



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 January 2021

by Matthew Jones BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 January 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/D0840/W/20/3259224

Land And Building South East Of Innis Lakes, Access To Trout Farm, Innis Moor, St Austell, PL26 8YH

- 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 P Talbot against the decision of Cornwall Council.
 - The application Ref PA20/01040, dated 4 February 2020, was refused by notice dated 20 April 2020.
 - The development proposed is conversion and extension to former stable building.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the suitability of the site for a dwelling, having regard to local and national policy for the location of housing, with reference to the character and appearance of the area and the accessibility of the site to services.

Reasons

3. The site comprises a stable and part of a paddock aside Innis Trout Farm. A public highway is to the south and a permissive public footpath passes to the east. The area has some dispersed dwellings, businesses and a football club. However, the overall atmosphere is of a part industrialised landscape, with wild greenery and heavy industry combining to create an isolated and somewhat spartan rural environment which clearly falls within the open countryside.
4. The site is part of a larger area of open paddock which sweeps along the north side of the highway. The building is simple, utilitarian and set well back, nearby to a running stream, against a luxuriant backdrop of trees and shrubbery. From the highway and permissive footpath, this offers up an attractive rural scene.
5. Policy 7 of the Cornwall Local Plan Strategic Policies 2010-2030 (adopted 2016) (CLP) restricts housing in open countryside to that which fulfils one of given special circumstances. This includes the reuse of appropriate buildings that are suitably constructed, redundant or disused, which would lead to enhancement to the immediate setting. The word 'appropriate' relates to a building's scale, construction, structural soundness and capacity for conversion without the necessity of substantial demolition or substantial rebuilding operations.
6. The work to the stable seeks to maintain its simple rural character. However, the area around it would invariably become domestically landscaped and beset with domestic paraphernalia and cars. Whilst this could be effectively hidden by new landscaping, enclosing the site would partition and reduce the open quality of the paddock. Either way, the existing picturesque scene would be lost to

view. The domestic drive and access would remain prominent features, which would further diminish rural character regardless of finish. As such, the scheme would cause harm, not enhancement, to the stable's immediate setting. It follows that there would be clear conflict with Policy 7 before the matter of the structural capability of the building for reuse is brought into consideration.

7. There are no public transport links close by, with Penwithick the nearest village some 1.4km away. Much of the route to the village is without lighting or defined pedestrian space, within a fairly sinuous highway environment of varying width punctuated by heavy industrial traffic. If one were to visit the village on foot or by bicycle, its range of facilities and the frequency of its bus services are not particularly extensive. As such, whilst walking and cycling may be an option for some, the site is not sustainably located as it is more likely that a significant majority of trips to services and facilities would be made by motorcar.
8. The appellant has brought to my attention an appeal decision from 2019 near Falmouth¹. Whilst I note the reasoning of the Inspector, it is clear that the character of the appeal building's immediate setting was already built up residential to a degree and was thus very different to this case. Moreover, enhancement, not harm, was found. Given that the application of Policy 7 is highly dependent on site specific circumstances and individual planning judgment, this decision has carried very little weight in my reasoning.
9. I therefore conclude that the site is not suitable for a dwelling, having regard to local and national policy for the location of housing, with reference to the character and appearance of the area and the accessibility of the site to services. The proposal would conflict with the relevant aims of Policies 1, 2, 7, 21 and 23 of the CLP and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Planning Balance

10. The government is seeking to significantly boost the supply of housing and the scheme would contribute a single dwelling to the local housing stock, with associated benefits to local facilities through a likely small increase in footfall. The construction work would also provide economic benefits. Given that it is a single dwelling proposed, these are benefits of limited weight. Conversely, the scheme would conflict with development plan policy for the location of housing and would undermine the Council's plan-led approach. In doing so, it would harm the character and appearance of the area in a place without adequate access to services and facilities. These matters attract significant weight in my assessment and outweigh the benefits of the scheme.
11. 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

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

Matthew Jones

INSPECTOR

¹ Appeal Ref APP/D0840/W/19/3220335