



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 March 2020

by Jonathan Edwards BSc(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 March 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/P1045/D/20/3244193

Cottage Farm, Longford Lane, Longford DE6 3DT

- 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 David Fox against the decision of Derbyshire Dales District Council.
 - The application Ref 19/00964/FUL, dated 15 August 2019, was refused by notice dated 14 October 2019.
 - The development proposed is extension and alterations to existing cottage including demolition of existing outbuildings.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Longford Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

3. Cottage Farm faces and is set back from Longford Lane with outbuildings to the rear. A public footpath runs from the road, across adjacent fields to the east and south of the site and over the nearby Longford Brook. The appeal property lies in the southern part of the CA, which covers most of the village and land to the north around Longford Hall. The significance of the CA partly lies in the historic and architectural interest of buildings it contains as well as the predominant agricultural setting of the village.
4. The appellant's heritage statement indicates that Cottage Farm is largely unchanged from its original 19th century form and construction and it retains interesting architectural features such as unusual brickwork and decorative tiling. As such, the house contributes positively to the attractive appearance and historic interest of the CA.
5. Whilst set back behind the front wall, the extension would project out to the side and so would be seen when looking towards the main elevation of the house from the road. Also, despite the appellant's claims that the proposal would be well-screened, the whole depth of the extension would be seen over low boundary features from the footpath and from the road when approaching the site from the east. The proposed planting would not entirely hide the extension from public views, particularly during times of leaf fall.

6. The extension would be set down below the host property's ridgeline and would be smaller in terms of footprint than the outbuildings to be removed. However, it would be attached and so would more directly affect the form of the house compared to the detached farm buildings. Also, the proposal would significantly increase the scale of the house and would result in a change in its appearance from a modest farmhouse to a much larger dwelling. As a consequence, the proposal would harm the historic character of the property.
7. The appellant's aims in respect of the design of the extension are noted but there is no evidence that the house has ever formed part of a courtyard and the proposal's non-agricultural appearance fails to complement the rural character of the site. The proposed timber cladding and large windows would reflect features seen on the nearby Cheese Factory but they would fail to respect the decorative features and traditional style of the appeal property. Furthermore, the projection of the extension beyond the side wall would compete with and detract from the attractive symmetry on the front elevation of the house. For all these reasons, the extension would be incongruous and undermine the attractive and interesting rural character of Cottage Farm.
8. The more recently constructed outbuildings are not rural in appearance and so detract from the property. As such, their removal would be a benefit of the proposal. However, the brick and tile outbuildings are of a historic agricultural appearance and emphasise the rural nature of the site, despite their poor condition and informal positioning in relation to the house. The removal of the brick outbuildings would therefore harm the interest and character of the site.
9. The proposed renovation works, the reinstatement of the porch and cast iron lights, removal of inappropriate minor additions to the house and new planting would all enhance the appearance of the property. Also, the proposal would retain the open fields surrounding the site, thereby preserving its rural setting. However, such benefits would not override or address the identified harm that would be caused to the attractiveness and historic interest of the property by virtue of the size and incongruous design of the extension and the removal of outbuildings that contribute positively to the rural character of the area.
10. The proposed changes to the property and resulting harm to the appearance of the site would be visible from various public vantage points. As such, the proposal would harm the overall character and appearance of the CA and diminish its significance. Whilst this would not reach the very high hurdle of substantial harm, it would nonetheless lead to less than substantial harm to the CA's significance that requires clear and convincing justification. Due to intervening buildings and landscaping, the proposed development would not be easily seen with the Cheese Factory, Longford Mill and nearby bridges and so would not affect the setting or significance of these listed buildings.
11. In line with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), the harm caused to the CA as a designated heritage asset should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. Great weight should be given to the asset's conservation in any assessment.
12. Cottage Farm has only basic facilities and the proposed works would allow the property to be used as a family home. However, there is no evidence that demonstrates the modernisation of the property is reliant upon the proposed development. Moreover, the desire to provide a house suitable for family use is a personal rather than a public benefit.

13. As such, there are no public benefits to the proposal that would outweigh the identified less than substantial harm caused to the CA. Consequently, I conclude the proposal fails to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA and so it would be contrary to policies PD1, PD2 and HC10 of the Derbyshire Dales Local Plan 2017 and the Framework. These all aim, amongst other things, to ensure development proposals are in keeping with the character and appearance of the original building and area and conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.

Conclusion

14. For these reasons, I conclude the appeal should be dismissed.

Jonathan Edwards

INSPECTOR