



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 June 2020

by Gareth Wildgoose BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16 June 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/M9496/D/20/3248211

**Nields Farm, Swythamley, Rushton Spencer, Macclesfield, Cheshire
SK11 0SW**

- 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 McCance against the decision of Peak District National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref NP/SM/0719/0805, dated 24 July 2019, was refused by notice dated 17 December 2019.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing single storey boot room and replacement with single storey oak framed orangery/boot room.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - the effect on the character and appearance of the host property and the Peak District National Park, and;
 - whether the proposal is consistent with policies relating to climate change and sustainability.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal property consists of a two-storey farmhouse with a distinctive T-shaped layout in an isolated open countryside location. The property is not a listed building but is within the Peak District National Park. When viewed from a public footpath which passes through the adjoining yard in a broadly east-west direction, the property sits comfortably in its countryside setting with surrounding land levels sloping progressively downward to the north. The residential curtilage includes an outbuilding to the east and adjoins surrounding paddocks, with a mix of tree lines, sporadic small groupings of distant buildings and undulating rural land beyond in the National Park landscape.
4. The dwelling has gritstone walls and tiled pitched roofs, with its particularly long eastern elevation having a distinctive horizontal emphasis. The traditional materials and an associated rhythm of timber framed windows at ground and first floor level provide a simple appearance that is typical of a rural farmhouse. This is particularly apparent on the elevations visible from the public footpath,

despite the presence of some previous alterations, extensions and some differences in alignment and proportions of windows, including above a single storey boot room outrigger located on the eastern elevation.

5. The proposal is for demolition of the existing single storey boot room and replacement with a single storey oak framed orangery and an attached boot room of lesser depth. The resultant extension as proposed would have a significantly greater width and maximum depth than the existing outrigger, with considerable glazing including folding style doors / windows on the eastern elevation. Revised plans submitted prior to the National Park Authority (NPA) decision, amongst other things, altered the roof lantern to sit below the eaves of the roof of the main building. Nonetheless, the overall scale, bulk and massing of the extension would subsume a significant proportion of the eastern elevation and include the loss of existing windows at ground and first floor level. Consequently, the proposal would significantly alter the appearance of the eastern elevation of the appeal property and would harm its rural character through the introduction of a more prominent and discordant extension than the smaller boot room that is currently in-situ. It would also depart from and contrast with the arrangement of existing windows and doors.
6. The proposed extension on the eastern elevation would be visible when approaching from the east and passing from the west on the public footpath, particularly through a significant gap in hedging where an adjoining car parking area and pedestrian access are located. From those perspectives, the proposed extension to the property would appear overly prominent, incongruous and would unacceptably erode the building's traditional character and appearance in its countryside setting. I have considered the possibility of additional boundary screening or landscaping being provided to soften the appearance of the development, but to my mind, it would not overcome the harm identified upon the character and appearance of the host building.
7. In reaching the above findings, I have taken into account that the extension would be capable of incorporating some sections of walls and roof in matching materials to those of the existing property and that it would replace a more modest extension that already differs from the dwelling in terms of form and materials. However, the potential benefits of replacing the modest existing extension do not justify the harm that would arise from the proposal.
8. The harm that I have identified would be relatively localised to viewpoints along the public footpath. A combination of variations in land levels, screening afforded by hedges and trees, together with the considerable distance to surrounding properties would limit the prominence of the extension from more distant vantage points in the wider Peak District National Park landscape. Nonetheless, it would still fail to conserve or enhance the landscape and scenic beauty of the Peak District National Park when viewed in the foreground from the public footpath. Such matters are afforded great weight in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and are not outweighed by the benefits of additional living accommodation in this case.
9. The appellant has drawn my attention to correspondence with an NPA officer regarding the principle of the extension, including the possibility of a contemporary design. I also note that Leekfrith Parish Council expressed support for the proposal. However, such matters are not influential on the outcome of this appeal as I have necessarily made my own assessment. In that

respect, the Peak District National Park Authority Design Guide, and its Detailed Design Guide - Alterations & Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) does offer an opportunity for contemporary styles of extension. However, it guides that such proposals should respect, be in harmony and have a strong visual relationship with the existing building. The design of the proposal would not achieve those requirements for the reasons previously stated.

10. I conclude that the proposed development would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host property and the Peak District National Park. The proposal, therefore, would conflict with Policies GSP1, GSP3 and L3 of the Peak District National Park Core Strategy (CS), adopted October 2011, and Policies DMC3 and DMH7 of the Peak District National Park Local Plan Part 2 - Development Management Policies, adopted May 2019, and the associated guidance in the SPD. When considered together, the policies seek to ensure new development is of high-quality design and that, amongst other things, it does not detract from the character and appearance of the original building and conserves the character of the National Park. The policy aims are consistent with the Framework.

Climate change and sustainability

11. The application subject of this appeal included a design and access statement which identified that the proposed materials would include oak sourced from sustainable/renewable forests and reclaimed roof tiles. Appropriate measures could also be incorporated for recycling of surface water run-off and to ensure natural ventilation and heat control. To my mind, the inclusion of such measures would be proportionate to the extension proposed and would contribute to achieving the highest possible standards of energy efficiency, carbon reduction and water efficiency so as to accord with the requirements of Policy CC1 of the CS. In that regard, I am satisfied that if I were to find the proposal to be otherwise acceptable, that any necessary additional details of climate change mitigation measures could be secured by condition.
12. I conclude that the proposal would be capable of complying with policies relating to climate change and sustainability. Therefore, I find no conflict with Policy CC1 of the CS or the Framework in that respect.

Conclusion

13. I have found no harm in terms of climate change and sustainability. However, the absence of harm in that respect and the limited benefits of additional living accommodation are outweighed by the harm upon the character and appearance of the host property and the Peak District National Park. The harm reflects conflict with the development plan and the Framework that is overriding.
14. For the reasons given above and taking all other matters into consideration, I conclude that this appeal should be dismissed.

Gareth Wildgoose

INSPECTOR