



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 27 May 2021

by Mr A Spencer-Peet BSc(Hons) PGDip.LP Solicitor (Non Practising)

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 09 June 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/D0840/W/21/3269063

Millside, Perrancoombe, Perranporth, Cornwall TR6 0JQ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr S Matthews against the decision of Cornwall Council.
 - The application Ref PA20/09348, dated 26 October 2020, was refused by notice dated 21 January 2021.
 - The development proposed is the construction of up to 14 holiday units and associated infrastructure.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. In the interests of accuracy and consistency, I have used the address of the appeal site as provided at section D of the appeal form and as included on the Council's Decision Notice, in the banner heading above.
3. The application was made in outline with all matters except for access and layout reserved. I have determined the appeal on that basis.
4. The reason for refusal given by the Council on the decision notice dated 21 January 2021 refers to Policy 7 of the Cornwall Local Plan Strategic Policies (2010-2030) (the Local Plan). However, upon review of the submissions of the main parties to this appeal, it is clear that the reason for refusal should have included reference to Policy 27 of the Local Plan. I have determined this appeal on that basis.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is whether the proposal would constitute an appropriate form of development with regard to the provisions of local planning policy in respect of the location of the development and its accessibility.

Reasons

6. The appeal site comprises an irregular shaped parcel of land surrounded by mature trees and vegetation, situated in a secluded valley adjacent to a narrow single-track lane and located outside of Perrancoombe. Opposite the appeal site and on the other side of the adjacent narrow single-track lane is the Leycroft Valley Holidays Park site.

7. The evidence before me confirms that outline planning permission¹ was recently granted by the Council for the siting of fourteen holiday units at the appeal site. That outline planning permission was granted subject to a range of conditions which included a specific requirement that the holiday units shall be used as holiday accommodation only for visitors to the existing Leycroft Valley Holidays Park. However, the planning application which the subject of this appeal concerns a new tourism business rather than being related to the existing Leycroft Valley Holidays Park business.
8. Policy 5 of the Local Plan is supportive of appropriate tourism development and provides that proposals within the countryside must be of a scale appropriate to its location and to their accessibility by a range of transport modes, and that proposals should provide a well balanced mix of economic, social and environmental benefits. This Policy broadly conforms with the advice in paragraph 83 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), which says planning policies and decisions should enable sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments. There is, therefore, no objection in principle to a countryside location for new tourist accommodation providing the criteria of Policy 5 of the Local Plan are met.
9. Policy 27 of the Local Plan requires schemes to provide safe and suitable access to the site for all people and minimise car travel. Policy 19 of the St Agnes Neighbourhood Development Plan 2018 -2030 (the SANDP) provides that proposals for new tourist accommodation should be accessible to the widest range of transport modes available in the area and be appropriate in scale and character to their setting and location.
10. The appeal site is located outside of a settlement and in a remote rural location. Travel to and from the nearest bus stop by bicycle or on foot would require navigating the adjoining narrow single track, unlit lane which does not provide pedestrian footways and which connects the site to Perrancoombe to the north, and to Trevellas west of the appeal site. As I observed on my site visit, the adjacent narrow lane provides little room for a vehicle to pass a pedestrian or cyclist. This route to and from the nearest public transport links would not, in my view, provide an attractive option for visitors to reach the appeal site on foot or by bicycle or for visitors to reach services and facilities that could reasonably be required in relation to self-catering tourist accommodation.
11. Whilst it is acknowledged that there are public footpaths away from the narrow unlit lane described above and which provides connections to the nearest bus stops and services, these paths would be similarly unlit and would not provide suitable alternative access especially for those with reduced mobility. Furthermore, while I note the Appellant's reference to an existing arrangement between the Leycroft Valley Holiday Park site and a local taxi firm in respect of reduced fares, there is no substantive evidence before me which confirms that such arrangements would apply to the new tourism business proposed at the appeal site.
12. In addition to the above, I further note the Appellant's submissions that indicate that visitors would be encouraged to use alternative modes of transport and that arrangements have been made with a local hire firm to deliver and collect bicycles from the Leycroft Valley Holiday Park site. However,

¹ Local Planning Authority Reference: PA19/05262

again I have no substantive evidence before me which confirms that such arrangements have been agreed to be in place for a new tourism business at the site.

13. In light of the above, and based on all the evidence before me and on observations made, it is therefore likely that visitors to the proposed new tourism business would be likely to be heavily reliant on private motor vehicles both in order to access the appeal site as well as in order to access services and facilities that could reasonably be required. Whilst dependence on private vehicles may be expected in a rural locations such as this, the appeal scheme would be likely to exacerbate this level of reliance. It would be likely to contribute to a pattern of development that could cause environmental harm as a result of increased car journeys and hence carbon emissions.
14. Consequently, the appeal proposal would not, in my view, be suitably located with regards to its accessibility by a range of transport modes and, accordingly, the proposal would conflict with Policies 5 and 27 of the Local Plan and would be contrary to the provisions of Policy 19 of the SANDP. The conflict with the policies of the development plan weighs significantly against the proposal.
15. The evidence before me indicates that the scheme would result in a net gain to biodiversity in accordance with local and national planning policy. However, for the reasons given above, visitors and employees would be likely to be heavily reliant on private motor vehicles to access the site and, as such, the appeal scheme would fail to accord with the environmental objective of sustainable development as described within paragraph 8 of the Framework and, consequently, could not be considered to be sustainable development in the context of the Framework or in terms of Policy 1 of the Local Plan for which there is a presumption in favour of.
16. The proposal would provide economic benefits in terms of employment opportunities for the management and maintenance of the proposed new tourism business. Furthermore, there would be economic and social benefits associated with the spend of future visitors within local businesses. However, I have not been provided with any indication of the nature of demand for additional tourism accommodation in this part of Cornwall and, as such, I cannot be sure of the magnitude of these additional economic and social benefits. Whilst I note the Appellant's submissions regarding the number of employment opportunities that would be created by the appeal proposal as well as the wider economic and social benefits that would arise, in my view and having considered all the information and submissions before me, by reason of the scale of the proposal, I attach moderate weight to these benefits.
17. However, such benefits either individually or in combination do not outweigh the identified harm and the associated development plan conflict to which, as noted above, I attach significant weight.
18. The Appellant has drawn my attention to a number of planning applications which concern tourism development outside of settlements and which have been approved by the Council. Whilst I have only been provided with limited information and extracts of reports in relation to those cited planning permissions, it does appear that the circumstances applicable in those cited matters can be distinguished from the present appeal, in that they concerned a different scale of development, were assessed against the requirements of different neighbourhood plan policies or concerned seasonal arrangements

only. Whilst the limited details of those other cited matters as provided is noted, I have, in any event determined this appeal based on its own merits.

Conclusion

19. I have found that the proposal would be contrary to the policies within the Development Plan, and other material considerations are not sufficient to outweigh that conflict. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Mr A Spencer-Peet

INSPECTOR