



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 May 2024

by J D Westbrook BSc(Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 June 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/P1045/W/24/3337034

Collycroft Cottage (Sessions), Collycroft Hill, Clifton, Derbyshire, DE6 2GN

- 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 Sessions against the decision of Derbyshire Dales District Council.
 - The application Ref: 23/00829/FUL, dated 24 July 2023, was refused by notice dated 25 September 2023.
 - The development proposed is the conversion of a garage to form a holiday let.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues in this case are:
 - whether the proposed conversion represents sustainable development, and
 - the effect of the conversion on the character and appearance of the area around Collycroft Hill.

Reasons

3. Collycroft Cottage is an end-terraced house, one of three traditional-style cottages set in open countryside to the south-west of Ashbourne and close to the village of Clifton. It is accessed from the main A523 road via Collycroft Hill. It has a detached double garage some 10-15 metres to the north, and the proposal would involve the conversion of the garage into a holiday let.
4. Policy S4 of the Council's Local Plan (LP) indicates that in the case of proposals to re-use an existing building or buildings that are capable and worthy of conversion, any such conversion should involve a building that positively contributes to an established local character and sense of place.
5. Policy HC8 of the LP indicates that outside of defined settlement development limits, the conversion of existing buildings to residential use from other uses will be permitted where all of the following criteria are met: a) the building is of permanent and substantial construction; b) the form, bulk and general design of the existing building makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of its surroundings; c) the building can be converted without extensive alteration, rebuilding or extension; and d) the conversion does not have a detrimental impact upon the character and appearance of the building and its surroundings.

6. Policy EC8 of the LP indicates that Council will support the development of Peak District tourism and culture, and that this will be achieved by, amongst other things, supporting sustainable rural tourism.
7. The Council contends that the proposed holiday let would be remote from basic services and facilities and occupants would be reliant upon the private motor vehicle. The outbuilding itself is not of historic or architectural merit and does not make a positive contribution to its surroundings. Therefore, the proposal would result in an unsustainable and harmful form of development in the countryside.
8. The appellants contend that the appeal site is within walking distance of facilities at a nearby garden centre and the village of Clifton; that it would have no detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the existing building or the local area; that it is close to walking routes; and that it would support the local economy.

Sustainability

9. Collycroft Hill is a short, narrow cul-de-sac accessed from the A523 via Dobbinhouse Lane. There are no pavements along the road, nor are there pavements along the main A523, which is a busy main road and has a speed limit of 60mph in the vicinity of the appeal site. The main road is unlit, as is Collycroft Hill. The nearest facilities are the Fairways Garden Centre and The Cock Inn in Clifton. Both are around a 15-20 minute walk from the appeal property. In the case of the Garden Centre the walk would be along a main road with no footway or street lighting. In the case of the Inn, it would entail a walk along the main road and crossing the road, again with no street lighting. I do not consider it likely that occupants of the proposed holiday property would walk to these facilities, especially at night. Moreover, while these facilities offer meals and speciality food, they do not offer shopping for the range of day-to-day items usually required by self-catering tourists.
10. I have no details of footpaths or tourist walks in the vicinity, but from my site visit, it would seem likely that occupants of the holiday property would use a car to visit tourist facilities in the wider area, including the town of Ashbourne which is over 2 miles away. There would not appear to be any public transport facilities within easy reach of the appeal site.
11. In the light of the above, I consider that the proposal would not represent sustainable rural tourism. I acknowledge that occupiers of the holiday let would be likely to spend money in the surrounding area, but the benefits to the local economy would be very limited and this would not outweigh the lack of sustainability associated with the proposal by virtue of its relatively isolated location and the likely dependence of the occupiers on private car transport.

Character and appearance

12. The garage is a large, brick-built detached building situated some 10-15 metres away from Collycroft Cottage, and with a parking area to the front. The garage appears as a somewhat more modern building with a pitched roof, two sets of garage doors in the front elevation, a small ground-floor window at each end, and a small, covered lean-to at the side. The conversion would involve the creation of living accommodation in the ground-floor of the building, and two additional bedrooms in the roof space, one of which would include a Juliet

window in the side elevation. The garage doors would be replaced with full-height windows and a door, while the small window in the northern side elevation would be replaced with large patio doors.

13. On this issue, I consider that the garage, which is currently a relatively subdued building in its rural context, would not, as converted, sit comfortably with the associated Collycroft Cottage, or the rest of the traditionally designed cottages in the adjacent row. It would appear as a modern house with large amounts of glazing and uncharacteristic features. As such the conversion would have a detrimental impact upon the character and appearance of the building and its surroundings and would not positively contribute to the established local character.

Conclusion

14. In conclusion, I find that the proposed conversion would not represent sustainable rural tourism and would be harmful to the established local character and appearance of the area around Collycroft Hill. On this basis, it would conflict with Policies S4, HC8 and EC8 of the LP. Accordingly, I dismiss the appeal.

J D Westbrook

INSPECTOR