
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 November 2017

by S J Lee BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 7th November 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/M9496/D/17/3179328

Aston Grange, Oker Road, Oker, Matlock DE4 2JJ

- 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 P Thompson against the decision of Peak District National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref NP/DDD/0117/0080, dated 25 January 2017, was refused by notice dated 6 June 2017.
 - The development proposed was originally described as alterations and extensions to create bedsit and ground floor shower room for disabled resident.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for alterations and extensions to create bedsit and ground floor shower room at Aston Grange, Oker Road, Oker, Matlock DE4 2JJ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref NP/DDD/0117/0080, dated 25 January 2017 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: Site Plan Scale 1/1250; Block Plan Scale 1/500; Existing Plans Scale 1/100; Proposed Plans Scale 1/100.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Procedural Matter

2. For the avoidance of any doubt, I have amended the description of the development in my formal decision to remove superfluous elements that do not relate to development.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal relates to a large detached two storey dwelling set within generous grounds. The dwelling is located toward the bottom of a hill and is well separated from other dwellings above and further along the lane. The area has

a predominantly rural and agricultural character, with open fields bordering three sides of the site. The dwelling itself appears to have been subject to a number of alterations, which has resulted in a building with a number of distinct elements. There is a broad consistency to the pitched roof form of the building and the use of white render across all of the external surfaces which ensure these elements complement each other and the overall character of the house.

5. The flat roof design of the extension to the garage/utility building would clearly differ from that of the remainder of the dwelling. While there is already a conservatory and a glazed link between the main dwelling and garage on this elevation, the extension would still result in a significant degree of additional glazing. However, the low profile and height of the extension would ensure that it would be a clearly subordinate structure. The overall scale of the dwelling and the significant degree of existing articulation and variance in height and orientation of its different elements would also ensure that the extension would not be seen as a dominant addition to the dwelling.
6. The fact the extension would be seen in context with the garage wall would also serve to reduce the impact of the development and minimise any effects resulting from the flat roof or glazing. The garage roof would still be the dominant feature. The extension would also have little effect on the appearance of the majority of the eastern elevation. I have noted the Council's concern that the extension would not reflect the established building tradition. Nevertheless, while the development would add some variety of design, those aspects of the dwelling that are important to its traditional character would not be obscured or overwhelmed by the presence of this feature and the overall effect would be minimal.
7. A mixture of the high boundary wall and landscaping also provides a reasonable degree of screening from the roadside which would soften the extent of any visual impact on the wider area. Indeed, when viewed from a distance along the road, only the upper floors and roof profile can be fully seen and these elements would not be affected by the development. I also observed the site from the public right of way which runs through the adjacent field. The hedgerow is patchier in places when viewed from this location and more of the gable of the garage can be seen. Nonetheless, even from this vantage point, the extension would not appear as an overly dominant or discordant addition to the building and its overall importance to the character of the area would remain intact.
8. The only element of the proposal that could be seen when coming down the hill toward the house is the small shower room extension. The scale and height of this would be such as to not appear unsympathetic or out of keeping with the remainder of the dwelling. In addition, the existing link between the house and garage already presents a flat element when viewed from the west. As such, I do not consider the overall appearance of the building would change dramatically as a result of this alteration.
9. There appears to be nothing in the Council's Design Guide which suggests sensitively designed modern extensions to buildings are not acceptable in principle. An important requirement, however, is that extensions are in harmony with the original building and do not diminish its quality or integrity. While I recognise that the site is in a sensitive location within the Peak District

National Park, I do not consider the extensions would have a harmful effect on the National Park's valued characteristics, particularly in terms of the impact on the quality of the wider landscape, the rural and agricultural setting of the dwelling or any aspect of its cultural heritage.

10. Taking all above matters into account, I am satisfied that the development would not result in unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of either the host building or the wider area. Accordingly, there would be no conflict with Core Strategy¹ policies DS1, GSP1, GSP2, GSP3 and Local Plan² policies LC4 and LH4 which seek, amongst other things, to ensure extensions respect and conserve the character and appearance of the original building and its setting and that the development would not affect the purposes and duties of the National Park. I also see no conflict with the Council's Design Guide, which seeks to ensure extensions should harmonise with the parent building. There would also be no conflict with section 7 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which seeks, amongst other things, to ensure good design.

Conditions

11. I have considered the suggested conditions from the Council in accordance with the guidance contained in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). In addition to the standard condition which limits the lifespan of the planning permission, I have imposed a condition specifying the relevant drawings as this provides certainty. I have also imposed a condition to ensure the materials used match those of the host dwelling in the interests of the character and appearance of the area.

Other Matters

12. The matter of personal circumstances was raised by both the appellant and Council. As I have found that there would be no conflict with the development plan in this case, this is not a matter that I need to address in any more detail here.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

S J Lee

INSPECTOR

¹ Peak District National Park Core Strategy Development Plan Document – Adopted October 2011

² Peak District National Park Core Strategy Local Plan – Adopted March 2001