



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 May 2022

by **Alison Partington BA (Hons) MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13th June 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/T2350/W/21/3289632

The Newdrop, Stonegate Lane, Ribchester, PR3 2XE

- 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 NGJ Holdings Ltd against the decision of Ribble Valley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 3/2021/0879, dated 20 August 2021, was refused by notice dated 13 October 2021.
 - The development proposed is the erection of four garages and four carports.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in the appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Reasons

3. The appeal site is an area of hardstanding that previously formed part of the car park for the public house that occupied the buildings to the west of the site. These, together with a building formerly used as a holiday let are currently being converted to 6 dwellings¹. Access for all but one of these units is from Old Clitheroe Road, with parking for units 1-3 and 6 to be a row of open parking to the west of this access.
4. The proposed garage and car port building would be constructed on land to the east of the access that under the previously approved scheme was to form part of a landscaping belt on the edge of the site. The rest of the former car park to the east was to be returned to open grassland. Open parking would be provided in front of each garage and car port.
5. The site is located within the Forest of Bowland AONB. The *National Planning Policy Framework* (the Framework) states that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing the landscape and scenic beauty in such areas. The surrounding area is open grazing land, giving way to moorland to the north of Old Clitheroe Road. To the east of Stonegate Lane buildings are limited with the area having an open and remote character, with wide panoramic views to the south.

¹ Application Reference 3/2020/0215

6. The building, which has been designed to have an agricultural character, would be separated from the rest of the complex of buildings which are largely concentrated on the western side of the site. A hedge would be planted along the boundary to the rear, and some planting would be located between it and the boundary wall to the north. Nevertheless, the building would occupy an elevated position in relation to the other buildings and would be clearly visible from the adjacent road, the site entrance and the footpath that crosses the field immediately to the south. As such, visually it would be very prominent. Given the lack of buildings in the surrounding area, and its detached position away from the other buildings on the site, it would be an incongruous addition in the landscape that would detract from its open character.
7. Whilst the proposal would remove the row of parking spaces to the western side of the access proposed under the existing permission, 4 individual spaces would still be provided along that side, as well as the 8 spaces proposed in front of the garage building. As such, the amount of open parking on the site would remain the same, despite the fact that the appeal scheme also provides a garage/carport building. With parking proposed on both sides of the access, the visual impact of cars and parking under the appeal scheme would increase. As a result, it would cause greater visual detriment to the area than the approved scheme.
8. In addition, the size and scale of the proposed garage/carport building would make it far more prominent than the row of open parking in the approved scheme. The more limited height of cars means that they would be less visible over the boundary wall, and they would also come and go, whereas the building would have a permanent visual impact.
9. Whilst the garage area may be used for storage of domestic paraphernalia that could otherwise be stored in gardens, how future occupiers use their garages is not a matter that can be controlled by planning. It is suggested by the appellant that the position of the appeal scheme would provide better amenity for future occupiers. Be that as it may, in granting the extant permission it was presumably considered that the proposal provided adequate amenity for future occupiers. As a result, I give this minimal weight.
10. The appellant has highlighted that permission was granted in December 2021² for a garage for unit 4, on what they consider to be a more prominent position adjacent to the southern edge of the site. Whilst this has a similar design to that proposed in the appeal scheme, it is significantly smaller as it only serves one house. In addition, in being located on the western edge of the site it relates far better to the existing buildings. Moreover, I observed that the existing roadside hedge along Stoneygate Lane and the lower elevation of the site means it is a far less visually prominent site than the appeal site, even if there would be some short range views when travelling in a southerly direction along the adjacent road.
11. Overall, I consider that the proposal would adversely affect the character and appearance of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Accordingly, it would conflict with Policies DMG1 and EN2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy 2008-2028 (adopted December 2014) which require development to respect the landscape character and protect, conserve and

² Application Reference 3/2021/0978

enhance the Forest of Bowland AONB. It would also be contrary to the Framework as outlined above.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons set out above, I conclude the appeal should be dismissed.

Alison Partington

INSPECTOR