
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 November 2021

by C McDonagh BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 November 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/M9496/D/21/3277266

Rouster Farm, Hazelwood Road, Swythamley, Rushton Spencer SK11 0SL

- 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 Roger Lawrence against the decision of Peak District National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref NP/SM/0920/0886, dated 23 September 2020, was refused by notice dated 18 December 2020.
 - The development proposed is a first floor extension to house.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The Government published the revised National Planning Policy Framework in July 2021 (the Framework), which forms a material consideration in the determination of this appeal. I consider that there have been no fundamental changes relevant to the main issue in this appeal and therefore, I will not prejudice any party by taking the Framework into account in reaching my decision.
3. The application was refused in part against Policy L3 of the Peak District National Park Core Strategy Development Plan Document (adopted October 2011) (the CS). However, I was provided with a copy of Policy L1 which is also referenced in the officer report. The proposal appears to have been assessed against L1 rather than L3 and I have proceeded on this same basis.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the local area.

Reasons

5. The appeal site comprises a detached two storey farmhouse located within a small cluster of converted agricultural buildings which are orientated towards a central courtyard type area. The host building is of simple form constructed of pink sandstone with a pitched roof. The north elevation faces towards this courtyard area and includes a projecting gable extension with a pitched roof. To one side of this gable is a single storey extension with a sloping roof. The proposal seeks to extend above this smaller extension at first floor level which

- would create a projecting gable of matching appearance and scale to that existing.
6. The Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) advises all extensions should harmonise with the parent building. An extension should respect the dominance of the original building and be subordinate to it in terms of its size and massing.
 7. Rouster Farm is an attractive example of a traditional Peak District farmhouse and I agree that, despite losing its Listed Building status, it has retained vernacular merit. From my observations, the north elevation appears the more important façade architecturally given it includes the main entrance and is orientated 'inwards' and towards the other buildings in this location. The dwelling is designed so that the north elevation and its projecting gable is the more substantial element of the building and, despite its differing roof design, the existing single storey extension is subservient to its host. The proposed extension would add significant additional mass to one side of the north façade which would alter the proportions of the building, making it appear unbalanced and disproportionate while not respecting the dominance of the host dwelling.
 8. Due to the existing gable, I agree that the setting down of the ridge and eaves of the proposal would be at odds with the host building. However, this does not justify allowing the harm the additional mass to this side of the north elevation would cause. Conversely, the appeal site is well screened from the road and the public domain in general. It is visible only to residents of the adjacent buildings within this small enclave. As such I do not consider the harm I have identified to extend across a larger area than this or compromise the scenic beauty of the NP as a whole.
 9. My attention is drawn to photographs showing double gables which exist elsewhere in the National Park (NP), although I have no other information on these. From the photographs, however, these appear to be constructed parallel to the rear of the corresponding host building rather than perpendicular as in this case. Despite the use of matching materials and openings, this would not overcome the harm I have identified.
 10. I am informed of an approved planning application at Old Smithy Farm, although again I have little information on this in order to compare it to the proposal before me. Furthermore, I understand a previously approved and extant application¹ includes a study to one side which is yet to be implemented. While I have considered the appellant's suggestion to agree via a planning obligation to waive their right to construct this element of that application, there is no obligation before me to secure this. In any event, I have assessed the proposal on its own merits.
 11. Based on the above, the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling. This would be contrary to policies GSP1 and GSP3 of the CS and policies DMC3 and DMH7 of the Peak District Local Plan Development Management Policies (adopted May 2019). These seek, among other things, for development to respect, conserve and enhance all valued characteristics of the site and building subject to the proposal. Attention should be paid to design which is in accordance with the Design Guide.

¹ NP/SM/0799/082

12. I have found that the proposal would not harm the landscape character and scenic beauty of the NP and as such the proposal would accord with policy L1 of the CS, which seeks to conserve and enhance valued landscape character. The application was also refused against policy DMC8 of the DMP, although this applies to development in Conservation Areas. From my understanding of the site, it is not located within a Conservation Area and as such this policy is not relevant.

Other Matters

13. I understand that the appellant concerns with the Council's handling of the application, including that case officer may not have undertaken a site visit in their assessment. However, I understand this may be due to restrictions caused by the ongoing pandemic. In any event, I was able to visit the site and although I understand the appellant's frustrations in this regard, this has not had a bearing on my decision.

Conclusion

14. The proposal would harm the character and appearance of the host building although I have found that this harm would not extend to the wider area or compromise the scenic beauty of the NP. Nevertheless it would conflict with the development plan taken as a whole. There are no material considerations that indicate the decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, for the reasons given, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

C McDonagh

INSPECTOR