



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 July 2023

by F Harrison BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 07 August 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/E2734/D/23/3316903

Coachmans Cottage, New Road, High Birstwith, North Yorkshire HG3 2JF

- 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 John Harrison against the decision of Harrogate Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 22/04133/FUL, dated 2 November 2022, was refused by notice dated 6 January 2023.
 - The development is described as 'retrospective householder planning application for the extension of a basement, ground floor and rear dormers'.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The development has been constructed and therefore I am considering this appeal retrospectively.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area, including the appeal property and the Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Reasons

4. The appeal site is a triangular plot bounded by three roads and accommodates a detached dwelling, located centrally within the spacious plot. To the east lies open countryside and the area has a rural character. The appeal site falls within the Nidderdale AONB, characterised by its rolling pastoral landscape, sporadic farmsteads and traditional dwellings. The site also lies within the Lower Nidderdale Valley north west of Harrogate Landscape Character Area (LCA), which is a large-scale, broad valley with a flat floor that channels extensive views.
5. In considering the development, I have had regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB as set out in Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and paragraph 176 of the National Planning Policy Framework which requires that great weight is given to conserving and enhancing the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB.
6. Two dormers have been added at the rear of the middle section of the dwelling, finished with similar materials to the roof. While set down from the ridge line, with separation between them and the side and a modest set up from the eaves, the flat roofs of the dormers have a horizontal emphasis and boxy

appearance which dominates the roof. This unbalances the traditional scale and form of the converted barn in this section of the appeal property.

7. The introduction of a domestic feature into the roofscape is incongruous and not in keeping with the agricultural character of the converted barn or the wider rural landscaped setting. Moreover, owing to their depth and height, the two dormers discernibly alter the roof profile, resulting in a marked visual difference between the erected dormers and the original rooflights previously approved by the Council.
8. While the Harrogate District Landscape Character Assessment (2004) does not make specific reference to dormer windows in the LCA within which the appeal site is located, it advises that the LCA's ability to accept change without harm to its character is limited, especially where development would be visible.
9. The appeal property occupies a prominent position, owing to the triangular shaped plot and the sloping topography away from the site. Despite the use of matching materials and the boundary planting and trees at the site which afford some screening of the development, the incongruous presence of the dormers is experienced from the surrounding roads. The development draws the eye and does not relate positively to the rural character of the area, detracting from the natural beauty of the AONB in longer views.
10. For the reasons given, the development unacceptably harms the character and appearance of the area, including the appeal property and the AONB, in conflict with policies HP3, GS6 and NE4 of the Harrogate District Local Plan 2014-2035 (2020). Amongst other things, these policies require development to enhance or reinforce local distinctiveness, conserve and enhance the beauty and special qualities of the Nidderdale AONB and to be sympathetic to distinctive LCAs.
11. The development is also contrary to the guidance contained within the House Extensions and Garages Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2005) regarding dormer extensions which advises that they should not dominate the roof and generally have pitched roofs.

Other Matters

12. There are two Grade II listed buildings nearby to the appeal site, known as 'Lodge to Swarcliffe Hall (now Grosvenor School)' and 'Swarcliffe Hall now Grosvenor House School'. Neither of the main parties have concerns regarding the impact of the development on the significance of these designated heritage assets and their settings. Having considered the development and visited the site, I concur with that view and find that the development would preserve their significance.

Conclusion

13. My above findings bring the development into conflict with the development plan, read as a whole. There are no material considerations that have been shown to have sufficient weight to warrant a decision otherwise than in accordance with it. Therefore, I conclude that the appeal is dismissed.

F Harrison

INSPECTOR