



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 August 2019

by Sarah Colebourne MA, MRTPI

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

Decision date: 2nd September 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/R1038/D/19/3232194

The Barn, Corner Farm, Higham, Alferton, Derbyshire, DE55 6EH

- 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 Paul Cropper against the decision of North East Derbyshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 19/00424/FLH, dated 15 April 2019, was refused by notice dated 11 June 2019.
 - The development proposed is for 2 no. Velux windows and re-roofing with Solar PV roofing slates.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed insofar as it relates to the windows only and planning permission is granted for 2 no. Velux windows at The Barn, Corner Farm, Higham, Alferton, Derbyshire, DE55 6EH in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 19/00424/FLH, dated 15 April 2019, subject to the following conditions:-
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plan insofar as it relates to the windows only: Drwg no BE1.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the windows hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing roof windows.
2. The appeal is dismissed insofar as it relates to the re-roofing.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the Higham Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

4. The Council's development plan policies in GS1, GS5 and BE1 in the North East Derbyshire District Local Plan seek to ensure that development improves the quality of the area and has regard to its character and appearance. Policy BE11 seeks to ensure that the choice of materials and detailing respects the prevailing traditional built features of the Conservation Area. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) has similar objectives.

5. The appeal building is a barn conversion that was granted permission for conversion in 1997 with a condition that removed permitted development rights for alterations to the building, in order to preserve its character and appearance.
6. The Higham CA is an attractive, compact CA whose significance derives from the many traditional, vernacular stone buildings which lie along and close to Main Street. The Barn is a traditional detached stone barn which is typical of many in this area and is located on a private drive which serves a small number of dwellings. Despite its conversion, it retains many elements of its former simple, agricultural character. It comprises a two storey part with an attached, slightly lower one storey part.

Re-roofing

7. The Barn has a roof of natural slate which contributes positively to the character of the CA. Most of the traditional buildings within the CA have either slate roofs or stone tile roofs. A few have modern roofing materials but those do not make a positive contribution to the area.
8. The plans show that the proposed solar PV roofing tiles would be sited on the top part of both the east and west facing slopes of the main roof over the two storey part of the building. The existing slates on the single storey part of the building would remain.
9. The Barn has a detached garage to the rear that has solar PV roofing tiles. Although that building is separated from the main building by a glazed link and has a lower, less prominent roof it is clear that the tiles have a darker, shinier appearance than the matt grey of the existing natural slates on the main roof. The proposed roofing tiles would contrast with the remaining slates and this would be particularly apparent given their proximity to one another. I agree therefore with the Council that the mix of roofing materials on one building would be detrimental to its appearance and would detract from its simple, agricultural character. Whilst the building is set back from Main Road and not prominently seen within the CA, it would also detract from its character by contrasting with the matt texture and more muted colours of the more attractive traditional roofing materials that prevail in the CA.
10. Although the harm would be less than substantial, it carries great weight and I must assess whether or not there are any public benefits that would outweigh that harm. I have noted that the development plan encourages sustainable development and renewable energy installations but only where the impact on CA's is acceptable. Whilst the proposed tiles would have some benefit in reducing the energy consumption of the dwelling and reducing carbon emissions, those benefits would be limited in comparison to the wider harm to the CA that would result and do not provide sufficient justification for the proposed re-roofing.
11. I conclude then that the proposed re-roofing would fail to preserve the character and the appearance of the CA. This part of the proposal would therefore be contrary to the development plan policies referred to above.

Windows

12. The Council has raised no objection to the two proposed rooflights which would be sited at either end of the western slope of the roof, directly above the

existing windows, resulting in four rooflights in total on this slope including the existing two. As the rooflights would be small and discreetly sited, the character and appearance of the building and the CA would be retained in this respect.

13. The Council considers that the windows are a satisfactory distance from the neighbouring dwelling which is in excess of 21m and I would agree. This distance would mitigate the impact of any overlooking sufficiently and they would not cause significant harm to the living conditions of the neighbouring occupiers. This part of the proposal would therefore preserve the character and appearance of the building and the CA and accords with the Council's policies referred to above, including BE11 which also seeks to ensure that proposals have a satisfactory relationship with existing buildings. (Policy H5 is not relevant as it relates to domestic extensions).
14. As the two parts of the proposal are clearly distinct and severable, I shall issue a split decision to allow the windows. In addition to the standard commencement condition, a condition is necessary requiring that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans insofar as it relates to the windows only, in order to provide certainty. A condition requiring matching window materials is necessary in the interests of the character and appearance of the dwelling and the area.

Conclusion

15. There are no material considerations that justify determining the appeal otherwise. The appeal should be dismissed in regard to the re-roofing and allowed in regard to the windows.

Sarah Colebourne

Inspector