



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 October 2020

by Zoe Raygen Dip URP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 2nd November 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/H1033/W/20/3247198

Greenfield, Longridge Lane, Peak Dale SK17 8AD

- 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 Smith against the decision of High Peak Borough Council.
 - The application Ref HPK/2019/0310, dated 1 July 2019, was refused by notice dated 15 November 2019.
 - The development is a building for the purposes of mixed use of storage of plant hire machinery, office accommodation, domestic storage and agricultural storage.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted for a building for the purposes of mixed use of storage of plant hire machinery, office accommodation, domestic storage and agricultural storage at Greenfield, Longridge Lane, Peak Dale SK17 8AD in accordance with the terms of the application Ref HPK/2019/0310, dated 1 July 2019 subject to the following condition:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans 1333-003, 1333-002A, 1333-001A.

Preliminary Matters

2. Planning permission was granted at the appeal site for the construction of a steel framed agricultural building for the storage of hay/straw and farm machinery/implements.¹
3. The development is described on the planning application form as to alter the size of building and change of use from agricultural general purpose. The Council describe the proposal as retrospective consent to alter size of building and change of use from agricultural to mixed use of storage of plant hire machinery, office accommodation, domestic storage and agricultural storage.
4. The appellant in his submission states that the building is primarily for agricultural use, for the storage of hay/straw produced on the applicant's own acreage and for the implements and machinery required to maintain the holding and harvest the crops. In addition, he wishes to store two mini diggers when on hire, storage for archived paperwork from his business including a desk area and storage of some automobile paraphernalia.

¹ HPK/2016/0462 (the 2016 permission)

5. At the time of my site visit there was a small amount of hay in the building. There was also a trailer, motorbike, building materials and, on the mezzanine level, filing cabinets. While I appreciate that this was just a snap-shot in time, the appellant has not disputed the Council's description in relation to the use of the building, and his own description within his appeal statement refers to a mixed use for storage and office accommodation. I have amended the description to reflect that work has commenced on site and to therefore accurately describe the development as outlined in the banner heading.
6. Work has commenced on site and the building has been substantially completed, with the exception of the installation of the windows and doors on the south west elevation and the rooflights, although the openings have been prepared.
7. As part of this appeal the appellant has submitted revised plan 1333-003A which shows all the elevations covered with polyester coated box profile steel sheeting. In addition, new plan ref 1333-004 details proposed landscaping. However, this has not been the subject of any local consultation and therefore I cannot be sure that any party would be prejudiced were I to take the revisions into account. I have therefore determined the appeal on the basis of those plans considered by the Council in its determination of the planning application.

Main Issues

8. The main issues are;

- the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area; and
- whether or not the development is in an appropriate location with particular regard to local and national policy.

Reasons

Character and appearance

9. The Council's Landscape Character Supplementary Planning Document 2006 (the SPD) outlines the design principles of identified landscape character types in order to assist developers and applicants in achieving a development that responds positively to appropriate landscape characteristics.
10. The appeal site is within the Plateau Pastures Landscape Character Area, which is described as a gently rolling, upland limestone plateau with nucleated limestone villages, dry stone walls, a pastoral land-use and open and expansive views.
11. The appeal building is a relatively small building sited to the south, but close to existing buildings. Due to the slope of the land it is sited at a lower level than the adjacent Longridge Lane, such that it is mostly obscured from view when travelling in a southerly direction along the lane. When travelling north, the front elevation is apparent. From most other directions, the presence of a substantial area of vegetation including trees and shrubs, means that there are very few open views available of the building as a whole.
12. The increase in size of the building is limited, and the Council's principal concern relates to the domestic appearance and material palette giving, what it considers to be, an incongruous form of development. The principal difference

between the approved plans under the 2016 permission and those for consideration on this appeal is the use of brick instead of stone and the insertion of windows and doors in the south west elevation and the reduction to one door in the south east gable elevation.

13. Any guidance regarding materials in the SPD appears to relate to large scale buildings. Materials and colours on these, it states, should reflect those of existing, traditional limestone buildings, these are bluey grey tones. Furthermore, darker roofing than walling gives weight and reduces visual impact and reflection on larger buildings. Moreover, new buildings should be no lighter or brighter than existing buildings.
14. I saw that there are very viewpoints where the building is seen in association with the existing farmhouse. The principal one is from the south, where the elevation is dominated by the large door. Even if the building were to be considered large scale, the amount of contrasting brick work is therefore small, and in any case did not appear lighter or brighter. While brick is not therefore particularly recommended, the SPD is guidance only and, in this instance, I did not find it harmful, particularly given the size of the building and its very limited visual prominence. In addition, due to the pitch of the roof, in distant views the main body, and hence colour of it is not particularly visible.
15. The SPD states that prefabricated metal buildings do not weather well and remain obtrusive within the landscape. For this reason, materials that do weather well and are sympathetic to the landscape are preferred. Examples include vertical slatted boarding, coloured concrete to blend with existing buildings or reclaimed stone. The appeal building has been constructed from red brick with blue engineering brick detail as base level with profile metal sheeting above. However, I note that the approved plans for the 2016 permission, which the appellant has provided a copy of, detail that the top part of the building was to be polyester coated box profile sheeting as used in the construction of the appeal building, despite the comments of the Council regarding the use of timber cladding. In addition, the roof sheeting was to be natural coloured fibre cement sheeting as shown on the elevation details plan for the appeal building.
16. The insertion of the doors and windows in the south west elevation, would give a domestic appearance to the building. However, they would be relatively small and, given the limited views available from the wider landscape, I do not find they would be unacceptably harmful.
17. I am also mindful, that the SPD states that there are non-traditional buildings in the form of small scale industry, which are not sympathetic to the landscape or traditional building style and that in areas where the landscape character has been eroded by previous activity the design approach should aim to improve / restore landscape character. However, in the area immediately to the west of the appeal site, there are many large scale buildings and industrial activity, some currently being constructed. While not in themselves determinative, they reinforce my view that the building is acceptable given its small scale and inconspicuous location.
18. For the reasons above, I conclude that the development is not harmful to the character and appearance of the area. There is therefore no conflict with Policies EQ3 and EQ6 of the High Peak Local Plan 2016 which requires amongst

other things that development is well designed to respect the character, distinctiveness, identity and context of High Peak's townscapes and landscapes.

Location

19. Policy EQ3 of the Local Plan regarding rural development seeks to ensure that new development is strictly controlled in order to protect the landscape's intrinsic character and distinctiveness, including the character, appearance and integrity of the historic and cultural environment and the setting of the Peak District National Park whilst also facilitating sustainable rural community needs, tourism and economic development.
20. Given that the use of the building is for mixed storage and office accommodation then it does not fit into any of the permitted categories of development in the rural area. It is not purely an agricultural development or is it on previously developed land or conversion of an existing building. However, it would provide some support for the existing agricultural unit, allow an element of home working and support the economy through the storage of plant hire equipment. Although general domestic storage is part of the use, which is not included within Policy EQ3, the building would also be used in association with agricultural and economic activity in the rural area which is supported by paragraph 83 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
21. I have also found that the building does not have an unacceptable impact on the character and appearance of the area which is also justification for Policy EQ3. Therefore, I find no fundamental conflict with Policy EQ3 and am of the view that the development is in an appropriate location with particular regard to local and national policy.

Conclusion

22. For the reasons set out above, having had regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Conditions

23. As the building is not yet complete, I have imposed a condition requiring it be constructed in accordance with the approved drawing.

Zoe Raygen

INSPECTOR