



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 May 2021

by Mrs H Nicholls FdA MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 3 June 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/J9497/W/21/3266705

Brook, Glazebrook Farm, South Brent TQ10 9JE

- 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 Martin Aldridge against the decision of Dartmoor National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref 0336/20, dated 15 July 2020, was refused by notice dated 11 September 2020.
 - The development proposed is agricultural building.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. From the evidence, the proposed building is to be used for the housing of agricultural livestock and storage of associated materials. Whilst there were sheep grazing on the site at the time of my visit, it is uncommon for such a sizeable building of the design specified to be required for the housing of sheep, or other typical agricultural livestock for that matter. The design is more akin to an equestrian stable block and thus, the Authority's concerns about the mismatch of the building's design to its intended function are understandable. If the building were to be used for the stabling of horses, it may necessitate a change of use of the paddock for the keeping of such¹, for either domestic or commercial purposes, and may alter the policy considerations relevant to the proposal. However, as the appeal evidence focusses on an agricultural use, I shall deal with the appeal on this basis.

Main Issue

3. The main issues are (i) the effects of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, which falls within the Dartmoor National Park; and (ii) whether the proposal would be served by an adequate means of surface water drainage.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal site comprises an agricultural paddock, bound by a river on the western and southern sides. A bridge crosses the river to provide access from the nearby rural road to the south. Approximately half of the paddock closest to the river is broadly flat and the other half slopes steeply up to the north.

¹ *Sykes v Secretary of State for the Environment and other* [1981] 42 P. & C.R.

Brook House sits at a commanding point to the north, outside of the paddock, but is partly obscured by vegetation and trees positioned in front of it. Glazebrook Court exists to the east and backs on to the site without much in the way of boundary treatment between the two.

5. The appeal proposal would introduce an L-shaped, shallow pitched roof building onto the site. The building would be fully enclosed, with only three 'stable-style' doors below a roof overhang, and three rooflights in the rear roofslope. It would be set at an angle in the northern, sloping part of the site, broadly orientated to face south-west. A gravel track would be formed from the bridge and a larger gravelled yard would be formed around the building itself. Due to the sloping topography, some retaining walls would also be formed around the rear and sides of the building.
6. Due to its elevated and exposed position, the extent of works that would be required to accommodate the building into the sloping ground and the way in which it would fail to relate well to the existing ground levels or surrounding features, it would appear a harsh and poorly sited building in relation to its picturesque and intimate setting. Whilst the building would have a natural timber finish, its incursion into the paddock in the manner intended would result in harm to the natural qualities of the site, particularly in the absence of robust agricultural justification for the scale and design of the building. Such harm would be perceived frequently by passers-by in views filtered through trees from the adjoining Public Right of Way, and would not be mitigated by the relationship with the dwellings at Glazebrook Court which would be visible in the background.
7. For the above reasons, the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area and to the Dartmoor National Park. It would therefore be contrary to, in particular, Policies COR1, COR3, COR4 of the Core Strategy² and Policies DMD1b, DMD5, DMD7 and DMD34 of the DMD³. These Policies collectively seek to ensure the conservation and/or enhancement of the character and special qualities of the Dartmoor National Park landscape, having regard to scale, layout, design and materials, and with particular regard to agricultural development, seek to ensure that it relates well to other landscape features and other building groups and demonstrates a scale and form well related to its function.

Surface Water Drainage

8. The appeal application was originally submitted with limited information in relation to the surface water drainage scheme. Following refusal, the appellant liaised directly with the Lead Local Flood Authority and provided details in relation to the intended soakaway design along with percolation test results. The submitted results indicate that the ground conditions are suitable for a soakaway device and that suitable management measures can be imposed to maintain the functionality of the system.
9. These aspects of the proposal are not before me for detailed consideration, but it is clear that the matter could be addressed by way of a suitably worded planning condition to achieve accordance with Policy DM3 of the DMD, which

² Dartmoor National Park Authority Local Development Framework, Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2008)

³ Dartmoor National Park Authority Development Management and Delivery Development Plan Document (2013)

seeks to ensure surface water is disposed of in a manner that minimises flood risk and pollution of watercourses. However, as the appeal is failing in relation to the first main issue, this matter is not determinative.

Planning balance and conclusion

10. The appeal proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area, contrary to the aforementioned Policies, but also to the development plan, considered as a whole.
11. Whilst the proposal would inevitably derive some benefit to the appellant, these benefits would be limited. As such, the limited benefits in this case do not amount to a consideration of sufficient materiality to indicate that a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan.
12. For the reasons set out above, the appeal is dismissed.

Hollie Nicholls

INSPECTOR