



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 January 2022

by M Ollerenshaw BSc (Hons) MTPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 February 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/A2335/D/21/3288386

2 Lythe Brow Barn, Quernmore Road, Quernmore LA2 9LZ

- 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 Ross Brevitt against the decision of Lancaster City Council.
 - The application Ref 21/00510/FUL, dated 21 April 2021, was refused by notice dated 12 October 2021.
 - The development proposed is described as 'proposed single storey extension'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of development in the heading above has been taken from the planning application form. In Part E of the appeal form a different wording has been entered, but as the parties have not provided written confirmation that a revised description of development has been agreed I have used the one given in the original application.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area, including the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Reasons

4. The appeal site comprises a semi-detached former barn, now in use as a three bedroom dwelling. It forms part of a small group of properties within the former Lythe Brow Farmstead, all of which are now in residential use. The site is located on Quernmore Road in the countryside, within the AONB. Paragraph 176 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) places great weight to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in such areas, which have the highest status of protection.
5. The residential conversion of the former agricultural building has sought to ensure that its former character and appearance were retained. The northern elevation of the building contains a number of door and window openings at ground floor level with several small window openings at first floor. The high eaves level on this elevation results in a strongly vertical emphasis. The southern elevation of the building includes a lean-to extension and buttress walls, which are not within the appeal site, together with several rooflights.

6. I note that the Council considers the barn to be a non-designated heritage asset. However, I have no substantive evidence of this before me nor do I have any indication of the mechanism used to classify the status of this building in this regard, such as a local list. In the absence of any indication that such criteria have been subject to public consultation, I cannot be satisfied that the approach taken to identifying non-designated heritage assets reflects the current advice set out in the Planning Practice Guidance. Accordingly, I have dealt with the appeal site on the basis that it is not a non-designated heritage asset.
7. Notwithstanding this, and despite it having been altered as part of the conversion works, the host property retains many original features and has a pleasing agricultural appearance which reflects its former use. In particular, it retains its characteristic rectangular plan form, barn door openings, and a simple and uncluttered northern elevation. The building contributes positively to the traditional character and appearance of the farmstead and the wider rural area.
8. The proposed development would take the form of a single storey extension with a lean-to roof including a covered porch, which would extend across almost the full width of the northern elevation of the property. It would be constructed in stone with a slate roof to match the existing building with composite timber and aluminium for the windows and doors.
9. There is a dispute between the parties regarding which is the principal elevation of the host property. The Council's view is that the northern elevation, which contains the only entrance to the property, is the principal elevation. The appellant considers that the principal focus of the building would historically have been towards the courtyard to the east of the farmhouse and south of the barn, which they say is further evidenced by the large opening in the south facing elevation of the building.
10. Irrespective of which is the principal elevation, the width of the proposed extension and the way that it would project forward of the northern elevation, means that it would compete with and partly obscure this elevation of the building. Furthermore, the proposal would result in a cluttered appearance and be at odds with the vertical proportions of this elevation. It would be of overly domestic appearance and therefore not in-keeping with the traditional agricultural character and appearance of the host property. Moreover, it would disrupt and unbalance the simple linear form of the building.
11. Although the host property is set back from Quernmore Road, the proposal would still be clearly visible from the road, particularly when approaching from the north. Given my findings above that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host property, it follows that the contribution that the barn makes to local landscape character and the visual amenity of the area, including the AONB, would be diminished.
12. I note that the attached neighbouring property, No 1, has been extended to the western side elevation adjacent to the road. That extension also projects forward of the northern elevation. However, unlike the appeal proposal it does not obscure or compete with that elevation of the building and therefore it does not lend support to the current proposal. The existing single storey lean-to on the southern elevation of the host property is not widely visible from public

vantage points and it does not extend across the full width of the property. Consequently, it is not harmful to the character of the building.

13. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would be significantly harmful to the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area, including the AONB. Consequently, the proposal would conflict with Policies DM29 and DM46 of A Local Plan for Lancaster District 2011-2031 Part Two: Review of the Development Management Development Plan Document (2020) (LP2) and Policies EN2 and EN3 of A Local Plan for Lancaster District 2011-2031 Part One: Strategic Policies and Land Allocations DPD (2020). Amongst other things, these policies seek to ensure that development proposals contribute positively to the character of the area through good design, having regard to local distinctiveness, and seek to conserve and enhance the landscape character and visual amenity of AONBs. The proposal would also fail to comply with Sections 12 and 15 of the Framework which seek to ensure that development proposals are well-designed and conserve and enhance the natural environment.
14. Given I have found that it has not been demonstrated that the building is a non-designated heritage asset, I have identified no conflict with Policy DM41 of the LP2, which relates to the protection of non-designated heritage assets and their settings, or with Section 16 of the Framework.

Other Matters

15. I acknowledge that the proposed extension would provide enlarged accommodation for the appellant and that, due to land ownership constraints, the northern elevation is the only location where an extension to the property could feasibly take place. However, in the form proposed this would be to the detriment of the character and appearance of the property and the surrounding area. Therefore, this consideration does not outweigh the harm that I have identified.
16. I note that the appellant raises concerns with the way the Council has handled the application. However, that is a procedural matter which does not impact on my assessment of the planning merits of the case.

Conclusion

17. For the above reasons, having considered the development plan as a whole, the approach in the Framework, and all other relevant material considerations, the appeal should be dismissed.

M Ollerenshaw

INSPECTOR