



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 August 2017

by Brendan Lyons BArch MA MRTPI IHBC

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

Decision date: 8th September 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/P1045/D/17/3179151

Windmill Cottage, Willersley Lane, Cromford DE4 5JG

- 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 A Bridge against the decision of Derbyshire Dales District Council.
 - The application Ref 17/00259/FUL, dated 31 March 2017, was refused by notice dated 7 June 2017.
 - The development proposed is described as a single-storey rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed extension on the character and appearance of the cottage and of the surrounding area, which forms part of the designated 'buffer zone' of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site.

Reasons

3. The appeal relates to a two-storey cottage or former farmhouse that makes up part of a small group of dwellings in an elevated position overlooking the Derwent valley. The cottage is of traditional stone construction, built partly into the sloping site. It has a tiled gabled roof, and a small single-storey lean-to at one end. Because of the slope, the principal windows and entrance are all on the downhill side. A modern porch with a tiled roof has been added, and the window openings have been fitted with modern frames but retain their plain stone surrounds and central mullions.
4. It is now proposed to add a single storey extension that would encompass the existing porch and cover one end of the house, including the lean-to. The extension would have a stepped plan form under a flat roof and would be clad in timber boarding. The window to one of the two main ground floor rooms would be removed and the opening taken down to floor level.
5. The Council does not object to the principle of an extension on this side of the cottage and has previously granted permission for a somewhat smaller addition in a similar position¹. I agree that there should be scope to enlarge the

¹ The permission (Ref 05/00743/FUL) has now lapsed.

dwelling in order to provide more varied living space or, as in this instance, to allow for the effect of disability.

6. However, I also agree with the Council that the extension now proposed would represent an unsympathetic addition that would be harmful to the cottage's character and appearance. Because the extension would obscure so much of the principal elevation, including the bases of upper floor windows, it would no longer be possible to easily appreciate the cottage's original appearance, even with glimpses through the proposed large windows. While later features, such as the porch, are not fully consistent in design with the original cottage, their alteration by the appeal proposal would not amount to a net benefit.
7. The extension's flat-roofed rather box-like shape and the splayed plan form would not relate well to the simple rectilinear lines of the original dwelling. The extent of the boarded cladding and large scale openings immediately next to the traditional scale and materials of the original building would tend to dominate the cottage's simple vernacular character. The pyramid rooflights would also be highly prominent from the raised approach and would appear incongruous.
8. I acknowledge the appellant's intention to respond to the cottage's character by making a clear distinction between the original and the new, which is an approach that can often prove sound. However, I find in this case that the balance between old and new has been unacceptably tilted. The appellant accepts that the proposal would not be directly comparable with the other example provided, where the extension was not masking principal elements of interest of the original building.
9. The appellant also accepts that reservations expressed about the previously permitted scheme are not directly relevant to the current decision. Other forms of extension that would achieve the desired objective would be possible, and should not necessarily require the loss of internal features of interest.
10. For these reasons, I find that the proposal would be contrary to saved Policy SF5 of the Derbyshire Dales Local Plan 2005 ('LP'), as the scale, massing, height and layout of the proposed extension would not preserve or enhance the quality or local distinctiveness of the original building, and would not reinforce the sense of place engendered by distinctive local building styles and materials. It would also be contrary to saved LP Policy H2, as it would have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the dwelling.
11. Because of the location of the cottage, the extension would not be highly visible from the immediate surroundings. The appellant has illustrated that it would also be screened by neighbouring buildings in longer distance views from within the World Heritage Site. There would be very little adverse effect on the appearance of the surrounding area.
12. Nevertheless, the site forms part of the buffer zone of the World Heritage Site, a designated heritage asset identified by the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') as of the highest significance. The Planning Practice Guidance ('PPG') lists protection from inappropriate development of the setting of World Heritage Sites, including any buffer zone, as one of the key principles in their planning. The PPG also warns of the danger of the cumulative effect of minor change.

13. The existing building is a very small element of the setting of the extensively drawn asset. However, the stock of vernacular buildings within the buffer zone provide a context that must make a positive contribution to the asset's heritage significance, which should be preserved from cumulative harm in accordance with the national advice. In this instance, the adverse effect on the character of the cottage would thus result in a very small degree of harm to the significance of the heritage asset. As the enlargement of the dwelling would be to meet the appellant's own domestic needs, this minor harm would not be outweighed by any public benefit.
14. I therefore find that the proposal would also be contrary to saved LP Policy NBE25, which resists development that would have an adverse impact on the setting of the World Heritage Site.
15. For the reasons set out above, and having taken account of all representations made, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Brendan Lyons

INSPECTOR