The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 March 2021 by Darren Ellis MPlan

Decision by Chris Preston BA (Hons) BPl MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 June 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/R0660/D/20/3265218
Pownall Farm, 2 Hollin Lane, Styal, SK9 4JH

- 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 Chris Poole against the decision of Cheshire East Borough Council.
- The application Ref 20/3731M, dated 11 August 2020, was refused by notice dated 21 October 2020.
- The development proposed is alterations and extension to roof to provide a loft conversion with front and rear dormers.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Preliminary Matters

3. A previous planning application[1] for alterations and an extension to the roof to provide a loft conversion with rear dormers was granted in 2018. The only difference between this appeal scheme and the previous planning permission is the proposed addition of the two dormer windows and a rooflight to the front roof slope. This appeal will therefore focus solely on the front dormers and rooflight.

4. The appeal site lies within the Green Belt. The Council has concluded that the proposal would not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt and has raised no objections on these grounds. Based on the evidence before me I have no reason to find otherwise. This appeal will therefore address the main issues described below.

Main Issues

5. The main issues are the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the appeal property and whether the proposal preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the Styal Conservation Area.

[1] Planning application reference 18/5264M

Reasons for the Recommendation

6. The appeal property is a two-storey detached dwelling set in a generous plot. The site is within the Styal Conservation Area (the CA). Although neither party has provided a copy of the Conservation Area Appraisal, I understand from the Conservation Officer's comments and the appellant's statement that the property has been identified as a key unlisted building within the CA.

7. From the information before me, the CA covers a wide area, including the central core of Styal village and the surrounding hinterland including historic farmsteads, Quarry Bank Mill and parts of the wooded Bollin Valley. Thus, it has a mixed character. The properties along Hollin Lane are predominately detached dwellings, with a variety of designs and house sizes. Some of the properties have front gables or dormers, although the properties to the north of the appeal site fall outside the Conservation Area. The historic nature of the buildings, the pattern of development and architectural features contribute to the significance of the Conservation Area. The property at the appeal site is of interest as a result of its historic use, being associated with the agricultural history of the area, the associated relationship with adjacent converted buildings and on account of its attractive and symmetrical design. As such, the simple design and the original architectural features of the appeal property contribute positively to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

8. The roof of the property is an integral part of its character. The unbroken roof plane, the overhanging eaves and the use of natural slate add to the character of the building, being reflective of its symmetrical and simple form. The 2018 planning permission would see the roof increased in height and three rear dormers constructed to allow for a roof conversion. However, the front facing slope, which is prominent from the roadside, would remain unbroken by any dormers, thereby retaining the simple proportions. The proposed front dormers would align with the ground floor windows, thereby retaining a degree of symmetry. However the dormers would be larger and therefore out of scale with the first floor windows on account of their overall height and width. As such, the proposed dormers would fail to respect the window hierarchy of the property and their somewhat bulky profile would represent a modern and unsympathetic addition. Furthermore, the dormers and rooflight would add clutter to and dominate the roof slope which would be at odds with the simple form of the existing building.

9. The rear dormers allowed in the 2018 permission are of a similar size and appearance to the proposed front dormers and are greater in number. However, unlike the proposed front dormers, the rear dormers would have very limited visibility from the public viewpoints and therefore they would not have a significant effect on the street scene and the Conservation Area.

10. For the above reasons, the proposal would detract from the character and appearance of the appeal property and the group of properties that share the design features mentioned above. Furthermore, the proposal would neither preserve nor enhance the character or appearance of the Styal Conservation Area and would consequently cause harm to the significance of the heritage asset, although the harm would be less than substantial.

11. Paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposed

development. In this case, no public benefits of the scheme have been identified. Furthermore, the Framework indicates that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.

12. The appellant states that the property is currently in a run-down appearance and that the proposal would enhance the appearance of the building. However, the scheme that was approved in 2018 would achieve this aim, with the appeal proposal being an addition to this approved scheme. Furthermore, it has not been demonstrated that the 2018 scheme would not go ahead should this appeal fail.

13. For these reasons the proposed development would cause harm to the character and appearance of the appeal property and the Conservation Area, and no material considerations would outweigh this harm. As such the proposal would conflict with Policy SE1 of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (July 2017) (CELPS) and Saved Policy DC2 of the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan (January 2004) (MBLP), which require development proposals to protect and enhance local character and respect architectural features of the building. The proposal would also fail to accord with the Policy SE7 of the CELPS and Saved Policy BE2 of the MBLP, which requires development to not harm heritage assets and make a positive contribution to the character of the historic environment.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

Darren Ellis

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

15. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and, on that basis, I agree with the recommendation and shall dismiss the appeal.

Chris Preston

INSPECTOR