



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 November 2023

by L Clark BA(HONS) DIPTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 1 February 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/X1355/D/23/3327172

Pit House, Pit Lane, Brandon, Durham DH7 8SZ

- 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 Bill Alexander against the decision of Durham County Council.
 - The application Ref DM/23/01055/FPA, dated 17 April 2023, was refused by notice dated 21 July 2023.
 - The development proposed is part demolition of existing attached garage and erection of two storey extension to the side of the property.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for part demolition of existing attached garage, erection of two storey extension to the side of the property at Pit House, Pit Lane, Brandon, Durham DH7 8SZ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref DM/23/01055/FPA, dated 17 April 2023, subject to the conditions set out in the attached schedule.

Applications for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mr Bill Alexander against Durham County Council. This is the subject of a separate Decision.

Preliminary Matter

3. The map submitted alongside the appeal refers to Pit House as being set within the Beamish Burn Conservation Area; however, it is apparent from the Officer's Report and submitted documents that it is also referred to as the Brandon Village Conservation Area (BVCA). For clarity, I have used BVCA.

Background and Main Issue

4. The only difference between the appeal proposal and a scheme for an extension to Pit House approved in 2022, Ref: DM/22/00562/FPA, is that the appellant is seeking permission to apply white render to the whole property.
5. The main issue is therefore whether the application of white render to Pit House would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the BVCA.

Reasons

6. The BVCA comprises the medieval village of Brandon and an extensive area of surrounding undeveloped agricultural countryside. The significance of the BVCA arises from the historic village which is encapsulated by the extensive countryside. Pit House does not form part of the built historic village. However, the two-storey detached red brick dwelling built circa 20th Century sits on the outer edge of the BVCA in an isolated and elevated position and acts as a

gateway to the wider conservation area. Its position and falling ground levels of the surrounding landscape results in the existing dwelling appearing visually prominent in its context. Even though Pit House is prominent taking into consideration its age and construction, it makes a neutral contribution.

7. The prevailing building material within Brandon village, the core of the BVCA is rough stone and render. Render colours predominantly range from white to cream, with the exception of grey render to the gable of the Bay Horse on the corner of Sawmills Lane and Pit House. The BVCA does contain brick buildings however, these appear limited in number and are located to its outer edges.
8. Pit House is surrounded by open countryside, however, views towards it are limited due to the topography of the surrounding landscape. Pit House is not visible from within the central village core nor when leaving the village along Pit Lane. When views are offered these are relatively short-range with fields to the foreground and an electricity pylon and skyline behind. Approaching the appeal site from the rear on Pit Lane, the ground levels fall towards Brandon village with the house only readily visible below roof level when within the BVCA and in short range. At this point, the existing property is viewed in isolation alongside the surrounding fields. Approaching the appeal site from the north, there are limited long-range views due to ground levels rising towards the junction of Pit Lane from New Brancepeth.
9. The location of Pit House does however appear unique in that it is set alone surrounded by an agricultural landscape. As such the change in appearance from red brick to white render would be noticeable. I have no substantive evidence to demonstrate the sensitivity of the landscape which goes beyond its rural characteristics connected to the medieval village core. Whilst the change in visual appearance colour would be noticeable, it would have a greater synergy with those used within the village core, resulting in a greater sense of connection. Therefore, the change in visual appearance and visual prominence would not undermine either its immediate setting or the BVCA as a whole. With its effects limited to it being a neutral effect on the landscape setting in which it is located and thereby preserving the character and the appearance of the BVCA as a whole.
10. I conclude that the proposed white render to Pit House would preserve the character and appearance of the BVCA. In this respect the proposal would comply with Policy 44 of the County Durham Plan (2020) (CDP) which seeks to sustain the significance of designated heritage assets. I also find no harm with regards to the wider rural landscape setting. The proposed development would therefore comply with Policies 29 and 39 of the CDP which seeks, amongst other matters, to ensure development contributes positively to an area's character and heritage significance; and not cause unacceptable harm to the character, quality or distinctiveness of the landscape.

Conditions

11. I have considered the Council's suggested conditions in light of the Framework and Planning Practice Guidance. In addition to the standard time limit, a condition specifying the plans is necessary in the interests of certainty.
12. A condition to control the colour and application of render is required to protect the character and appearance of the area. A condition to ensure that mitigation

measures for protected species are carried out as part of the development is necessary for nature conservation.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

L Clark

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:

21/PHL-04
23/PHL-02
23/PHL-03
- 3) Notwithstanding condition 2, prior to the application of render to any external surface of the development hereby permitted, details of the make, colour, and texture of the external render, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and retained thereafter as approved.
- 4) The proposal shall be carried out in strict accordance with section 4 (conclusions and recommendations) of the Bat Survey Report prepared by Tyne Ecology received 10 July 2023.

*** END OF CONDITIONS ***