



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 January 2021

by John Wilde CEng MICE

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 09 February 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/D0840/W/20/3260612

**Land east of An Jue Green Farm House, Trevalgan, St Ives, Cornwall
TR26 3BJ**

- 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 N Bolitho against the decision of Cornwall Council.
 - The application Ref PA20/02746, dated 16 March 2020, was refused by notice dated 22 May 2020.
 - The development proposed is the conversion of redundant agricultural barn to a single dwellinghouse.
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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 area.

Reasons

3. The appeal building is an old barn that lies to the east of a group of buildings that includes An Ju Green Farm House. It is separated from the latter by the garden area belonging to the farmhouse. To the north and east of the barn there are open fields as there are to the south, beyond the access road. The site lies within the Cornwall Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the Heritage Coast and, notwithstanding the presence of a few clusters of buildings, is very rural, remote and rugged in character. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) informs at paragraph 172 that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing scenic beauty in AONBs.
4. I have been supplied with a document entitled Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Landscape Character Study (LCS). This informs that the appeal site lies within the West Penwith – North and West Coastal Strip Landscape Character Area. This is described as a windswept and exposed plateau gently sloping from the Penwith Central Hills towards the coast and encompassing anciently enclosed land and prehistoric field patterns with distinctive treeless stone walls and Cornish hedge boundaries.
5. The LCS makes clear that the landscape is very special with a strong sense of identity due mainly to the clearly perceptible historic landscape character. It also makes the point that due to its open and bleak nature any change could

- ruin the integrity of this character and that therefore the objective should be to conserve as well as seek to minimise any impact.
6. The barn itself is in poor condition with only about a third constructed of stone, and this has been extended upwards using blockwork in several places. The pointing to the stonework is generally loose and friable. The north gable end is constructed of blockwork whilst the front is open and the rear (west) wall is timber. The roof is of a corrugated material and is missing in places. There is no flooring other than earth.
 7. Notwithstanding this however, the building in its current state has a character and appearance commensurate with its place in the landscape; it is seen as an agricultural building sitting within the rural and rugged landscape, integral with the large open field to the east.
 8. I acknowledge that the proposed dwelling would be completed in stone with a slate roof and would be on the same footprint as the existing barn. However, it would be taller than the barn with the introduction of a dual pitched roof with a ridge height higher than the existing building, indicating its status as a dwelling. Perhaps more importantly the proposed development would introduce a new driveway and a more formal garden area, and inevitably there would be the domestic trappings associated with dwellings such as clothes lines, garden furniture and also parked cars. The proposed Cornish Hedge boundary to the north-east and south-east would also to an extent compromise the historic open field pattern that is seen as feature of this part of the AONB. The fact that the proposed dwelling would be reasonably screened does not to my mind outweigh these negative factors, as its physical presence would have a harmful domesticating effect on the rugged and open nature of the landscape.
 9. It cannot be said therefore that the proposed development would conserve the character or appearance of the AONB. Consequently conflict would exist with policy 7 of the Cornwall Local Plan Strategic Policies 2010-2030 (LP). This policy allows the reuse of suitably constructed redundant, disused or historic buildings that are considered appropriate to retain provided that the reuse would lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting.
 10. I also note that in the justification for this policy the appropriateness for conversion is assessed against a number of criteria including the structural soundness and the ability to convert the building without substantial re-building operations. Given the work necessary to convert the existing barn, it cannot, to my mind, be considered as appropriate for conversion.
 11. In respect of policy 7 my attention has been drawn to a recent appeal¹ where the Inspector noted that the Framework post-dates the LP. However, paragraph 79 of the Framework still requires an enhancement to the immediate setting, which I have found would not occur in this particular case.
 12. Policy 23 of the LP requires that proposals must conserve or enhance the landscape character and natural beauty of the AONB. Conflict would therefore also exist with this policy. There would also be conflict with policy OS1 of the St Ives Neighbourhood Development Plan 2015-2030 (NP) makes clear that development will not be permitted in designated landscape areas unless it fully conforms to the objective to conserve and enhance such landscapes.

¹ APP/D0840/W/19/3220335

13. My attention has been drawn to a recently approved conversion at Folly Farm, which is relatively close to the current appeal site. This other development was however directly adjacent to a road, already had planning permission to be converted into an office and was already served by a large paved parking area. It cannot therefore be considered to set a compelling precedent.

Conclusion

14. For the above reasons, and having taken into account all other matters raised, the proposal conflicts with the development plan taken as a whole and with the approach in the Framework. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

John Wilde

INSPECTOR