
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 September 2020

by Alison Partington BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22nd September 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/P1045/D/20/3254740

9 Water Lane, Cromford DE4 3QH

- 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 Sally Wright against the decision of Derbyshire Dales District Council.
 - The application Ref 20/00196/FUL, dated 24 February 2020, was refused by notice dated 30 April 2020.
 - The development proposed is 2 no. dormer windows to front and replacement porch.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed insofar as it relates to the 2 no. dormer windows to the front. The appeal is allowed insofar as it relates to the replacement porch and planning permission is granted for a replacement porch at 9 Water Lane, Cromford DE4 3QH, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 20/00196/FUL, dated 24 February 2020, and subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans insofar as relevant to that part of the development permitted: Location Plan Scale 1:1250; Block Plan Existing Scale 1:500; Block Plan Scale 1:500; Existing Elevations v 01 Scale 1:100; Proposed Elevations v 01 Scale 1:100; Existing Ground and First Floor Plan v 01 Scale 1:100; and Proposed Ground and First Floor Plan v 01 Scale 1:100.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Procedural Matter

2. I note the detailed description of development on the application form. The more succinct description used in the above banner heading and the formal decision is that used on the decision notice and appeal form. In her appeal statement the appellant noted the description had been changed and, although not notified of the change, she indicated she would have agreed it.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in the appeal is whether or not the proposed development would preserve or enhance Cromford Conservation Area and the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site and the host property.

Reasons

4. The appeal site lies within Cromford Conservation Area and the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires special attention to be had to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of a conservation area.
5. The common use of materials and details in many of the buildings, the consistent form of the housing and the relatively urban character of the village reflect its historic development as an industrial estate village with a common landowner. These are key architectural features of the conservation area and give a strong sense of unity to the village. The village's association with Richard Arkwright, a key figure in the industrial revolution, also gives historic significance to the conservation area.
6. The appeal property is a 1930s detached bungalow situated in an elevated position above Water Lane, a busy road through the village. Although views of the property from this road are limited, the dwelling, and particularly its roof, is clearly visible from Scarthin "promenade", where it occupies a prominent position in views across the mill pond, as well as from properties along this side of the valley. The *Cromford Conservation Area Appraisal (November 2007)* highlights that it forms one of an uncharacteristic assortment of buildings on this part of Water Lane.
7. The front elevation of the bungalow is symmetrical and, although a 20th century property, the plain uncluttered roof form is consistent with the simple roof form of the majority of the older dwellings in the conservation area. Two pitch roof dormer windows are proposed on the front roof plane. These are modest in size, set down from the ridge and up from the eaves.
8. Notwithstanding this, whilst dormer windows may, in general terms, be common on bungalows, they are not a feature of properties in the conservation area. As such, they would appear alien and incongruous features, which would be out of keeping with the character of the area. Moreover, the increased bulk they would add to the roof would serve to make this uncharacteristic property more prominent in views along Water Lane, as well as from Scarthin. The fact that the dwelling is uncharacteristic does not justify the addition of further discordant features to it.
9. In support of the appeal my attention has been drawn to a dormer window on a terraced property on the hillside above Scarthin which is clearly visible in views from Water Lane, and also to a number of properties in the vicinity that have solar panels on their roofs. However, I observed that such properties are very much in the minority, and the property with the dormer window appeared to be the only dormer in the area. I do not know the circumstances that led to the dormer being considered acceptable, or the policies that applied at the time of its consideration and so cannot be sure it represents a direct parallel to the

appeal scheme. In any event, it confirmed that dormers are detrimental to the character and appearance of the host property and the conservation area and so it does not set a precedent to be followed. Nor do the small number of properties with solar panels on their roofs justify allowing dormer windows on this property.

10. The appellant has indicated that the dormers would provide better head height and increase the amount of useable floor space in the bedrooms they would serve. Be that as it may, this is not sufficient reason to allow them given the harm I have identified they would cause.
11. The proposed porch would be wider and higher than the current lean-to porch on the property. The pitch roof would match the angle of the main roof. As a result, it would cut slightly into the front roof slope. In addition, the width of the porch would be such that there would only be limited space between it and the two windows on either side. However, given the vegetation in the front garden the porch, unlike the dormers, would be virtually unnoticeable from Water Lane, and often obscured in views from Scarthin. As a result, it would not have a detrimental visual impact on the character and appearance of the area.
12. In addition, although, larger than the existing porch, the scale and mass of the proposed new porch would still be proportionate to the main dwelling. As such, it would be a sympathetic addition to the bungalow. As this element is clearly severable from the dormer windows, I consider it can be allowed on its own.
13. Overall, I consider that the replacement porch would preserve the character and appearance of Cromford Conservation Area and not have a detrimental impact on the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site, or the host property. However, the proposed dormers would not preserve, and would unacceptably harm, the character and appearance of Cromford Conservation Area and would have an adverse impact on the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site. Accordingly, the dormers would conflict with Policies PD1, PD2 and HC10 of the *Derbyshire Dales Local Plan (adopted December 2017)* which require that development in general, and house extensions in particular, should have a high quality of design, conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance and respect the character and context of the area.
14. Having regard to paragraph 196 of the *National Planning Policy Framework*, the harm caused to the conservation area would be less than substantial but there are no public benefits that would outweigh the harm caused.

Conclusion and Conditions

15. For the reasons set out above, I conclude the appeal should be allowed in respect of the replacement porch but dismissed in respect of the 2 dormers at the front. In addition to the standard implementation condition, to provide certainty it is necessary to define the plans with which the scheme should accord. In the interests of the character and appearance of the area a condition is required to control the external appearance of the porch.

Alison Partington

INSPECTOR