



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 December 2022

by D M Young JP BSc (Hons) MPlan MRTPI MIHE

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17th January 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/M9496/W/22/3304095

Long Roods Farm, Ashford Lane, Ashford in the Water DE45 1NJ

- 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 & Mrs Thornhill against the decision of Peak District National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref NP/DDD/1221/1306, dated 1 December 2021, was refused by notice dated 6 July 2022.
 - The development proposed is the conversion of part of agricultural building to home gym and self-catering holiday accommodation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for conversion of part of agricultural building to home gym and self-catering holiday accommodation at Long Roods Farm, Ashford Lane, Ashford in the Water DE45 1NJ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref NP/DDD/1221/1306, dated 1 December 2021, subject to the conditions set out in the schedule to this decision.

Main Issues

2. The main issue is whether the development would accord with the development plan insofar as it relates to the conversion of agricultural buildings to holiday accommodation.

Reasons

3. Long Roods Farm (Grade II listed) is an isolated farmhouse located adjacent to the B6465 Ashford Lane approximately 1.6km north of Ashford in the Water. The wider site comprises a loose collection of agricultural buildings arranged around a yard area. Long Roods Cottage, located on the opposite side of the yard, is already used as for self-catering holiday accommodation.
4. The appeal building is a single storey barn located to the west of the site. Its front (east) elevation faces the yard area with the rear elevation backing onto the open countryside to the west which rises away from the farm. Due to its location, the appeal building has very little visual exposure from Ashford Lane.
5. The building is constructed of local gritstone with a dual pitch tile roof. The building has a strong horizontal form and high degree of solidity with small windows and cart openings in the gables and on the east elevation. The Authority accept that the building is outside of the domestic curtilage of the farmhouse and is not therefore a curtilage listed building.

6. The appeal proposal involves the conversion of part of the appeal building to a gym and 2-bed holiday let. The remainder of the building would be converted to a swimming pool pursuant to an extant planning permission.¹ This permission is highly relevant as it establishes the principle of the building's conversion to a non-agricultural use.
7. The Authority's reason for refusal alleges that the barn is "*a non-traditional former agricultural building*" and therefore its conversion to holiday accommodation would be contrary to Policy RT2 of the Core Strategy² (the CS) and Policy DMC10 of the Development Management Policies Document³ (the DMPD).
8. Policy RT2 seeks to provide accommodation for visitors to the Peak District National Park (PDNP). The supporting text recognises the importance of providing a wide range of holiday accommodation to enable people from all walks of life to visit and enjoy the area. The policy itself states that the change of use of a traditional building of historic or vernacular merit will be permitted, except where it would create an unacceptable landscape impact on the open countryside.
9. Unusually, I note that the reason for refusal does not contain an allegation of planning harm. For example, it is not alleged that the appeal scheme would harm the character of the area or the main group of farm buildings which are the principle aims of the policy. Given that the external appearance of the appeal building would be markedly similar to the approved scheme, I see no reason to take a contrary view on these matters.
10. The Authority's delegated report does state "*Allowing the conversion of buildings like this to holiday accommodation would undermine the strategy of converting heritage assets to holiday accommodation*" (my emphasis). However no further discussion, analysis or evidence is provided in respect of this argument. I find it difficult to understand how the conversion of this building would prevent or fetter other schemes from coming forward.
11. For this line of argument to carry weight, evidence would need to be provided to show that there is 1) an oversupply of self-catering accommodation in the PDNP and 2) that this was preventing or discouraging the conversion of heritage assets. Finally, I note that the strategy contained in Policy RT2 is not exclusive to 'heritage assets' but rather "*traditional buildings of historic or vernacular merit*".
12. Putting that fundamental point to one side, the determinative issue as far as compliance with Policy RT2 is concerned is whether the appeal building is "*historic or of vernacular merit*". No definition is provided within the policy and therefore one must exercise a degree of planning judgement. I understand the building was constructed around 1939 and therefore on that basis alone I would be hard pushed to describe it as 'modern'.
13. The delegated report does refer to a date of 1919 which is contained within the supporting text to a different policy in the DMPD. However, and

¹ LPA Ref NP/DDD/1116/1127 allows for the conversion of the building to a swimming pool, office and tractor shed.

² Full Title: Peak District National Park Local Development Framework: Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2011

³ Full title: Development Management Policies (Part 2 of the Local Plan for the Peak District National Park) 2019

notwithstanding supporting text is not policy, Policy DMC3 is not cited in the reason for refusal. Moreover, there is no cogent explanation before me as to why 1919 is considered an appropriate cut-off date. Without this and while it might be a helpful to have a starting point, I am not persuaded that the use of an arbitrary date alone to determine whether a building is 'traditional', constitutes good planning.

14. My immediate impression upon viewing the appeal building was that it was 'traditional' on account of its stone walls and simple form, layout and fenestration. These design aspects were clearly informed by its historical use as a cowshed. The appellant has drawn my attention to the Design Guide SPD which sets out that that a traditional building style is defined by its robustness, simplicity and horizontality of form. With regard to those matters, I see no reason to depart from the initial assessment I made on site.
15. Based on the foregoing, I am satisfied that the appeal building is '*traditional and of vernacular merit*'. Its conversion to holiday accommodation would therefore accord with CS Policy RT2. Both parties have made written submissions in respect of DMPD Policy DMC10. However, as I found compliance with Policy RT2, there is no need for me to consider the scheme against this policy.

Conclusion

16. To provide certainty, safeguard the appearance of the building and its setting and to ensure compliance with Policy RT2, I have imposed conditions covering the approved plans, occupation of the building, permitted development rights and external materials.
17. For the reasons given above and taking into account all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should succeed.

D. M. Young

Inspector

SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 2112-03A and 2112-02B.
- 3) This permission relates solely to the use of the barn hereby approved for short-let holiday residential use, ancillary to Roods Farm. The property shall not be occupied as a permanent dwelling and shall not be occupied by any one person for a period exceeding 28 days in any calendar year. The owner shall maintain a register of occupants for each calendar year, which shall be made available for inspection by the National Park Authority on request.
- 4) Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development Order 2015 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that order) no alterations to the external appearance of the converted barn shall be carried out and no extensions, porches, ancillary buildings, satellite antenna, gates fences, walls or other means of boundary enclosure shall be erected on the site without the National Park Authority's prior written consent.
- 5) The solar panels hereby permitted shall be coloured black with a black framework.