



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 July 2022

By M Clowes BA (Hons) MCD PGCERT (Arch Con) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18th August 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/A2335/D/22/3296384

Ingleborough View, Low Barn, Station Road, Hornby LA2 8JN

- 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 Mrs Pauline Gardner against the decision of Lancaster City Council.
 - The application Ref 214/01536/FUL, dated 6 December 2021, was refused by notice dated 25 February 2022.
 - The development proposed is replacement windows and roof.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The appeal property is located in a prominent location at the crossroads of Station Road, the B6480 and Moor Lane. The building is distinguishable as a former traditional agricultural barn, now converted to a dwelling.
4. The Council identify the appeal property as a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA). There is no statutory listing process for NDHA's, nor any formal definition of them in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) indicates that NDHA's are buildings, monuments, sites, places or areas identified by plan making bodies as having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets. Whilst I am unaware as to whether the Council has followed the advice in the PPG in identifying the building as such, the guidance is clear that in some cases, local planning authorities may also identify NDHA's as part of the decision-making process on planning applications.
5. Based on the evidence before me, and my own observations on site, I consider that the appeal building merits consideration as a NDHA. I find the significance of the appeal building as a NDHA is mainly derived from its historic sandstone wall construction; simple L-shaped form; solid, unbroken catslide roof and arched former cart door opening to the front elevation. Despite the introduction of domestic features including the chimneys, regimented window pattern and a conservatory, the appeal building retains much of its traditional character and

form, illustrative of early 19th century agricultural architecture and practices. Given its prominent location, it contributes positively to the character and appearance of this part of the village and the AONB, designated for its natural beauty and wider cultural heritage as a rural landscape.

6. I agree that typically, uPVC windows maintain a smooth, reflective sheen and uniform manufactured finish that lacks the finesse and craftsmanship of traditionally constructed timber windows, which age over time. As such, it would be readily apparent that proposed windows would be modern uPVC replacements. The appellant has provided specifications for the proposed windows but there are no detailed drawings of the existing windows with which to make a comparison. It is unclear which windows would be fixed and which would be opening and what the thickness and profile of the frames including openings lights would be. Without clear section drawings comparing the existing windows with the proposed uPVC replacements, I cannot be certain of the full impact of the replacement windows on the character of the NDHA.
7. Nevertheless, the appropriateness of a particular window frame material is not solely related to the visual appearance, but also the authenticity of materials and how this relates to the heritage values of the particular building. My attention has been drawn to Historic England's Adapting Traditional Farm Buildings guidance (2017) which encourages the use of timber on converted barns to preserve their agricultural character.
8. The existing windows are timber, set into a reveal, with very slender frames where the top opening lights are difficult to distinguish from those that are non-opening. They are therefore of a suitable material and design that is authentic to the period when the building was constructed. This contributes to the building's authenticity and integrity as a NDHA.
9. In this particular location the appeal site is experienced amongst a group of historic buildings including Butt Yeats and High Barn on the opposite side of the B6480, where the built form and historic materials including timber windows, contribute positively to the rural setting of the village and wider AONB.
10. The site is publicly visible from 3 main roads and although there is no footpath to the front of the dwelling, I saw a number of walkers passing by in reasonably close proximity. Even if the appeal property were only visible to passing vehicles, this does not justify the use of non-traditional materials which would result in discordant additions and a cumulative diminishment of the character of the former barn.
11. I do not doubt the need for a new roof to ensure that the dwelling remains watertight. Although I note that the existing roof is concrete it does not follow that such material would be suitable now, given the time that has elapsed since the original conversion and the changes to local and national planning policy within this period. I recognise that there are a mixture of roofing materials nearby including but not limited to, stone slate roofs laid in diminishing courses and slate. Nevertheless, modern interlocking concrete tiles have level edges and are without texture, such that the resultant roof would appear uncharacteristically smooth and flat, contrary to the character of the NDHA. There is no substantive evidence before me that hardworn tiles are difficult to source or that slate, stone slate or artificial versions of these materials could not be used.

12. Whilst the scheme does not propose the insertion of new openings, nor alteration of the shape or pitch of the roof, the character and heritage significance of the building is not restricted to these features in isolation. Rather the significance arises from the combination of attributes that form the overall character of the asset. The scale of harm from the wholesale replacement of the windows and roof would be significant, not least due to the size of the building and the dominance of its roofscape and fenestration.
13. The proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the host property and the wider area, which forms part of the AONB. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policies DM29, DM41 and DM46 of the Local Plan for Lancaster 2011-2031; Part 2, Review of the Development Management DPD (2020) which seeks amongst other things, that new development contributes positively to the character of the area including the protected landscape, and that alterations to NDHA's should be sympathetic in terms of style and palette of materials. It would also fail to comply with paragraphs 176 and 197 of the Framework which amongst other things, seek the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and the conservation and enhancement of cultural heritage in a protected landscape.

Other Matters

14. I am referred to appeal decision 3211659. However, the building the subject of that appeal was not identified as a NDHA. It also had a different context being some distance from the main road. I do not find the circumstances comparable to the appeal before me. Likewise, the development described in appeal decision 3257903 related to the demolition and replacement of stone barns. Although the stone barn was considered to be a NDHA, the site was not located in an AONB. In that instance the benefits of providing a new building for farm animals which further improved visibility splays at a vehicular access, were considered to outweigh the harm arising from the loss of the NDHA. The context of this decision therefore differs from the appeal scheme before me.
15. Reference is made to the use of uPVC windows for their energy efficient properties. There is no evidence before me that uPVC would significantly outperform well installed and maintained double glazed timber windows. Whilst uPVC units may require less maintenance, they are a less sustainable material choice. Having carefully considered the potential benefits of the scheme, dismissal of the appeal is a proportionate response to the well-established planning objectives of protecting heritage assets and areas of high landscape and cultural value, and I am led to a dismissal of the appeal.

Conclusion

16. I have found that the proposal would cause harm to the significance of the building as a NDHA. There are no public benefits arising from the scheme to outweigh the identified harm. As a whole, there are no considerations that would warrant taking a decision other than in accordance with the development plan. I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

M Clowes

INSPECTOR