



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 February 2018

by D R Cullingford BA MPhil MRTPI

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

Decision date: 17 April 2018

Appeal Ref: APP/M0933/W/17/3185121

Wells House Farm, Cartmel, Grange-Over-Sands, Cumbria, LA11 6PN

- This appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is by Mr and Mrs Andrew Cretney against the decision of the South Lakeland District Council.
 - The application (ref: SL/2017/0114 and dated 9 February 2017) was refused by notice dated 18 July 2017.
 - The development is described as the 'demolition of single storey extension and detached single storey garage: and erection of 1no dwelling. NB LPA wording: there is no need to demolish the single storey extension, so that could be deleted from the description'.
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Decision

1. I dismiss this appeal.

Main issue

2. From what I have read and seen, I consider that this appeal turns on whether the proposal would spoil rather than conserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Cartmel Conservation Area contrary, principally, to policy CS8.6 of the adopted Core Strategy, the statutory duty and the advice in the Framework (NPPF).

Reasons

3. Wells House Farm is an attractive stone cottage standing immediately beside a narrow stone-walled lane. Together with the adjoining converted barn (now a dwelling known as Lowdene) it still reflects its origin as a small farmstead just beyond the village, an impression accentuated by the open land (including the playground) in front of the property and the 65m gap to the south before the dwellings beside Cloggerbeck Cottage are encountered. This gap also accommodates an entrance to a caravan park on the open land to the rear towards the River Eea. The amended scheme now entails the demolition of a rendered garage and the erection of a modest 2-storey dwelling beneath an asymmetrical roof positioned about 5m from the old farmstead.
 4. I appreciate that the site lies within Cartmel and that the proposed dwelling could be regarded as a small scale scheme within the confines of the village. But the site is also within the Cartmel Conservation Area where section 72 of the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act imposes a statutory duty to carefully consider the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the place, a duty reflected in policy CS8.6 and the advice in
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the Framework to give 'great weight' to the conservation of heritage assets. The Conservation Area encompasses the open spaces within the village, including the open land and playground immediately in front of the appeal property and the swathe of open grazing land down towards the Headless Cross 'crossroads'. It also extends across open land beyond the village including the flat expanse of the caravan site and much of the 65m gap between Wells House Farm and the dwellings beside Cloggerbeck Cottage.

5. Those open areas are crucial to the character of the Conservation Area, in my view. The 65m gap to the south of the appeal property serves to separate the ancient core of the village, with its mass of Listed Buildings crowding in on a morass of narrow lanes, from the more sporadic and often more recent development beyond. Together with the spaces in front of the appeal property it creates the impression that Wells House Farm still reflects its origin as a small farmstead just beyond the village set against the low hills beyond Cartmel Park. That impression is pronounced from The Causeway. But it is also evident when emerging from the narrow lanes beside St Mary's Lodge and from some vantage points across the grazing land to the north of the Headless Cross 'crossroads'. The dwelling, together with the adjoining converted barn is denoted as making a particular positive contribution to the special character of the Conservation Area in the Cartmel Conservation Area Character Assessment. And, it does so by terminating vistas across the open spaces (several denoted as 'amenity open spaces' on the extant Proposal Map), by (in the words of the Planning Officer) its 'detached singularity', by its appearance as an historic farmstead and by its location on the apparent edge of the old village.
6. I am afraid that the proposal would undermine most of those positive attributes. It would diminish the gap to the south of the appeal property and, although a gap would remain, the proximity of the new building would destroy the 'detached singularity' of the existing structure filling the space beside it and appearing uncomfortably close to the end elevation. The awkwardness of that juxtaposition would be accentuated, in my view, by the non-traditional character of the front elevation of the proposed dwelling and the discordant pattern of the fenestration. The impression of an historic farmstead on the edge of the old village would be destroyed by the intrusive impact of an incongruous structure in such proximity to the existing building. Such harmful development would be very damaging and such damage would be all too evident in the vistas across the intervening open spaces and from The Causeway. For those reasons I consider that this scheme would spoil rather than conserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Cartmel Conservation Area contrary to policy CS8.6 the statutory duty and the advice in the Framework. And, in spite of considering all the other matters raised, I can find nothing sufficiently compelling to alter my conclusion that this appeal should be dismissed.

David Cullingford
INSPECTOR