance of the area in conflict with the environmental role described in paragraph 7 of the document.

Conclusion

11. For the above reasons and notwithstanding the absence of local objections, I conclude that the proposal is unacceptable and the appeal should fail.

Michael Moffoot

Inspector

² Core Strategy Development Plan Document: *The Way Forward (2011-2026)*