



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 December 2019

by J M Tweddle BSc(Hons) MSc(Dist) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 08 January 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/A2335/W/19/3237329

The Coach House, Crag Road, Warton, Carnforth LA5 9SD

- 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 R Graveson against the decision of Lancaster City Council.
 - The application Ref 19/00113/FUL, dated 28 January 2019, was refused by notice dated 22 March 2019.
 - The development proposed is described as a 'change of use of existing garage, boat store and outbuilding to a 2 storey dwelling (C3), erection of a first floor extension with new raised roof above, relocation of existing vehicular access point and parking area. Resubmission of previous approval 17/00647/FUL incorporating design changes'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. As part of the appeal submission, the appellant has put forward a revised drawing which omits the Juliet balcony, includes a smaller window to the south facing gable elevation and retains the existing terracotta roof vent. However, I am mindful that the appeal process should not be used to evolve a scheme to overcome the Local Planning Authority's (LPA) reasons for refusal and instead a fresh planning application should usually be made¹.
3. Whilst, in certain circumstances, a proposal can be amended through revised plans during an appeal, in line with the Wheatcroft principles², it is my view in this case that the appeal must be determined on the basis of the plans as originally submitted to the LPA and upon which it based its decision. To do otherwise would prejudice the interests of the LPA, interested third parties and consultees, who have not been consulted on the revised scheme and who may have observations to make. I have therefore proceeded to determine the appeal on the basis of the plans as originally submitted.
4. The Arnsdale and Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Development Plan Document (DPD) was adopted by the LPA on 28 March 2019 and this post-dates the Council's refusal notice. This now forms part of the statutory development plan for the area and therefore I have had due regard to these policies in my decision. In doing so, I am satisfied that this has not prejudiced

¹ Annex M of the *Procedural Guide Planning Appeals – England* advises that the appeal process should not be used to evolve a scheme and it is important that what is considered by the Inspector is essentially what was considered by the local planning authority, and on which interested people's views were sought.

² *Bernard Wheatcroft Ltd v Secretary of State for the Environment* [JPL, 1982, P37]

either party as DPD policies were cited in the reason for refusal and the appellant has had the opportunity to respond during the appeal proceedings.

Main Issues

5. The main issues are:

- The effect of the development on the character and appearance of the existing building and the surrounding area and whether it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Warton Conservation Area, and;
- Whether the development would conserve or enhance the landscape and scenic beauty of the Arnside and Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Reasons

Character and appearance

6. The appeal site lies within the Warton Conservation Area (CA) which focuses on the historic core of the village along Main Street and some of the roads leading off it. A defining characteristic of the village is the extensive use of local limestone as the predominant building material and is, to a degree, used in combination with lime render. Sandstone is also prevalent albeit restricted to more decorative window and door surrounds or quoins.
7. The Coach House is a modest single storey building faced in a mix of mainly limestone and lime render and with a slate covered roof topped with a decorative terracotta roof vent. The building enjoys an elevated position on the southern side of Crag Road where the CA has a more rural character with a looser pattern of development. The building is thought to have historically been associated with Craglands, a large former Victorian gentleman's residence located on the opposite side of the road from the site. Originally the building comprised a stable, tack room and coach house to serve the residence. Hence, its historical use, along with its simple form and use of traditional materials make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the CA.
8. The proposal involves the building's conversion to a dwelling along with the addition of a first floor extension in the form of a lightweight timber frame structure clad with vertical larch boarding. This would be at odds with the materials used in the original building and those prevailing in the surrounding area. Indeed, notwithstanding the previous approvals on this site, the addition of a first floor extension, as proposed, would not be a sympathetic nor subservient addition to the property. Instead it would undermine the original simple form and character of the building resulting in a harmful loss of authenticity. The timber frame extension and cladding being slightly set back from the external wall would do little to reduce its overall bulk, scale and prominence.
9. The building's altered appearance would significantly draw the eye and so would represent a prominent and incongruous form that would be harmful to the surrounding area. Furthermore, the Juliet balcony and wide window openings, particularly on the south-facing elevation, represent overly domestic features that are not sympathetic to the original simple form and rural character of the building. The loss of the terracotta roof vent and chimney would also be regrettable and further compound the loss of original character

and authenticity. Overall, the effect of the proposal would be to unacceptably diminish the character, appearance and architectural integrity of the original building. In doing so, the proposal would also be harmful to the character and appearance of this part of the Warton CA.

10. The larch timber boarding may weather over time and this may reduce its visual impact, yet it would remain as a stark contrast with the more traditional palette of materials found in the area. Furthermore, the existing timber sliding doors do not provide a justification for the extensive timber cladding that is proposed.
11. In terms of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), the harm to the CA would be 'less than substantial' as it would affect only its immediate surroundings. It is incumbent upon me to give considerable importance and weight to such harm. The Framework advises that this harm must be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The development would provide a new home that would add to the local housing supply and provide economic benefits during its construction and following its occupation. However, these benefits are tempered somewhat by the fact that the proposal would only provide a single new home. Consequently, the benefits would not outweigh the harmful effects of the proposal on the CA.
12. Furthermore, the Council considers Craglands to be a non-designated heritage asset and, by association, the Coach House is considered to form part of the setting of this non-designated heritage asset. The appellant does not dispute this, and it is evident from my examination of the submitted information and my own inspection of the site, that the building is of some historical and architectural merit. It therefore possesses a degree of local significance which forms part of the village's historic character. As such, the first floor extension, inappropriate use of vertical timber cladding and the introduction of overly domestic design elements would result in a prominent and discordant form of development that would harmfully detract from the historical setting and significance of Craglands.
13. Given the strong use of stone and lime render in the area and the absence of timber as a facing material, I do not agree with the appellant's assertion that the use of a different facing material to the first floor, as proposed, would appropriately provide a clear distinction between the original building and the extension. Instead, its extensive use would be an obvious and harmful departure from the existing character of the area that would harm the appearance of the building and its surroundings.
14. To conclude on this main issue, the proposal would have a significant harmful effect on the character and appearance of the existing building and the surrounding area. It follows, therefore, that the proposal would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Warton Conservation Area. This harm is not outweighed by public benefits. I have also found the proposal to be harmful to the setting of a non-designated heritage asset.
15. Accordingly, the development is contrary to Policies DM31, DM33, DM35 and DM41 of the Local Plan for Lancaster District 2011 – 2032 Development Management DPD. Amongst other things, these policies combine to ensure that new developments are of a high design quality which contributes positively to the identity and character of the area and only permits development that preserves or enhances the character and appearance of conservation areas. In

this context, the proposal would also conflict with the provisions of the Framework which seek to conserve and enhance the historic environment and promote high standards of design.

Effect on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

16. The appeal site is located within the Arnside and Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and therefore in determining this appeal I have had regard to the statutory duty under section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. This requires that decisions have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area. The AONB is a valued landscape with a nationally designated status where, in accordance with paragraph 172 of the Framework, great weight is to be given to the conservation and enhancement of the landscape and scenic beauty of the area. As such, the AONB is afforded the highest status of protection in these regards.
17. The building is set into the hillside, hugging the lower south-eastern slope of Warton Crag which forms an important landscape feature that dominates the area and provides an attractive backdrop and setting to the village. Given its elevated position, the site occupies a prominent location which is clearly visible for some distance in views from the south and southwest of the site. The introduction of a first floor extension to the building, coupled with its elevated location, would result in a more visually discernible feature within the landscape. This would be accentuated by the use of vertical timber cladding that is at odds with the local architectural vernacular and thereby results in a discordant feature that would detract from the character and appearance of the surrounding landscape.
18. In this regard, I agree with the assessment of the AONB Officer in that the proposal would result in a highly intrusive feature that would have a detrimental impact on local landscape character and the visual amenity of the area. Accordingly, I afford great weight to these adverse impacts on the landscape and scenic beauty of the area.
19. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposal would not conserve or enhance the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB. As such, it conflicts with Policy DM28 of the Local Plan for Lancaster District 2011 – 2032 Development Management DPD and Policies AS02, AS07, and AS08 of the Arnside and Silverdale AONB Development Plan Document. These policies attach great importance to the protection of the unique landscape characteristics of the AONB and to the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of this nationally protected landscape. It follows that there would also be conflict with the policies of the Framework which seek to protect and enhance valued landscapes.

Other Matters

20. I note that there is a fall-back position in the form of a previously approved scheme for the site which also included a first floor extension but finished in stone³. However, from the plans that I have been provided with and from what I saw on site, the approved scheme would not be more harmful to the character and appearance of the area or to the landscape of the AONB than the present appeal proposal. As such, this does not justify allowing the appeal.

³ LPA Ref. 17/00647/FUL & 19/00814/VCN

21. My attention has been drawn to a development at the western end of Crag Road which appears to include the use of timber cladding as part of an extension to a dwelling. Whilst I do not have the full details of this scheme before me, I understand that the site is not within the Warton CA and the development is of a differing form and scale. Therefore, the development does not appear to be comparable to the appeal proposal and as such attracts little weight in my determination.
22. The LPA has advised that it is currently unable to demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites. However, the Framework's policies in relation to the protection of designated landscapes and heritage assets provide clear reasons for refusing the development proposed. Therefore, the proposal does not benefit from the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Conclusion

23. For the reasons I have set out, and having considered all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

Jeff Tweddle

INSPECTOR