
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 March 2021

by Paul Griffiths BSc(Hons) BArch IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 7th May 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/D0840/W/20/3264908

Land to the Rear of 43 Clinton Road, Park Road Redruth TR15 2JD

- 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 Gareth Venning of Gareth and Ross Venning against the decision of Cornwall Council.
 - The application Ref.PA19/04093, dated 10 May 2019, was refused by notice dated 16 November 2020.
 - The development proposed is the construction of six residential apartments with associated parking and landscaping.
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Preliminary Matter

1. The Council's decision notice uses a different site address from that set out on the originating planning application form. I have adopted the Council's version of the address in the header above for the sake of clarity.

Decision

2. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

3. This is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Redruth Conservation Area (CA) and, linked to that, its impact on the Camborne and Redruth Mining District section of the Cornwall and West Devon Landscape World Heritage Site (WHS).

Reasons

4. There are essentially two elements to the proposal. The first involves the erection of a two-storey building containing two apartments on the Park Road frontage. In principle, I see no great difficulty with such an intervention; the building would fill what is a rather incongruous gap in the street-scene, providing a transition between the elevated No.4 Park Road, and Nos.2a and 2b which are contained in a building set lower, reflecting the slope of Park Road. Further, the approach to the frontage treatment, adopting some of the motifs of No.4 adjacent, such as the bay window, would be an appropriate response.
5. However, unlike No.4 adjacent, the frontage would not contain the main entrance. Moreover, unlike neighbouring buildings which have front gardens, the area between the frontage of the building and the boundary with the pavement would be taken up with parking spaces, leaving little room for any significant landscaping.

6. The second element of the proposals is a larger building containing four apartments to the rear of the frontage building proposed, on land currently used, it seems, for car parking. I noted during my site visit that the land to the rear of the Clinton, Park and Albany Road frontages is home to a variety of buildings and a 'service lane'.
7. On that basis, there is no overriding reason why the open space where the rear building is proposed needs to remain in that state. However, the building proposed for it is significant in scale, and much larger than the buildings that are generally found along the 'service lane'. Moreover, it would be much more complex in its form and design than what generally prevails, with two-storey gables, and dormer windows.
8. Bringing all those points together, there are significant shortcomings in terms of the arrangement and design of the frontage building, and the scale and detailed resolution of the rear building. As a result of all that, the proposal would appear as an incongruous insertion that would fail to preserve or enhance the character or the appearance of the CA.
9. It seems that the appeal site and the surrounding land formed part of the Wheal Sparnon mine complex before it was developed in the early 19th Century. It is therefore an important remnant that contributes positively to the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the WHS. For the same reasons that the scheme would cause harm to the character and appearance of the CA, it would have a similarly deleterious impact on the OUV of the WHS.
10. In the light of those findings, the proposal fails to accord with Policy 12 of the Cornwall Local Plan (CLP) that seeks to ensure development is respectful of its context. Further, there is CLP Policy 24 to consider. This only permits harmful impacts to designated heritage assets where justified by public benefits. This mirrors the approach of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
11. Bearing in mind the scale of the CA, and the WHS, the localised harm that would be caused by the proposal would be, in the parlance of the NPPF, less than substantial. In such a scenario, NPPF paragraph 196 tells us that any such harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The scheme would bring forward additions to the stock of smaller housing units in the locality. That would represent a public benefit, as would the attendant economic activity in the build phase and beyond.
12. Against that, the Council can demonstrate a 6.5 years supply of deliverable housing sites, and a housing delivery test result of 133%. With those points in mind, the identified public benefit is nowhere near sufficient to outweigh the harm that would be caused. That is especially so when the workings of s.72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 dictate that considerable importance and weight must be attached to preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas. The proposal fails to accord with CLP Policy 24 and the NPPF, therefore.
13. For all those reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Paul Griffiths

INSPECTOR