



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 August 2023

by Sarah Manchester BSc MSc PhD MEnvSc

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 August 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/C9499/D/23/3319220

Fechs Sheiling, Kiln Hill Lane, Feizor, Austwick, Lancaster LA2 8DF

- 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 and Mrs Mark Benson against the decision of Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref C/04/709, dated 17 November 2022, was refused by notice dated 11 January 2023.
 - The development proposed is single storey extension to an existing dwelling to form a new entrance hall.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. Planning permission (ref C/49/26F) was granted in 2013 for erection of extension to form new entrance hall. The development has not been completed, but the foundations and part of the sub floor slab were installed under the rear courtyard. On the basis that the permission has been implemented, it is extant and it provides a fallback position.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the appeal property.

Reasons

4. Fechs Sheiling is a detached dwelling formed by the conversion of 2 large traditional barns joined by a contemporary 2 storey link extension. The barns are parallel to one another but on stepped building lines. Small courtyards to the front and rear of the dwelling are each framed by the gable end of one barn and part of the side elevation of the other. The building is constructed in random rubble stone with a stone slate roof and painted timber windows and doors. It is prominently located close to the road in the small rural settlement of Feizor, which is characterised by traditional stone dwellings and farmstead buildings. The former barns have been sympathetically converted and the dwelling is a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA).
5. The proposal would be sited in the sunken rear courtyard. The pitched roof single storey extension would extend across part of the 2 storey gable end of the south-eastern barn. It would be joined to the north-western barn side elevation by a narrow flat roof glazed link section that would finish below the single storey eaves of the extension.

6. Although it would occupy only a part of the gable end elevation of one barn, it would be the same length as the exposed side elevation of the other. The proposal would finish below the first floor windows in the side elevation, but the pitched roof would be only roughly 0.5m below the 2 storey eaves. Consequently, the 2 storey side elevation and its original openings would be enclosed at ground floor level and the first floor would only be visible in close oblique views. The 3D visuals further confirm that the proposal, by virtue of its size, height and siting, would obscure much of the adjoining 2 storey rear gable end. Irrespective that the lower part of the extension would be below the surrounding ground level, it would be a substantial addition to the property. While it would be subservient to its host in terms of its dimensions, the proposal would be a conspicuously bulky addition that would not relate well and it would overwhelm and dominate the rear part of the property.
7. The proposal would be finished in matching materials and its pitched roof would match the slope of the adjoining 2 storey gable end. Even so, while its gable end wall might harmonise with the historic stone walls, it would not be read as part of the original barns nor as a later agricultural extension. The overly large and domestic addition, including its large patio doors and rooflights, would be a discordant feature that would detract from the locally distinctive traditional rural agricultural character and appearance of the former barns. Furthermore, rather than retaining and enhancing the legibility of the relatively simple barns, it would have a somewhat complicated and awkward form and relationship that would diminish the visual amenity and visual separation of the historic barns.
8. The existing historic quoins would be visible internally, original openings would be retained and the enclosed historic stonework would not be plastered. While the proposal might therefore result in minimal impacts on the original historic fabric of the building, this would not mitigate the visual harm. Moreover, while the proposal would be relatively unobtrusively sited to the rear of the dwelling, such that it might not detract from the special qualities of the National Park so far as they are understood and enjoyed by the public, nevertheless it would fail to conserve and enhance the NDHA and cultural heritage.
9. Therefore, I conclude that the proposal would harm the historic character and appearance of the property. It would conflict with Policies SP1, SP2 and L1 of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Local Plan 2015-2030 Adopted December 2016 (the LP). These require, among other things, that proposals conserve and enhance the historic environment and cultural heritage, including the significance of non-designated heritage assets. Although the traditional buildings have been converted, there would be tension with the aims of LP Policy L3 in relation to avoiding significant extension or alteration and being sensitive to traditional character and appearance. It would also conflict with the aims of The Yorkshire Dales National Park Design Guide in relation to the conservation and enhancement of locally distinctive built heritage and historic interest. It would conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework in terms of being sympathetic to local character and history, maintaining a strong sense of place and conserving the historic environment.

Other Matters

10. The fallback development would be a modest lean to glazed porch extension with a slate roof. By virtue of the design and siting of the porch, the first floor link window would be enclosed and a small first floor window in the rear side

elevation would be removed. However, much of the adjoining elevations of the barns would be exposed and visible. The glazed porch would be a subservient and permeable feature that would enable appreciation of the historic barns.

11. In contrast, the proposal would retain the first floor windows. However, the narrow flat roof link, first floor link window and adjoining first floor side elevation would only be visible in close views looking between the proposed single storey pitch roof and the exposed first floor elevation of its host. Notwithstanding the aluminium glazed doors, the proposal would be a much more substantial feature than the fallback, with significantly increased solid built form, a far greater extent of the external barn walls enclosed or obscured, and the legibility and separation of the 2 historic barns eroded.
12. The proposal would be a benefit to the appellant, including in terms of internal storage space and the retention of the first floor link window that serves the stairwell. However, the stairs are also served by the 2 storey glazed front of the link section. The reduction in light to the stairs, which is not a habitable room, would not be significantly detrimental to the living conditions of the residential occupiers. There is evidence that there are no other solutions that could deliver boot and coat storage for the family.
13. I note the suggestion that the lesser extent of glazing compared to the fallback would better protect the special qualities of the National Park, including the dark skies. However, there is little substantive evidence that the fallback would contribute significantly to light pollution or that the proposal would result in significantly less light spill than the fallback. Drawing all this together, the fallback does not weigh in favour of the proposal.
14. The proposal would be heated by ground source heat pump and it would function to protect the main dwelling from drafts and heat loss through doorways. As the dwelling is already served by the ground source heat pump, the renewable energy source is not a benefit of the proposal. The reduction in drafts and heat loss, in a building privately heated by renewable energy would not appear to be a significant public benefit.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons set out above, the proposal would conflict with the development plan and there are no material considerations, including the appellants' personal circumstances and the fallback, that would outweigh that conflict.
16. Therefore, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Sarah Manchester

INSPECTOR