
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 May 2017

by Gareth Wildgoose BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

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

Decision date: 2 June 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/M9496/D/17/3174189

Lilac Cottage, Bankside, Bonsall DE4 2AX

- 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 B Ward against the decision of Peak District National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref NP/DDD/1216/1220, dated 9 December 2016, was refused by notice dated 6 February 2017.
 - The development proposed is demolition of attached outbuilding and conservatory to be replaced by two storey side and rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character and appearance of Bonsall Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. Bonsall Conservation Area consists of two distinct parts of the rural settlement. The larger part is wholly within the neighbouring Derbyshire Dales District and consists of the historic core of Bonsall arranged as largely ribbon development along High Street, Church Street and Yeoman Street. Those areas consist of predominantly residential buildings and the intermittent presence of commercial, agricultural and religious buildings set within a rural hinterland. The smaller part of the Conservation Area comprises ribbon development located on higher ground to the west on a steeply sloped hillside, where the Peak District National Park boundary runs along Bankside and Moor Lane covering properties to its west and south, including Lilac Cottage.
 4. Lilac Cottage is a two storey detached dwelling with a single storey side outrigger set at a lower level linked by a dry stone wall that wraps around the front. Although previously altered via a 2 storey rear extension and a modern rear conservatory, it has maintained its rural character through traditional limestone walls and clay tiled roofs, detailing, linear plan form and side gable roof visible from Bankside and more distant views on lower ground within the Conservation Area. Due to the steep slope, the ribbon development along Bankside, where the appeal site is located, consists of more dispersed groups of buildings than other parts of the Conservation Area with a characteristic transition of building heights and orientations due to differences in land levels. Both individually and as a group with neighbouring properties, Lilac Cottage
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makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area emphasising this relationship between topography, historic settlement character and form.

5. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. Paragraph 131 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) requires that account be taken of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. Paragraph 132 of the Framework states that when considering the impact of a proposal on the significance of designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.
6. The proposal would involve the demolition of the modest side outbuilding and replacement with a side extension that is described as two storeys. However, its appearance would be three storeys at the front due to its siting where Lilac Cottage is considerably higher than Bankside which steeply slopes downward as it curves around the property. The extension would incorporate only a minimal step down from the ridge of the main roof and a minimal set back from the front building line. Consequently, its resultant scale, bulk and massing would be viewed as a dominant addition on the side elevation when viewed from public vantage points, such as roads and public footpaths. From those perspectives, the three storey appearance of the extension would appear incongruous and of incompatible scale relative to the host property. The extension would also disrupt the transition of building heights between Lilac Cottage and the neighbouring Westbury that is currently complemented by the subservient scale and form of the attached outbuilding.
7. The replacement of the existing rear conservatory with a two storey rear extension with a linking flat roof section would be less visible from Bankside due to the position of Westbury which would largely screen the glazed sections at ground floor level. However, the upper floor and roof of the extension would be visible from other public vantage points due to the elevated position of Lilac Cottage. When taken together with the side extension and an existing two storey rear extension, the cumulative effect would subsume the original profile of the building resulting in a dwelling of disproportionate scale, bulk and massing compared to those surrounding. Furthermore, the introduction of a secondary gable feature and a flat roof section would result in a relationship with the original roof that would appear incompatible. Consequently, the extensions would be viewed as dominant and incongruous additions to the existing property. The use of matching materials would not mitigate the harmful effect upon the character and appearance of the host building and its relationship to those surrounding.
8. In reaching the above findings, I have taken into account that there are examples of three storey buildings in Bonsall which I observed during my visit. However, the relationship of those buildings to surrounding properties, topography and the character of the Conservation Area is different to the proposal before me. The appellants have also referred to an example of a flat roof dormer that is visible from the highway and I observed a number of other alterations such as extensions and installation of solar panels to roofs, including to neighbouring properties. However, the particular circumstances which led to

those extensions and alterations are not before me. In any case, I do not consider that the presence of those examples in the local area should justify a further erosion of the character of individual properties or the Conservation Area. I have determined this appeal based on its own merits.

9. The harm caused would be significant in terms of the host property and the immediate surroundings, but less than substantial to the significance of Bonsall Conservation Area as a whole given its different character areas. In such circumstances, paragraph 134 of the Framework requires that the less than substantial harm be weighed against any public benefits.
10. The public benefits suggested are the provision of suitable accommodation for a growing family and visits from an elderly parent, addressing issues relating to damp on the south gable and improving energy efficiency. I understand and sympathise with the appellants' wishes to improve the living accommodation for their family in those respects. However, the public benefits do not outweigh the great weight given to the conservation of Bonsall Conservation Area and the less than substantial harm to its significance which I have identified.
11. I conclude that the development would have a harmful effect upon and, therefore, fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Bonsall Conservation Area. The proposal would conflict, therefore, with Policies GSP1, GSP2, GSP3 and L3 of the Peak District National Park Core Strategy, adopted October 2011 and Saved Policies LC4, LH4 and LC5 of the Peak District National Park Local Plan, adopted March 2001, together with the associated guidance in the Peak District National Park Detailed Design Guide - Alterations & Extensions Supplementary Planning Document. When considered together the policies seek to ensure new development is of high quality design which conserves the character of National Park settlements and preserves or enhances the historic significance of designated heritage assets, including conservation areas. The policy aims are consistent with the Framework.

Other Matters

12. I have taken into account that a letter of support was received from Bonsall Parish Council, but the consultation response does not outweigh the harm identified.
13. The National Park Authority have indicated that the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on the living conditions of occupiers of neighbouring properties and no objections in terms of highway safety have been offered. Based upon the evidence before me and my observations of the site and its surroundings, I have no reason to take a different view. There would be no loss of privacy or outlook to surrounding dwellings due to the position of extensions, windows and respective separation distances, whilst existing parking provision would be unaffected. However, the absence of concern in those respects is a neutral factor.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons set out above and having taken all other matters into account, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Gareth Wildgoose

INSPECTOR