



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 June 2025

by Elaine Moulton BA (Hons) BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7th July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/M9496/W/24/3352514

Hillcrest Barn, Pits Lane, Parwich

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Thomas Slater against the decision of Peak District National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref is NP/DDD/0224/0143.
 - The development proposed is conversion of outfarm to dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the appeal building and the surrounding landscape, with particular regard to the enclosure of the site and the introduction of steps.

Reasons

3. The appeal building is a 19th Century, traditional field barn, or outfarm, recorded on the Derbyshire Historic Environment Record. It is constructed in rubble limestone with gritstone detailing around the doors and windows, tooled gritstone quoins on some elevations and a Staffordshire blue clay roof. It is situated some distance from the edge of the village of Parwich, in an isolated position.
4. The main parties agree that the appeal building is a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA). The evidence before me supports this conclusion and, in reaching my decision, I have treated it as such. Its significance as a NDHA is, in part, derived from its evidential and historical value as a traditional agricultural building.
5. The appeal site is within the Peak District National Park (PDNP). Paragraph 189 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) makes clear that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. It goes on to state that the conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas and should be given great weight in National Parks.
6. The landscape within which the appeal site is located is pastoral and characterised by, amongst other things, its gently rolling topography, and narrow strip fields bounded by hedges. The rural setting of the appeal building also contributes to its significance as a NDHA.

7. Due to its elevated position, the appeal building is a prominent feature within the landscape that is visible from nearby public rights of way. These factors mean that the building and its setting are particularly sensitive to change.
8. The appeal building is accessed by an informal track and is currently located within an irregular shaped enclosure bound by a post and rail fence. The proposal involves the formation of a smaller curtilage which, according to the historic maps included within the appeal documents, broadly reflects the extent of the yard as it existed in the 18th century. Such a reinstatement of the historic yard enclosure would have a moderate beneficial impact on the significance of the NDHA.
9. Whilst there are the remains of a stone wall extending from the existing fence, there is, however, no compelling evidence before me that supports the appellant's assertion that the yard was historically enclosed by a stone wall. In the context of fields that are bound by hedges and remote from roadside walls, the proposed dry-stone wall would not reflect the boundary features that are predominant within the landscape and would appear as a stark and incongruous feature.
10. The proposed curtilage would be tightly drawn, thereby limiting the external space and the extent of domestic paraphernalia, such as washing lines, bin storage and outdoor seating, that could be accommodated within the site. Nevertheless, even when the local topography is taken into consideration, the proposed boundary wall would not fully obscure such domestic features, nor the vehicles that would be parked within the curtilage, from public views. In combination with the formalisation of the access track and the increased activity associated with the residential occupation of the appeal building, such changes would result in an overly domesticated appearance that would unacceptably diminish its historic agricultural character. In the absence of a planting scheme that would soften the appearance of the dry-stone wall and provide greater screening of the parked vehicles and domestic paraphernalia, this would also unacceptably degrade the open rural setting of the building.
11. As well as raising concerns about the introduction of the vertical element of the drystone wall to the landscape, the Authority has suggested that the introduction of steps increases the visual impact of the building. I have taken this to be a reference to the proposed stone steps to an upper floor opening.
12. The evidence before me indicates that a flight of steps was removed from this position. The construction of the steps would, therefore, reintroduce a historic feature of the appeal building, which I find would have a minor beneficial impact on its significance as a NDHA. Nonetheless, it remains that the introduction of a dry-stone wall, in combination with the parking and domestic paraphernalia associated with residential occupation, would result in harm to the setting of the appeal building, thereby harming its significance as a NDHA. It would also fail to conserve and enhance the landscape, scenic beauty and cultural heritage of the PDNP.
13. Paragraph 210 of the Framework requires account to be taken of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation. In addition, account is to be taken of the desirability of development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. Paragraph 216 says that the effect of an application on the significance of a NDHA should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect NDHAs, a

balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

14. The proposal would provide a new, viable use for the barn, and consequently would secure the future of the NDHA. However, notwithstanding the unsuccessful attempts that have been made to find an alternative use for the appeal building in the past, the evidence before me supports the conclusion that it is not at immediate risk. Furthermore, it has not been demonstrated that there are no alternative ways of achieving a reuse of the building without the harm that I have identified. As such, I give only limited weight to these benefits.
15. A new dwelling would be provided, thereby contributing to the supply of housing in the area. There would also be economic benefits arising from the conversion and occupation of the building. Nevertheless, given this is a single dwelling such benefits would be limited.
16. Overall, I find that there are no clear benefits that would outweigh the harm to the NDHA that I have identified. In reaching this conclusion I have had regard to appeal decisions¹ within the PDNP, for the conversion of field barns to residential uses, that the appellant has drawn to my attention. I do not have full details of these other schemes, but I note that, unlike my conclusions on the appeal before me, harm to the significance of the building and its setting, and on the wider landscape setting, was found to be limited in both cases. Such decisions, therefore, are not directly comparable and do not alter my findings.
17. For the above reasons, whilst I have not found harm due to the extent of the proposed curtilage of the building or the reintroduction of the external steps, I find that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the appeal building, a NDHA, and the surrounding landscape of the PDNP. It would therefore conflict with Policies GSP3, L1, L3 and HC1 of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document, adopted in October 2011, and Policies DMC3, DMC5 and DMC10 of the Development Management Policies document, adopted in May 2019. Such policies, amongst other things, seek to ensure that development is consistent with the purposes and duty of the National Park, conserves and where possible enhances valued landscape character and that any conversion of a heritage asset does not compromise its character or setting. In addition, it does not accord with the similar aims set out the guidance set out in the Conservation of Historic Buildings Supplementary Planning Document or the Framework.

Conclusion

18. The development conflicts with the development plan when considered as a whole and there are no other considerations, either individually or in combination, that outweighs the identified harm and associated development plan conflict. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Elaine Moulton

INSPECTOR

¹ APP/M9496/W/21/3285395 & APP/M9496/W/20/3260769