
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 October 2020

by John Wilde CEng MICE

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 05 November 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/D0840/W/20/3252052

The Stables Caravan Park, Pit Lane, Higher Fraddon, Fraddon, Cornwall TR9 6LG

- 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 S Jones against the decision of Cornwall Council.
 - The application Ref PA19/04433, dated 23 May 2019, was refused by notice dated 8 November 2019.
 - The development proposed is the retention of the building and its continued use for the storage and repair of motor vehicles for purposes incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matter

2. The development had been carried out at the time of my site visit, consequently the appeal is retrospective.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is situated to the south east of the settlement of Indian Queens, outside of the boundary of that settlement. In planning terms, it is therefore in the countryside. The site, which is large and surfaced with hardcore and chippings, contains an industrial looking building that has previously been used as a commercial garage, as well as a static caravan and a metal storage container. The main building is mainly finished in corrugated metal and has two areas inside, a larger portion with an inspection pit and a smaller one used as a workshop.
5. Pit Lane is a narrow rural lane that has several dwellings of differing types and design at its northern end and is then bordered by hedgebanks. As progress is made in a south-west direction there are a range of dwellings sited sporadically along the lane. However, there are fields between the lane and Indian Queens to the north-west and fields are seen to the south-east. Looking south-west along the lane therefore, the dominant features are the fields and hedgebanks,

- with the dwellings seen as domestic intrusions into a relatively, although not entirely, rural landscape.
6. Conversely, the appeal site and appeal building are seen as a stark industrial encroachment into this landscape. This is made particularly noticeable by the removal of a length of hedgebank and its replacement with the entrance and wooden fencing, as well as the harsh surfacing and also the main building, which by virtue of its design and materials cannot be construed to be an intrinsic part of the character of the area. The fact that the appeal site retains some boundary hedges and is not on the crest of a hill does not overcome these issues. I note the suggestion that the hedgebank had been removed prior to the appeal development. However, notwithstanding this, a length of hedgebank would have had to be removed to make way for the site access.
 7. Policy 2 of the Cornwall Local Plan Strategic Policies 2010-2030 (LP) requires that development maintains and respects the special character of Cornwall by, amongst other things, ensuring that the design of development is high quality and demonstrates a cultural, physical and aesthetic understanding of its location. Policy 12 of the LP seeks to ensure that development ensures Cornwall's enduring distinctiveness and maintains its distinctive natural and historic character by, amongst other things, showing a clear understanding of, and response to, its landscape. Policy 23 of the LP makes clear that development should recognise and respect landscape character.
 8. In light of my above findings the development the subject of this appeal would be in conflict with all of these policies.
 9. In arriving at this conclusion, I have noted that there are a number of businesses located along the lane to the south-west, in particular a construction and haulage business. This is, however, some distance from the appeal site and is not seen in association with it. Furthermore, I have not been supplied with the planning background to this development. This cannot therefore be taken as a compelling precedent for allowing the present appeal, given the harm to character and appearance that has been identified.
 10. It has been suggested that the appeal site constitutes previously developed land. However, even if this were the case it does not alter my overall conclusion.

Conclusion

11. Therefore, in light of my above reasoning and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

John Wilde

Inspector