



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 June 2020

by Matthew Jones BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 2 July 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/D0840/W/20/3245119

Site East of Trewindies, Trelake Lane, Treknow, Tintagel PL34 0EW

- 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 Andy Roberts of ARC Developments (Cornwall) Ltd against the decision of Cornwall Council.
 - The application Ref PA19/04886, dated 3 June 2019, was refused by notice dated 19 July 2019.
 - The development proposed is a new residential dwelling and associated works.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

The main issues are:

- the suitability of the site for a dwelling, having regard to local and national policy for the location of housing; and,
- the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area, with particular regard to the Cornwall Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Heritage Coast.

Reasons

Suitability of the site

2. The appeal site comprises agricultural land with a standing barn, inside a larger field at the edge of the settlement of Treknow. It is at the eastern end of a row of dwellings, the last being Trewindies, along the north of Trelake Lane. Housing also fronts the south side of the lane, passing the site and terminating a short distance to the south east. The remainder of the field extends to the north and east, and the site has been delineated within the field by low bunding. The field has vehicular access off Trelake Lane, from which a farm track runs to the east of the appeal site. The area is within the Cornwall Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (the AONB) and the Heritage Coast.
3. Policy 3 of the Cornwall Local Plan: Strategic Policies Document 2010–2030 (adopted 2016) (CLP) supports limited growth adjacent to or within settlements such as Treknow, subject to the site meeting one of a number of specific criteria. Most applicable to this case is where a development would result in the 'rounding off' of such a settlement. The supporting text to Policy 3 clarifies that rounding off applies to development on land that is substantially enclosed but outside of the urban form of a settlement and where its edge is clearly defined by a physical feature that also acts as a barrier to further growth.

4. The site is enclosed by Trelake Lane and Trewindies. However, the bunding at its north and east boundaries is low and, given also its verdant appearance, has very little presence within the field. The access and the farm track are modest and innocuous features. Indeed, I observed the track to be barely discernible at all, and it does not compare to the clear settlement boundary provided by Trewindies. Given such, neither the track, access or bunding substantially enclose the site nor would they act as a barrier to further growth. Moreover, as the proposed dwelling would not reach the same extent eastwards as the housing on the opposite side of Trelake Lane, it would not achieve symmetry across the street scene or appear to complete the settlement. It follows that the proposal would not constitute 'rounding off'.
5. This leads the site to be, for planning purposes, within the countryside, and the proposal to be considered under Policy 7 of the CLP, which seeks to avoid new homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances. There is no evidence before me that any of the circumstances set out within Policy 7 would apply to this case. Policy 21 of the CLP does potentially support proposals which reuse Previously Developed Land (PDL). However, given that the site was last in agricultural use, it is not PDL when taking the definition set out within the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).
6. I therefore conclude on this issue that the site is not suitable for a dwelling, having regard to local and national policy for the supply of housing. The proposal would conflict with Policies 1, 3, 7 and 21 of the CLP. Whilst reference has been made to the Chief Planning Officer's Advice Note: Infill/Rounding Off, this document is not part of the development plan and has had limited weight in my reasoning.

Character and appearance

7. The field containing the appeal site is bound by a substantial hedge a little to the east, which corresponds to the edge of the built environment on the south side of Trelake Lane. On the other side of this hedge, within the adjacent field, is a fairly substantial barn. On approach to the settlement, this barn and the adjacent boundary hedgerow obscure much of the field containing the appeal site. Instead, the barn is viewed together with Trewindies, the housing on the south side of Trelake Lane and adjacent 30mph road signs. This has the visual effect of drawing the appeal site into close association with Treknow. Similarly, as one leaves Treknow the scene is very much characterised by surrounding built form, including the prominent building within the appeal site itself.
8. Given such, whilst the site is within the countryside, it makes an inconsequential contribution to the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB and has a negligible role within the Heritage Coast. The dwelling would be well-designed, adhering to the approximate scale and pattern of housing along the highway, assimilating with its environment. Appropriate boundary treatments could be secured by condition in the event I were minded to allow the appeal.
9. I therefore conclude on this issue that the proposal would not have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area, with particular regard to the Cornwall Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Heritage Coast. It would accord with the landscape aims of Policy 23 of the CLP, Policy ENV1 of the North Cornwall District Local Plan (adopted 1999) and the National Planning Policy Framework. I also find no conflict with the referenced guidance of the Cornwall AONB Management Plan 2016-2021 (2016).

Planning Balance

10. Planning law and the Framework require proposals to be determined against the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
11. The government is seeking to significantly boost the supply of housing and the scheme would contribute a dwelling, built to modern accessibility standards, to local supply. It would do so without harm to the character and appearance of the area. The quality of the proposal's design would raise standards within its environs to a degree. However, given the small scale of the proposal, its benefits in these regards would be modest. The absence of any objection from the Parish Council or interested parties weighs neutrally in the balance.
12. The site would not, however, be a suitable location for housing having regard to local and national policy for the supply of housing. This constitutes harm of significant weight in my assessment, outweighing the modest benefits of the scheme. I therefore conclude that the proposal would conflict with the development plan when read as a whole and that there are no other considerations, including the Framework, that outweigh the conflict.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons outlined above and taking all matters raised into account, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Matthew Jones

INSPECTOR