
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 May 2020

by J Williamson BSc (Hons) MPlan MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23rd June 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/P1045/W/20/3245305

White Close, Longford Lane, Sutton-on-the-Hill DE6 5JB

- 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 J Bowler against the decision of Derbyshire Dales District Council.
 - The application Ref 19/00881/FUL, dated 14 June 2019, was refused by notice dated 25 September 2019.
 - The development proposed is erection of a replacement dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. I note that since the determination of the planning application the appellant applied to the Council for prior notification of proposed demolition of 'White Close', ie the dwelling that is the subject of this appeal, Ref 19/01198/DEM. The Council concluded that its prior approval is not required for demolition of the property. I have taken this into consideration in reaching my decision.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, with particular regard to siting, scale and design.

Reasons

4. For planning policy purposes, the site is in the countryside. The surrounding landscape is characterised by expansive, relatively flat/gently undulating, open agricultural land, sub-divided by hedges and trees into field parcels. Residential properties are sporadically located along the network of local roads. The dwellings in the area tend to be of modest size, and although mainly two-storey there are several examples of one-and-a-half and single-storey properties. The appellant suggests that larger properties such as Suffield Manor set a precedent for development of properties that are larger than the modest dwellings in the area. However, I consider that large properties are the exception, rather the rule, in the surrounding area. The dwellings are primarily of simple design, often sited not far from the road in informal shaped curtilages. Many have benefitted from extensions, with such development appearing to have gradually evolved over time. The external materials used on

most properties in the area are red brick under clay tiled roofs, though several have rendered elevations.

5. Although the existing dwelling is of a size, design and sited such that it nestles comfortably in the landscape, alterations to it have been unsympathetic. As such, I consider the existing dwelling has a neutral effect on the landscape and the character and appearance of the area.
6. I note that the design concept is that of a converted range of traditional barns, based upon an award-winning build in Scotland. However, it does not readily follow that the proposed development would be acceptable with the open, rural landscape of Derbyshire.
7. The proposal would be sited such that it would substantially extend beyond the eastern curtilage of the site, up to the proposed site boundary. The built form would also press up to the northern site boundary. The ratio of built form to curtilage would be reversed from that of the existing, where the property covers a small proportion of the plot, to one where the proposed dwelling would cover most of the plot. The scale of the proposal is such that the building overall appears to be somewhere in the region of 3 times the size of the existing dwelling. Due to its siting, size and scale the proposal would fill an existing gap between the existing dwelling and the southern boundary of Suffield Manor. Bearing these factors in mind, I consider the proposal would erode the character and appearance of the landscape.
8. The appellant suggests that farmsteads are part of the surrounding landscape and that some have brick buildings that have been converted. However, such development is also the exception, rather than the rule. Furthermore, of the few conversions that exist in the area, they have not resulted in a substantial introduction of additional built form into the landscape. Additionally, the converted barn-style buildings I observed during my site visit have been sympathetically converted, retaining many of their original features, such as fenestration openings, which allows the original building to still be read. In contrast, many of the window openings in the proposed building are large with large, horizontally defined glazing panels and large chunky stone lintels. There is also little variation between roof ridges, eaves heights and roof pitches. Rather than being interpreted as a conversion of traditional barns, I consider that the proposal would read as a pastiche of such development, which would harm the character and appearance of the area.
9. In light of the above, with particular regard to the siting, scale and design of the proposed development, I conclude that the proposal would encroach into, and be out of keeping with, the character and appearance of the countryside. Consequently, the proposal would not accord with policies S4, PD1, PD5 and HC7 of the Adopted Derbyshire Dales Local Plan (2017). Collectively, these policies, among other things, do not support development that does not respect, preserve or enhance the character, appearance or local distinctiveness of the area. Nor would the proposal accord with paragraph 127 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which also requires development to be sympathetic to local character.

Other Matters and Planning Balance

10. I note the appellant has drawn my attention to examples of planning permission having been granted for replacement dwellings in the area

comprising of modern houses replacing traditional cottages. I do not have the full details of these cases and therefore cannot conclude that they are directly comparable to the current proposal.

11. I also note that no issues have been raised in respect of highway safety, public right of way, ecology or living conditions, which are therefore matters that weigh in favour of the proposal. However, these matters do not outweigh the significant harm to the character and appearance of the area I have identified, which, in the context of local and national policy, attracts substantial weight.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons outlined above, I conclude that the appeal is dismissed.

J Williamson

INSPECTOR