



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 22 February 2021

by David Wyborn BSc(Hons), MPhil, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 March 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/J9497/W/20/3264287

Glendale, Sticklepath, EX20 2NG

- 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 A Lovell against the decision of Dartmoor National Park Authority.
- The application Ref 0456/20, dated 15 September 2020, was refused by notice dated 24 November 2020.
- The development proposed is to convert former stable building to one holiday cottage.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - whether the proposed conversion of the building to a holiday let is supported by the development plan in this location, and
 - the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

Whether the proposed conversion of the building to a holiday let is supported by the development plan in this location

3. Policy DMD9 of the Dartmoor National Park Authority Development Management and Delivery Development Plan Document (July 2013) (the DPD) sets out the approach for the conversion or re-use of non-residential buildings outside classified settlements. This policy can allow for the provision of short stay tourist accommodation where it relates to a historic building. The supporting text explains the meaning of a historic building is one that may be considered "traditional" within the context of Dartmoor's built heritage. It is explained that typical qualities of a traditional building for the purposes of the policy can include, amongst other qualities, that it is constructed in a distinctive local style, of local materials, or materials readily available historically, walling predominantly stone or cob with lesser elements of brick or wood, and was built before 1919.
4. These policy requirements for the re-use of existing buildings are complemented by Policy DMD44 of the DPD which lists a series of options that may allow for the provision of new tourist accommodation. This includes accommodation in large houses in the countryside, including self-catering units of accommodation in close proximity to the main dwelling or where

- accommodation is provided as part of an acceptable farm diversification exercise.
5. This approach is consistent with Policy COR2 of the Dartmoor National Park Authority Core Strategy 2006-2026 (the CS) for development outside settlements where development is acceptable, in principle, amongst other things, if it would sustain buildings or structures that contribute to the distinctive landscape or special qualities of the Dartmoor National Park.
 6. In this case, the proposed holiday let would be located outside a settlement in the countryside. It would be accommodated in a building which appears was designed as a stable building and has a reasonably shallow mono-pitched, sheeted roof. The external materials, arrangement of windows and other openings, and the general form of the building, give it a reasonably functional appearance.
 7. I note the case made that this type of building is a vernacular feature of Dartmoor and related to the historic equestrian and pony rearing use within the National Park. However, in this case the building is a typical type of stable building that does not appear to have any particular historical or cultural heritage associated with it. The evidence indicates that the building does not predate 1919 and its appearance does not clearly display the defined qualities of a traditional building that would be applicable for conversion or re-use that would accord with Policy DMD9 of the DPD.
 8. In terms of policy DMD44 of the DPD, the building is located close to the main house. However, Glendale, in my view, could not reasonably be described as a large house in terms of the policy approach and there is no robust evidence to demonstrate that the holiday let would be part of a farm diversification scheme.
 9. Policy COR18 of the CS provides the policy approach to employment and business development across the National Park. As the proposal would be a holiday let within a building of functional appearance, I am not satisfied that the scheme would be based on the intrinsic qualities of the Dartmoor National Park such as to meet with the relevant criterion of Policy COR18.
 10. As a consequence of the above analysis, the proposal would not be supported by the policies of the development plan that would allow for the conversion of buildings to a holiday let outside settlements.
 11. The proposal would effectively be a new residential unit of accommodation in a countryside location. While it would be next to the main house it would be physically separated by intervening countryside from the village. In this situation, paragraph 79 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) specifies the limited circumstances when the development of isolated homes in the countryside may be allowed. In this case, the proposal would not meet with any of the exceptions and, in particular, for the reasons explained later regarding the adverse impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, the proposal would not re-use a redundant or disused building and enhance its immediate setting. Consequently, this conflict with national policy weighs against the scheme.
 12. In the light of the above, I conclude that the proposal would not be supported by the development plan in this location. In particular, the scheme would

conflict with Policies COR2, COR18 and COR19 of the CS, Policies DMD9 and DMD44 of the DPD and the Framework which, amongst other things, sets the policy requirements for the re-use and conversion of rural buildings.

Character and appearance

13. The building is a reasonably modestly sized structure. With its position close to the main dwelling, and with the main openings facing the joint drive and away from the immediately adjoining field, the presence of the building in the landscape is reasonably benign. The field runs up close to the edge of the building and provides a verdant and rural setting to the building group within this part of the National Park.
14. The scheme would insert upvc framed doors to the rear elevation, replacing the three windows. Additionally, a raised decked balcony edged in a glass balustrade with brushed metal supports and covered by a cantilevered canopy would be constructed. These changes would combine to erode the low key appearance and benign relationship to the adjoining field by introducing a more prominent and suburban character to this elevation of the building. The additions would not be sympathetic to the simple form of the present structure, or be entirely constructed with traditional materials, or provide a design that was locally distinctive and sensitive to the rural setting.
15. Additionally a section of hedge at the road frontage would be removed, an access drive provided within the edge of the field, and a parking and amenity area provided to the rear. The hedgebank constructed on the field side of the access would assist with softening the impact of this part of the proposal. However, the result would still form an encroachment of development into the field and the parking and amenity area would add to the suburban form of the rear additions detracting from the rural landscape character of the surroundings.
16. The rear part of the site is reasonably well screened in the wider landscape and the hedge along the road would prevent views into the site from that aspect. It is accepted that the site does not form part of the moorland and the works would not affect the setting of such parts of the National Park. Nevertheless, the localised changes would not be sympathetic to the rural surroundings of this section of Dartmoor and, therefore, would not meet the requirements of Policy COR4 of the CS which includes that development will be expected to demonstrate a layout appropriate to the site and its surroundings, conserving or enhancing the quality and distinctiveness of the local landscape character.
17. The Framework requires that great weight be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The harm that would result to the character of the landscape from the appeal proposal, even though localised and not open to public view, is, nevertheless, a matter which affords great weight.
18. Accordingly, I conclude that the proposal would not conserve the character and appearance of the area and would conflict with Policies COR1 and COR4 of the CS, Policies DMD1b, DMD5 and DMD7 of the DPD and the Framework which seek, amongst other things, that proposals should conserve and/or enhance the character and special qualities of the Dartmoor landscape.

Other Matters

19. The development plan explains that tourism is a major component of the Dartmoor economy and there would be a resulting boost in that respect from the proposal during construction and then in subsequent occupation. The site would be located within walking distance of the village and visitors would help support local services and facilities both locally and across the wider National Park. The Parish Council support the proposal because it considers that the economic benefits to the village, at a time when village services are under pressure, would outweigh the policy conflict with Policy DMD9 of the DPD.
20. There would be some ecological benefits from the proposal, such as the provision of the hedgebank, however, these benefits are likely to be reasonably minor because of the extent of the proposal in this respect.

Conclusion

21. In general, the development plan supports the provision of additional tourist accommodation. However, this is dependent on the proposal meeting a number of policy criteria to ensure that schemes support national park purposes, including specifying the type of building that would be suitable for re-use and conversion. In this case, the proposal would not comply with the policy approach for the reasons explained and there would be harm to the character and appearance of the area. These are matters which weigh substantially against the scheme.
22. The benefits of the scheme would be limited because only a single unit of accommodation would be provided and any ecological benefits would be reasonably minor. Accordingly, the identified harm would not be outweighed by the benefits of the scheme.
23. It follows from the above analysis that the proposal would not accord with the development plan when considered as a whole and the evidence does not indicate a departure from the development plan would be justified. Consequently, and taking all other matters into account, I conclude the appeal should be dismissed.

David Wyborn

INSPECTOR