



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 March 2012

by Gary Deane BSc(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 13 March 2012

Appeal Ref: APP/T2350/D/12/2169654

Kezmin House, Hothersall Lane, Hothersall, Preston, Lancashire PR3 2XB

- 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 Ronald McDonald against the decision of Ribble Valley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 3/2011/0937 was refused by notice dated 13 January 2012.
 - The development proposed is the installation of a 4Kw black-edged solar PV system to the rear, south-facing roof of the property Kezmin House
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the appeal property and the local area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property, Kezmin House, is an attractive, detached stone barn, which has been converted to a dwelling. With its simple built form, regular pattern of fenestration, and largely clear expanse of roof slope at the front and rear, the building has retained much of the character and appearance of a traditional rural building. The site lies within the open countryside, which is to be protected for its own sake.
4. Policies ENV24 and ENV25 of the Ribble Valley Districtwide Local Plan (LP) provide conditional support for small-scale renewable energy schemes provided such proposals have regard to such matters as their effect on the landscape. National guidance¹ also strongly encourages the take-up of small-scale renewable energy generation projects as an essential element of the drive to cut carbon dioxide emissions in the bid to manage climate change.
5. The proposed panels would be installed on the rear roof slope of Kezmin House. They would lie just below the ridge in four rows, each of four panels, and would cover a significant portion of the western half of this south-facing roof slope.

¹ These include Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 1, *Delivering Sustainable Development*, PPS1 Supplement, *Planning and Climate Change*, PPS22, *Renewable Energy*, and its Companion Guide, *Planning for Renewable Energy*.

- Each panel would be black in colour with a black edge and sit on top of the non-traditional dark grey concrete roof slates.
6. In this elevated position, the proposed panels would be a conspicuous feature of Kezmin House given their texture and colour, which would sharply contrast with the tiles beneath. Over time, this contrast would become more pronounced given the effects of weathering of the roof tiles. Notwithstanding their close fit to the roof slope, the new panels would stand proud of the roof plane. Taken together, these features would cause the proposed panels to be visually obtrusive and, in my opinion, detract from the appearance of the appeal property.
 7. The proposal would be largely shielded from public view by existing development and vegetation. Consequently, its effect on the character and appearance of the wider landscape would be limited. Nevertheless, glimpse views of the new panels would be possible at an oblique angle from the adjacent highway, close to the site. From this vantage point, the proposal would relate uneasily with the remainder of this traditional rural building and materially harm the character of the local area.
 8. Therefore, I conclude that the proposal would significantly harm the character and appearance of the appeal property and the local area, in conflict with underlying aims of LP Policies G1 and H17 to ensure that development achieves a high standard of design and protects the rural environment.
 9. In reaching this conclusion, I acknowledge that Kezmin House is not listed and does not fall within a conservation area. It is also located some distance from a main road. I also note that installations of the type proposed are often considered to be permitted development and therefore do not normally require the prior consent of the Council. Notwithstanding, permitted development rights were removed in this case when the barn conversion was originally approved. This restriction indicates that the Council had potential concerns that some types of external alteration could harm the character and appearance of the appeal property. That would be the case with the proposal before me.
 10. Reference is made to other converted barns in Preston that have been granted planning permission for similar developments. However, no detailed information is before me regarding the particular circumstances of these cases. Consequently, I am unable to conclude that these examples are directly comparable with the proposal. In any event, each proposal should be considered on its merits, which I have done in this case.
 11. I have had regard to all other matters raised, including the absence of objections from others. However, these matters are not sufficient to outweigh the harm that I have identified. Therefore, for the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Gary Deane

INSPECTOR