



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: 10 July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/M9496/W/24/3357258

Oaks Wood, Highlow, Hathersage S32 1AX

- 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 Ms Cecile Browne against the decision of Peak District National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref is NP/DDD/0424/0460.
 - The development proposed is forestry storage shed.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for forestry storage shed at Oaks Wood, Highlow, Hathersage S32 1AX in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref NP/DDD/0424/0460, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any equivalent Order following the amendment, re-enactment or revocation thereof) the use of the building hereby permitted shall be restricted to forestry only and for no other purpose.
 - 2) When the building hereby permitted is no longer required for the purposes of forestry it shall be dismantled and removed from the site and the site restored to its original condition.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have omitted the words 'Proposed retention of' from the description of development set out above, as this does not describe an act of development. As the building forming the appeal scheme was in situ at the time of my visit I have determined the appeal on that basis.
3. The appeal site is within the Peak District National Park. Paragraph 189 (paragraph 182 in the version that was in place at the time the Authority determined the application) 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.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are:

- Whether there is a proven functional need for the appeal building; and
- The effect of the appeal building on the character and appearance of the site and the surrounding landscape having regard to its location in the Peak District National Park (PDNP).

Reasons

5. Oaks Wood, approximately 11 acres in area, is managed for conservation and to increase biodiversity through a low impact approach, in accordance with a Forestry Commission Woodland Management Plan. The appellant advises that this involves the thinning and replanting of the mature monoculture by hand, to help reverse the decline of woodland birds in the area. Such work has led to the Forestry Commission redesignating the woods from its previous designation as a mixed pine plantation to a mixed woodland. The nature of the activities carried out within the woods, therefore, has, and continues to, enhance and conserve the landscape of the PDNP through the reinstatement of a mixed native woodland and its continued management.
6. On my visit I was able to see that the building is used to securely store tools and other items utilised in the management and maintenance of the woods. As the evidence before me suggests that the appellant only manages Oaks Wood, it is reasonable to consider that such tools and items are solely used for that purpose. Bringing such equipment to the woods as and when required would likely increase the number of vehicular movements to and from the site, as it would be impracticable to transport the number and type of tools required as well as the personnel undertaking the work. A secure building on site for storage purposes is therefore justified in the interests of securing a sustainable development. Furthermore, given the remoteness of the site from services and facilities, it is reasonable to provide a building of a size that would also meet the welfare needs of the workforce, many of which are volunteers. Despite the use for both storage and welfare purposes, the building is modest in its overall scale and proportionate to the size of the woods.
7. The Council has suggested that the yurt, located close to the appeal building, could be used for storage and welfare purposes. The appellant indicates that the yurt is already used for shelter in poor weather but is not suitable for making hot drinks or soup due to gas safety requirements. In addition, the appellant also indicates it is not suitable for tool storage and a wheelbarrow will not fit through the door. Whilst the information provided is brief, I find that as the yurt is less secure and has more limited use it, therefore, would not serve the same useful purpose as the appeal building.
8. I note that the management of several woodlands that the Authority owns in the National Park does not require it to store vehicles, equipment or tools permanently on a site, or for shelter to be provided within a permanent building. Where numerous sites are managed it is reasonable to consider that, operationally, a central storage location is more efficient and cost effective as it enables the same tools and equipment to be used across multiple woodlands. A building solely used for welfare purposes on the limited occasions that management work is carried out

in a woodland is difficult to justify. As such, the woodland management undertaken by the Authority is not directly comparable to that carried out in connection with this case and does not demonstrate that the appeal building is not required for forestry purposes.

9. I therefore find that there is a functional need for the storage shed in connection with the forestry activities associated with the management and maintenance of Oaks Wood.
10. The landscape within which the appeal site is located is characterised by its steeply sloping landform, with blocks of woodland, some of which are extensive in area. Oaks Wood positively contributes to this character.
11. The appeal building has a chalet style appearance that is typical of garden buildings within urban areas. Nonetheless, and notwithstanding the extent of glazing within the building, due to its dark green colour, timber construction and simple design, it is not overly domestic in appearance and assimilates well into its surrounds. Furthermore, it is surrounded by trees and is located some distance from the road which, in combination with the sloping topography of the site, ensures that only glimpses of the building are possible from public vantage points and that the appeal building does not appear incongruous in the landscape.
12. Whilst the proposal has introduced a building into the countryside that is remote from others, I find that, for the above reasons, it does not have an inherent and harmful urbanising effect. It represents an acceptable form of development that conserves and enhances the landscape and scenic beauty and the valued characteristics of the PDNP.
13. In conclusion, I find that a proven functional need for the appeal building has been demonstrated and it does not unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the site and the surrounding landscape of the PDNP. Accordingly, there is no conflict with policies GSP1, GSP2, GSP3, and L1 of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (CS), adopted in October 2011, and Policy DME1 of the Development Management Policies Document, adopted in May 2019. These policies, amongst other things, seek to ensure that development is of a high standard of design which protects the character and appearance of the PDNP, and supports new forestry buildings that are functionally required. In addition, it accords with paragraph 189 of the Framework and the guidance set out in the Agricultural Developments in the Peak District National Park Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Other matters

14. The Authority has also referred to a conflict with CS Policy CC1, which addresses climate change mitigation and adaptation, in the reason for refusal set out in the decision notice. No specific concerns relating to such matters are expressed within the reason, however, I note from the officer report that the Authority's concerns relate to the absence of details as to how the development would make the most efficient and sustainable use of land, building and natural resources and would achieve the highest possible standards of carbon reductions and water efficiency.
15. Whilst no information in this regard has been provided by the appellant, I have found that there is a functional need for the appeal building, which is of a modest scale, takes up very little land, and is largely constructed from sustainable

materials. In addition, the appeal building does not have an energy or water supply, and given its size, it is reasonable to consider that such requirements, which are brought to site, are limited. Taking into consideration such factors, and in the absence of any compelling case to the contrary, I find that the appeal scheme does not conflict with CS Policy CC1.

Conditions

16. The Authority have suggested two conditions which I have considered alongside the advice in the Framework and Planning Practice Guidance.
17. The Framework in paragraph 55 states that planning conditions should not be used to restrict national permitted development rights unless there is clear justification to do so. In this case the proposal has been justified based on a specific forestry need in a countryside location in the PDNP, where the development plan applies strict control over the uses of land. It is therefore reasonable to attach a condition restricting its use for that purpose. I have, however, amended the suggested wording by replacing the word 'agriculture' with 'forestry' in recognition of the use of the appeal building, in the interests of precision and clarity. I have also omitted reference to a definition, as the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 does not contain a definition of forestry.
18. If the building becomes redundant for forestry purposes the Authority proposes its removal and the subsequent reinstatement of the land. I consider that such a condition is necessary to avoid any harmful effect that a redundant building could have on the natural beauty of the PDNP.

Conclusion

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

Elaine Moulton

INSPECTOR