
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 June 2017

by Beverley Doward BSc BTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 20th July 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/M9496/W/17/3173151

Horseshoe Cottage, Back Lane, Alstonefield, Ashbourne, Derbyshire, DE6 2FW

- 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 Ms Mandy Turley against the decision of Peak District National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref NP/SM/0716/0731, dated 27 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 17 October 2016.
 - The development proposed is described as "In order to provide a self sufficient and sustainable dwelling there needs to be sufficient storage for the battery store away from the cottage to support the recently approved Solar panels and back up generator. It is proposed to erect a small store situated to the East of the cottage next to the existing stone wall which is to remain. A South facing pitched roof is proposed in order to gain maximum sunlight if Solar thermal is to be used. The store will be built using naturally greying timber in order to naturally blend with its surroundings with a grey roof. The store is kept low lying in order to prevent a change in the landscape and does not rise more than 1.8 metres above the stone wall within the garden of Horseshoe Cottage."
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of a store at Horseshoe Cottage, Back Lane, Alstonefield, Ashbourne, Derbyshire, DE6 2FW in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref NP/SM/0716/0731 , dated 27 July 2016, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Location Plan Drawing No. 2327.SK 37A and the Existing Site Plan Drawing No. 2327.MA.15C, Proposed Store Building Drawing No. 2327.MA.16C and Proposed Site Plan Drawing No. 2327.MA.17C contained within the Design and Access Statement.

Application for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Ms Mandy Turley against the Peak District National Park Authority. This application is the subject of a separate decision.

Procedural Matter

3. The description of development in the heading above is taken from the planning application form. The description of development in my formal

decision reflects that used on the Authority's decision notice and removes those aspects of that stated on the planning application form that are superfluous.

Main Issues

4. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the existing cottage and its setting and the surrounding landscape.

Reasons

5. The appeal site is a parcel of land which lies outside the village envelope of Alstonefield in the countryside. It extends to about 0.04ha and is bounded by stone walls. The site is accessed off Back Lane, a single track lane which provides access from the village. There are fields on all sides of the appeal site and the nearest other residential properties are about 120m away.
6. The Authority's Landscape Strategy and Action Plan indicates that the appeal site lies within an area of landscape which is characterised as limestone village farmland. This consists of limestone villages and clusters of stone dwellings within a pastoral farmland enclosed by limestone walls with a repeating pattern of narrow strip fields and scattered boundary trees and tree groups around buildings.
7. The site contains a dwelling which the evidence indicates was previously a barn/blacksmith's workshop that was granted permission for conversion to a dwelling in December 2015. The Authority indicates that the justification for approval of the conversion was to provide a simple vernacular building of some merit with a beneficial use through a sympathetic conversion within the confines of the building. However, the building is not listed nor is it within a conservation area. Furthermore, there is nothing in the evidence before me to indicate that the Authority has identified it as a non-designated heritage asset. At the time of my site visit there was also a container and two small timber outbuildings on the site.
8. The dwelling on the site is single storey in height and is built of stone with a tiled roof. There are a number of solar panels on the south facing side of the roof which sit flush with the roof tiles. Although the building is simple in form and detailing it has the appearance of a small domestic cottage rather than a traditional agricultural building/field barn. The appeal proposal comprises a single storey detached timber outbuilding which the appellant indicates would be used to accommodate the plant and equipment required to operate the renewable sources of energy being used on the site. It would provide storage space for batteries, a back-up generator and maintenance equipment to power the water supply and sewage treatment plant for the dwelling.
9. The outbuilding would measure about 5m x 3m x 2.6m and would be sited to the east of the dwelling close to the rear boundary wall of the garden, in a similar position to that currently occupied by the container. It would be smaller, in terms of footprint and height, than the cottage which is itself very modest in size. It would also be set around 6.5m to 6.8m away from the cottage. Accordingly, the outbuilding would not be overly large and would be subordinate to the cottage in terms of its size and massing. Its siting some distance away from the cottage would further ensure that it would not dominate the adjacent cottage and the use of a different building material, in this case, timber would ensure that the

outbuilding would not visually compete with the cottage thereby reinforcing the primacy of it.

10. I appreciate that one of the particular characteristics of the local vernacular is the use of stone as a building material. However, I saw from my site visit that it is also quite common to see timber outbuildings in the area. There are already two small timber outbuildings on the eastern boundary of the appeal site, one of which from the evidence appears to have previously been used as a store/chicken coop. There are also a number of other timber outbuildings within the locality which are visible from the wider rural landscape within the vicinity of the appeal site. Accordingly, I consider that the proposed building material for the outbuilding would not unduly detract from the character and appearance of the existing cottage or its setting in this open rural landscape. The proposed outbuilding would not be readily visible from Back Lane and although it would be visible from the public rights of way which run to the south and east of the site for the reasons set out above I consider that it would not appear unduly intrusive so as to be detrimental to the character and appearance of the existing cottage, its immediate setting or the wider surrounding landscape.
11. To conclude therefore, the appeal proposal would not cause material harm to the character or appearance of the existing cottage, its setting or the surrounding landscape. Accordingly, there would be no conflict with the character and appearance objectives of policies GSP2, GSP3 and L1 of the Peak District National Park Core Strategy Development Plan Document (Core Strategy) adopted 2011 or saved policies LC4 and LH4 of the Peak District National Park Local Plan (Local Plan) adopted 2001. It would accord with policy GSP1 of the Core Strategy which seeks to ensure that all development supports the purposes of the National Park. It would also accord with policy DS1 of the Core Strategy which, in so far as it sets out the development strategy for the National Park, indicates that the principle of providing an outbuilding on the appeal site is acceptable.
12. I also find that the proposed development would not conflict with the guidance (at paragraph 115) of the National Planning Policy Framework in respect of conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks.

Other matters

13. The proposed building is intended for use as a store and its use as a separate residential unit would require planning permission.
14. The appellant raises concerns regarding the Council's handling of the planning application. However, this is not a matter that I can comment on or consider as part of an appeal made under Section 78 of the above Act.

Conditions and Conclusion

15. The Authority has not suggested any conditions that it considers would be appropriate were I minded to allow the appeal. However, to ensure certainty a condition requiring the development to be implemented in accordance with the approved plans is necessary.
16. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Beverley Doward INSPECTOR