HPK/2012/0461

3 LAKE VIEW FURNESS VALE

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REBUILD CANAL RETAINING WALL AND REPLACEMENT SHED WITH SITTING AREA OVER, AND GARDEN AREAS

APPLICANT	KATY MCCALL AND JIM MEDWAY
PROPOSAL	REBUILD CANAL RETAINING WALL AND REPLACEMENT SHED WITH SITTING AREA OVER AND GARDEN AREAS
LOCATION	3 LAKE VIEW, FURNESS VALE HIGH PEAK SK23 7QD
AGENT	JOHN MCCALL, MCCALLHAYFIELD, ASHLAR, MARKET STREET, HAYFIELD, HIGH PEAK, SK22 2EP

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

BACKGOUND AND SETTING

3 Lake View is a double frontage, mid terrace property accessed by means of an unnamed, unadopted road off Calico Lane in Furness Vale.

The terrace was originally constructed in the mid nineteenth century to provide workers cottages associated with the nearby mill which is now part of the Goyt Valley Industrial Estate. In 1968 the terrace was acquired from the then owners, CPA, by a local builder/developer who carried out a programme of 'modernisation'.

The measures taken included, in 6 cases, converting two adjacent houses into one double fronted dwelling. In addition the houses were all given bathrooms (with indoor w.c.), kitchens, and in the case of most of the double frontage units a large flat roofed carport.



The Victorian windows and doors were at this time all removed and in the style of the time the window openings were greatly enlarged (mainly on the ground floor level), to create large 'picture windows' unfortunately without the benefit of lintels to support the loads on them. The frames were replaced with cheap, standard softwood units, with single glazing in an unsympathetic 'contemporary' style.

It appears that up to this time the main entrance side of the dwelling had been on the south west side of the house, and that the terrace at that time was known as "Canal View".

The modernisation programme seems to have included changing the focus of the houses so that the main entrance side became the north east side which looks over the old mill pond – hence the name change at this time to "Lake View".

It seems clear that the trend towards increased ownership of private cars was part of the motivation for creating parking spaces and carports and for making the vehicular access side of the house into the main entrance side.

From examination of the house deeds it seems that planning approval was granted in 1978 for an entrance porch (code no. 9167/HPK/1178/1040) – there is no evidence that this was ever implemented.

It is most interesting that this 'turnaround' of the 'back' and 'front' of the house has had the effect that most of the houses in the terrace now treat the canal side of the house as their back yard, and have in general tended to use the space for sheds, coal storage bunkers, bin storage etc.



THE SITE

The site is bounded to the south west by the canal retaining wall, to the north west and south east by neighbouring properties and to the north east by a dry stone wall which is the boundary of the old mill pond area.

Two rights of way go through the site, being the private road along the north east boundary and the path along the south west face of the house.

The house has a modest garden on the north east side, and has a small yard area on the south west side, which is heavily shaded by the canal retaining wall.

The ground floor level of the house is approximately 2.000m below the canal towpath level, so that ground floor windows on this elevation have very limited views, and are heavily over looked by users of the towpath which is only approximately 5.500m away.

The yard area is on two levels, the footpath area nearest to the house being at roughly the ground floor level of the house and with a width of approximately 2.100m. On the south west edge of the footpath is a brick retaining wall (approx. height 950mm), and at the level of the top of this retaining wall is a concrete surfaced area. A further mass concrete underpinning has been introduced at some earlier date, presumably to help with the stability of the canal and the retaining wall.

THE PROPOSAL

As noted in the application form this is a retrospective application. This is not because of previous disregard of the Planning Regulations, but because of a genuine misinterpretation of them.
What occupied the site at the time of the applicants purchase of the house in 2009 was a timber shed standing on the existing concrete base and accessed by the existing masonry steps up to this level. This shed (which was presumably erected by the previous owners at some time during their 40 year occupation of the house) was in a ruinous condition. Its poor state was partly caused by wood rot and partly by the even more ruinous state of the canal retaining wall which had deformed to such an extent that it was taking support from the shed and in danger of collapse. The combination of a rotten timber shed and a collapsing heavy stone retaining wall was clearly very dangerous, particularly for a family with two young children.
We ascertained from British Waterways that the canal retaining wall was not their responsibility (surprising as that may seem), but that of the homeowners.
Builders were instructed to carefully remove the old shed and to take down and rebuild the canal retaining wall. Once this work was completed the applicants erected a new timber shed on the site of the old one. They assumed that rebuilding a structurally unsound stone retaining wall and replacing a timber shed in their back yard did not require planning consent. Apologies for this misapprehension.

DESIGN

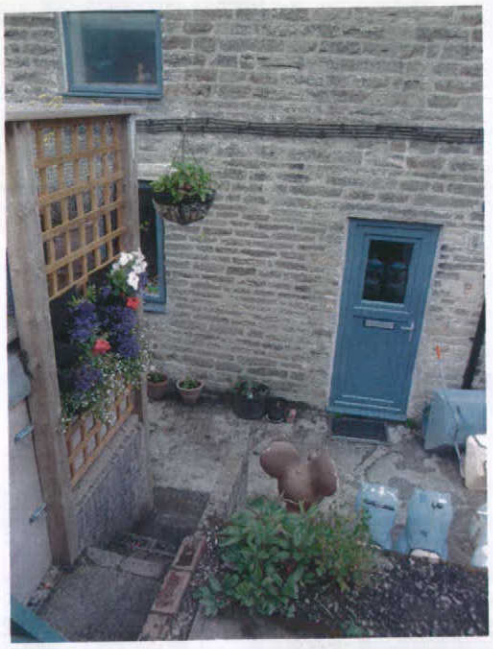


The key criteria in the design of the area which is the subject of this application were:-

- To create a storage shed for tools, garden equipment etc.
- To retain existing planting bed between no.3 and no.2 Lake View.
- To create a small garden area between no.3 and no.4 Lake View which gives opportunity for planting to soften the impact of the stone canal retaining wall and to improve the views from the kitchen window of no.3.
- To create a small sitting area at the level of the canal towpath.
  It is significant that in the years since the terrace of houses which includes no.3 Lake View was built the Upper Peak Forest canal has evolved from a utilitarian, working waterway into a major leisure resource, used by large numbers of pleasure boaters, restaurant boats, walkers. joggers, cyclists etc.
  The aspect from the south west side of the house is of very high quality, looking out, as it does, over the landscaped grounds of Furness Vale Marina and encompassing the colourful moored boats, the changing reflections on the water and the flora and fauna of the canal.
  In addition to the social and visual benefits of this sitting area is the orientation – in that it is the only outdoor space within the curtilage of the dwelling which has the advantage of afternoon and evening sunlight. An important criterion for the applicants

is to be able to enjoy this view and sunlight which is denied to the living areas of the house because of the levels and the height of the canal retaining wall.

- To create privacy and screening between canal towpath and the large window into the living area of the property.
- To screen the ugly mass concrete underpinning structure which forms part of some measures taken in the past to provide structural stability to the canal.



As a response to the above criteria the works which are the subject of this application include:-

- A timber shed structure built on the existing concrete base as the previous shed and accessed by the old masonry steps as previously.
  The height of the new shed is very modest being approximately 1.00m (ie the previous shed was approx. 2.200mm ht).
- The planting bed between no.3 and no.2 is retained.
- The concrete and stone surface of the garden area is removed and the area top-soiled and planted.
- A sitting area is created on the flat roof of the shed, with a timber guardrail at a level to match in with the top of the rebuilt canal retaining wall. Balustrading for safety is provided by means of timber trellising which will support climbing plants. The overall effect to be to soften and enhance the visual aspect of the rear of the property and to create privacy and screening between canal towpath and the large window into the living area of the property.
- Access is by means of a short flight of timber steps from garden area.

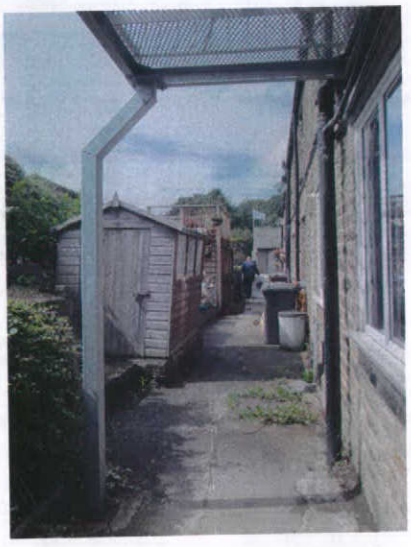


CONCLUSION

The overriding intention of these proposals is to improve the visual aspect and amenity of this property and of the improvement corridor in which it is situated. The boundary treatment on the canal frontage is a rebuilt section of stone wall which has been reinstated in its original form, with curved stone copings.
The design is simple, of domestic scale and uses natural materials. The proposal will, when it comes to maturity be very well screened by planting. The whole development is kept below the level of the canal retaining wall and has no detrimental effect on existing important landscape, townscape, historic, wildlife or water features.

No 3 Lake View is a good family home. The current owners, the applicants, have taken great care and effort to improve and bring it up to date, whilst endeavouring to correct some of the mistakes of the past and to pay more respect to its original architecture than the shoddy 'modernisers' of the 1960's.

Part of this process has been the works which are the subject of this application.
The spaces on the canal side of these dwellings have, in the main been the sites for owners to try and create useful outdoor amenities. There are outdoor paved terraces (at canal level), drying areas, sitting areas, sheds, outbuildings and in one case a steel balcony at first floor level (at no.4 – the house next door to the applicants.)



The variety is part of the charm of Lake View (or Canal View) – and is characteristic of the historic engagement of householders with waterways.
The factors which visually organise developments such as Lake View are the strong lines of the canal, the towpath, the retaining wall, the roof line of the terrace and the rhythm of repeated elements like windows and chimneys.





These elements are dominant enough to allow householders to make their house and gardens individual without detracting from the overall composition.



In this context the proposals are sympathetic to the character of the area and will not cause a detrimental effect to the visual qualities of the locality or the wider landscape.

Similarly the application will not cause any material harm to the privacy or amenity of neighbouring residents. The immediate neighbours to no.3 (nos.2 and 4) are extremely supportive of this application and have no objections to it.

In view of the above I would urge the Planning Authority to approve this application for retrospective consent.