
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 June 2020

by William Cooper BA (Hons) MA CMLI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 6th July 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/H1033/D/20/3252187

Bankwood Cottage, Bankwood, Charlesworth SK13 5ER

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mrs Carol Bryant against the decision of High Peak Borough Council.
 - The application Ref: HPK/2019/0547, dated 6 December 2019, was refused by notice dated 17 February 2020.
 - The development proposed is described as a single storey first floor back extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - a) whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt for the purposes of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and development plan policy, and
 - b) the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host building and the area.

Reasons

Green Belt

3. The appeal site comprises a two-storey detached dwelling with outbuildings, located within the Green Belt.
4. Paragraph 145 of the Framework sets out a small number of exceptions to inappropriate development in the Green Belt. One such exception is the extension or alteration of a building, provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.
5. Policy EQ4 of the High Peak Local Plan (2016) (LP) seeks to protect the Green Belt. As such, in respect of the matters described above, the above policy is broadly consistent with the Framework.
6. The Council sets out that, in most cases, they consider a proposed extension resulting in more than a 30% increase in footprint and volume, comparable to the original building, would be disproportionate. How much the building on the

appeal site has increased from its original size, is a matter of dispute between the main parties.

7. During my site visit, I saw there was not conclusive evidence 'on the ground' that the existing cottage was originally joined to outbuildings to the south and south-west. Nevertheless, the OS 25-inch 1892-1914 map indicates that this was so, showing an 'L' shaped building footprint joined to what is now approximately the main body of the cottage. The OS Six-inch England and Wales 1842-1952 map and National Grid maps 1940s-1960s show similar footprints.
8. Judging by the totality of historic map and existing layout plan evidence before me, I consider that the size of the footprint of the original building - as a whole, including buildings joined to the main dwelling core - as it stood on 1 July 1948, was in the region of no less than 170sq.m.
9. Even if the apparently demolished rectangular building, which originally adjoined the easternmost of the two garages and the current main body of the cottage, was single-storey, I consider that the volume of the original building was in the region of no less than 850cu.m.
10. The Council excludes demolition of parts of the original building from their calculation, and considers that the proposed extension would result in disproportionate additions over and above the original building. However, I find that, together with extensions to and demolition of parts of the original building, as indicated by the combination of the maps and plans presented, the proposal would a) not entail an increase in the size of footprint of the building, over and above that of the original, and b) would result in a combined increase in building volume of less than 10% over and above the original.
11. Taking the above together, I find that the proposal would not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building, and so would meet the exception test in paragraph 145c) of the Framework. Consequently, the proposal would not amount to inappropriate development in the Green Belt. As a result, it is not necessary for me to consider matters of openness or very special circumstances. The proposal would therefore comply with Section 13 of the Framework and Policy EQ4 of the LP, which together require strict control over inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Character and appearance

12. The host property is located within a verdant rural landscape on the south-eastern side of the River Etherow valley, on land that rises up from an access track that is also a public right of way (PROW). The host building and the nearby Bankwood Mill dwelling are mainly of traditional buff stone construction with slate roofs.
13. The facade of the proposed extension would mainly comprise a tinted non-reflective glass wall, approximately 4m wide and 2.5m high. The appellant considers that the glass wall would create an appearance of shadow and mimic the existing building void. However, the following combination of factors would result in the proposed extension being discordant with the traditional rustic character of the host building and the cluster which the latter forms with the nearby Bankwood Mill dwelling, and the immediate rural landscape context: the glass wall's substantial expanse, modern appearance, and contrast with the

host building's traditional fenestration pattern and exterior texture; and the elevated position of the proposal at first floor level, on a building which is located on land rising from and facing the PROW.

14. The above adverse effect would be visible from the following combination of viewpoints: the PROW and access track to the north of the property; the shared access drive to the appeal property and Bankwood Mill house; and the north-western side of the River Etherow valley.
15. Together, the above leads me to find that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the host building and the area.
16. The appellant states in their Appeal Statement that they would be 'willing to consider either a masonry, or vertical timber boarding finish' as an alternative to a glass facade. However, a substantively illustrated alternative scheme is not before me, and I assess the proposal as illustrated in the submitted drawings.
17. My attention is drawn to another property, described by the appellant as 'ultra-modern' and within the Bankwood 'complex'¹. However, the full details of the other case are not before me, and no substantive indication is presented that the other scheme is analogous to the current proposal in terms of being an extension to a traditional rustic building. Moreover, the appeal building is part of a distinct cluster with the Bankwood Mill house and has its own setting and circumstances. As such, I assess the proposal on its own merits.
18. In conclusion, the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the host building and area. As such, it would conflict with Policies S1, EQ2, EQ3 and EQ6 of the LP. Together the policies seek to ensure that development complements local character.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

19. The absence of harm in terms of appropriateness of development in the Green Belt does not outweigh the harm identified in respect of character and appearance. The modest private benefit - in the form of proposed additional bathroom space with a shower - would not outweigh the harm identified.
20. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

William Cooper

INSPECTOR

¹ Planning Application Ref: HPK/2015/0385.