
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 February 2025

by S. Ashworth BA (Hons) BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 6 March 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/M9496/W/3350201

Barn to the south of Hole Carr Farm, Longnor, Buxton SK17 0QX

- 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 George Sherratt against the decision of Peak District National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref is NP/SM/1123/1403.
 - The development proposed is change of use of barn to holiday let, and erection of single storey lean-to extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The barn that forms the subject of this appeal is a small, stone-built field barn, located in the open countryside within the Peak District National Park, the statutory purposes of which are to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area and promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of national parks by the public. The proposal seeks to extend and convert the building to a one-bedroomed holiday let.
4. Policy L1 of the Core Strategy (CS) requires development to conserve and enhance valued landscape character. Policy DMC3 of the Local Plan Part 2: Development Management Policies (DMP) requires development to be of a high standard that respects, protects and where possible enhances the natural beauty, quality and visual amenity of the landscape including the cultural heritage that contribute to a distinctive sense of place. Policy RT2 of the CS allows for the change of use of traditional buildings of historic or vernacular merit to self-catering holiday accommodation except where it would create unacceptable landscape impact on the open countryside. Policy DMC10 of the DMP states that the conversion of a new building will be permitted where a building is capable of conversion, the extent of which would not compromise the significance and character of the building, and where changes brought about by the new use and any associated

- infrastructure, conserves or enhances the heritage significance of the site and its setting and valued landscape characteristics.
5. This vernacular farm building, which is considered to date from the late 18th or early-mid 19th century is considered by the Authority to be a non-designated heritage asset. The building is thought to have been used to house livestock and fodder away from the main farmstead. Its significance as a heritage asset lies largely in its archaeological, historic and architectural interest which together indicate the building's historic function and evidence of traditional farming practices. The open rural setting contributes to the significance of the building as a heritage asset.
 6. The barn is currently in a dilapidated state. The roof and first floor have largely collapsed, the upper part of the east elevation and corner of the building have also collapsed, and there is a significant crack in the south elevation. The structural report submitted with the application, which is over 4 years old is somewhat dated, is limited in its scope but even so concludes that there is significant structural movement to the remaining parts of the south elevation. There is no detailed assessment of the foundations, movement of which is considered to be the cause of the partial collapse of the building, and there is nothing before me which sets out in any detail the extent of rebuilding that would be required to make the building habitable. Accordingly, I share the Authority's concern that there is insufficient information to be sure that the building is capable of conversion.
 7. However, even if it was clear that the building was capable of conversion, the policies outlined above require that development should not have an unacceptable landscape impact and conserves the heritage significance of the site.
 8. The building stands alone, visually isolated, away from other buildings and farmsteads, some 60m back from the highway in an expansive landscape. Its setting is open, with limited vegetation and field boundaries marked by low dry-stone walls. In that context the building is highly prominent in the landscape and is visible from many public vantage points, including from the road for a distance both west and east of the site and from the public footpath network.
 9. The building is reached via an informal access track through a field gate. Materials for the surfacing of the track, and parking area which would accommodate up to 2 cars, could be controlled by condition. Nevertheless, comings and goings by domestic vehicles using the track would be readily apparent and a parked vehicle, although partially screened by the topography from some viewpoints, would be a jarring element in the open rural landscape.
 10. The site boundary has been tightly drawn so that the external space associated with the building would be limited and would be enclosed by a dry-stone wall which would provide a degree of screening. However, the proposed external patio area could accommodate external seating and other paraphernalia. While domestic paraphernalia would be more limited than would be expected at a permanently occupied dwelling, it would not be unreasonable to expect a washing line and storage facilities to be provided as part of the operation of a holiday let. In addition to that, internal and external lighting would also be apparent in the wider area.

11. To facilitate the conversion of the building for a domestic use, a small single storey lean-to extension is proposed to the north side, accessed via a newly created door opening. A new window would be formed at first floor level. Accordingly, the form of the building would be slightly altered and there would be a limited loss of historic fabric. Moreover, the introduction of a domestic use into the building, with attendant external activity, parking and paraphernalia as outlined above would undermine the significance of the non-designated heritage asset as a small traditional farm building.
12. Considering all these matters together the proposal would have an urbanising impact on the site that would be apparent across a wide area. On that basis, given its prominent isolated position, it would cause significant harm to the character of the landscape. In addition, there would be some, albeit limited, harm to the heritage asset which is of low significance.
13. I acknowledge the appellant's point that the road itself is a detrimental element in the landscape. Nevertheless, the road is not the defining characteristic of the rural area and does not justify further harmful incremental development close to it. I also acknowledge that many other barns in the National Park have been converted to residential use. However, there are no specific details of directly comparable sites before me and it is incumbent on me to determine the appeal on its own merits.
14. For the above reasons the proposal is thereby contrary to Policies L1 and RT2 of the Core Strategy and Policy DMC3 and DMC10 of the DMP, as set out above. Furthermore, for these reasons, the proposal would undermine the purposes of the National Park contrary to Policies GSP1 and GSP2 of the Core Strategy.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

15. There is no dispute that the proposal could secure the long-term future of the building. However, the proposal would cause some harm to its heritage significance and this limits the weight I can give the matter as a benefit. The proposal would be of economic benefit in terms of the revenue it would generate, employment opportunities and benefits to the wider economy from tourist spending. However, given this is a small one bedroomed unit any benefits in that regard are limited.
16. I have found that the proposal would be contrary to the development plan considered as a whole. Given the limited weight given to the benefits of the scheme, even considered cumulatively, the circumstances of the proposal do not indicate that planning permission should be granted. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

S Ashworth

INSPECTOR