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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 June 2017

**by Alison Partington BA (Hons) MA MRTPI**

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

**Decision date: 7<sup>th</sup> July 2017**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/E2340/W/17/3172168**

**Letcliffe Farm, Manchester Road, Barnoldswick BB18 5HE**

- 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 Michael and Mrs Dawn Wade against the decision of Pendle Borough Council.
  - The application Ref 16/0760/FUL, dated 24 November 2016, was refused by notice dated 1 February 2017.
  - The development proposed is the demolition of existing garage and stable block and creation of new two storey dwelling with attached double garage within curtilage of the existing house.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Main Issue

2. The main issue in the appeal is whether or not the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of Calf Hill and Gillians Conservation Area.

### Reasons

3. The appeal site lies within Calf Hill and Gillians Conservation Area. S72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires special attention to be had to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of a conservation area.
4. The conservation area covers a large area of predominantly open, rural land to the south west of the town which reflects the early development of the town around agriculture and weaving. Whilst the houses situated on an elevated position along Manchester Road reflect the growing prosperity of the town, the *Calf Hill and Gillians Conservation Area, Barnoldswick Appraisal of Special Interest and Character (March 2005)* (CAA) indicates that the host property and the attached cottages are examples of how many of the farms supplemented their income through weaving. Therefore, I agree with the Council that the significance of this part of the conservation area lies in its open rural character, together with the links to the weaving industry shown in the small vernacular weaver's cottages.
5. The appeal site forms part of the large side garden of Letcliffe Farmhouse, and is occupied in part by a large detached garage and a smaller stable block. The wider garden area is open in nature, although there are a number of trees and

shrubs along the boundaries especially to Letcliffe Lane and Letcliffe Park. The scale, footprint and mass of the proposed dwelling would be greater than the existing buildings on the site. As such, the proposal would erode some of the open character of the site and the contribution it makes towards the open and rural character of the conservation area. Nevertheless, the plans show the residential curtilage around the property would be limited in size, and much of the wider garden /paddock area would continue to make a positive contribution to the open character of the conservation area.

6. The appellant has stated that the design of the dwelling has sought to reflect its rural location. The proposed two storey dwelling would have a large attached double garage at the side. Whilst this has been set back from the front elevation, and incorporated into the dwelling by a catslide roof, the width and mass of this element would make it a disproportionate element of the dwelling. As such, it would appear as a dominant rather than a subservient feature on the dwelling.
7. Although I did observe a farm with a catslide roof on Manchester Road, the CAA does not indicate that such roofs are a specific feature of the rural buildings in the area. Moreover, the numerous roof lights within this large roof plane would make it an overly dominant and obtrusive feature on the dwelling, to the detriment of the character and appearance of the area.
8. I accept that random window openings are a feature of the traditional properties in the area. However, although proposed to incorporate characteristic deep reveals, the proposed dwelling contains a confusing mixture of window designs, some with a strong horizontal emphasis, and others with a clear vertical emphasis. Combined with the significant number of openings, this would give the main elevations a cluttered and incongruous appearance, that would be out of keeping with the simple vernacular of traditional cottages, and which would not respect the distinctiveness of the conservation area.
9. Whilst it has been argued that there would be limited visibility of the dwelling from the road, the relatively open nature of the land around the site means that it would be visible in places along Letcliffe Lane, as well as from the adjacent park, and from the public bridleway along Hodge Lane to the south of the site. Furthermore, irrespective of visibility, developments within a conservation area still need to secure a high standard of design that are compatible with the special characteristics of the area.
10. All in all, I consider that the proposed development would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of Calf Hill and Gillians Conservation Area. Accordingly, it would conflict with Policies ENV1 and ENV2 of the *Local Plan for Pendle Core Strategy (adopted December 2015)* which seek to ensure that developments make a positive contribution to the protection, enhancement, conservation and interpretation of the natural and historic environment, and have a high quality of design that is informed and reflects the history and development of a place. Having regard to paragraph 134 of the *National Planning Policy Framework*, whilst the harm caused to the conservation area would be less than substantial, there are no public benefits which would outweigh the harm caused.

11. I note that the appellants undertook pre-application discussions with the Council, and that the design sought to reflect the advice received from Officers and contained within the *Conservation Area Design and Development Guidance Supplementary Planning Document (adopted August 2008)*. However, for the reasons set out above, I agree with the Council that the appeal scheme would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area.

#### *Other Matters*

12. It has been highlighted that Manchester Road is a bus route, that the site is within walking distance of the town centre, and that the dwelling would be built to all the relevant sustainability standards. These are matters that favour the proposal but they do not outweigh the harm I have identified it would cause to the conservation area.
13. The appellant has argued that since the conservation area was designated there has been considerable new development both in and adjacent to it. However, I have not been directed to any specific examples, and the Council have indicated that since it was designated there have been no significant developments within the conservation area. I have in any case determined the appeal on its own merits.

#### **Conclusion**

14. For the reasons set out above, I conclude the appeal should be dismissed.

*Alison Partington*

INSPECTOR