



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 30 June 2021

by Alison Fish BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20 July 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/D0840/W/21/3271871

Bests, Blisland, Cornwall PL30 4LH

- 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 & Mrs Millward against the decision of Cornwall Council.
 - The application Ref PA20/09052, dated 14 October 2020, was refused by notice dated 17 February 2021.
 - The development proposed is a replacement dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The appellant has provided a 'comparison site plan' numbered 20014/22 at appendix EJFP3 of their appeal statement. This indicates a suggested re-siting for the appeal proposal in the event that I find the proposed siting unacceptable. However, it would not appear that this proposal has been subject to any public consultation and affected parties have not had the opportunity to comment upon these changes. As a result, and taking into account the 'Wheatcroft principles', I have determined this appeal on the basis of the plans considered by the Council in their determination of the application.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is located adjacent to the main farm complex which consists of the farmhouse set within a hard-surfaced area together with some smaller ancillary barns, one of which has an extant consent for conversion to a dwelling. Open farmland surrounds the farm complex on all sides.
5. The extant consent relates to the conversion and extension of an 'L' shaped barn (the barn) to form a 'T' shaped dwelling. The access is already in existence and the associated domestic curtilage would be confined to a level and enclosed area which already surrounds the barn. The barn itself is traditional in appearance being constructed from local building materials and it appears to me that the approved scheme would be sympathetic to its existing character.
6. The appeal proposal is the erection of a dwelling outside the farm complex on farmland which is gently sloping, undeveloped and enclosed by native hedges.

The presence of a hedge and field gate on the boundary between the appeal site and the barn provides clear delineation between the main farm building complex and the surrounding open farmland. In addition, the appeal site occupies an elevated position from where views are far reaching.

7. As undeveloped farmland surrounding a traditional farm complex of buildings, the appeal site contributes to the character and appearance of the rural landscape and the distinctive qualities of the Camel and Allen Valleys Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) which are derived from the relationship between the built and natural environment including its dispersed farmsteads, field patterns and strong hedgerow boundaries.
8. The provision of a dwelling on elevated, undeveloped farmland together with the opening up of the boundary between the barn and the field, the artificial subdivision of the field and the domestication of the land around the dwelling would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the area and the AGLV, contrary to Policies 2 and 12 of the Cornwall Local Plan 2010-2030 which seek to protect, conserve and enhance the natural landscape.

Other Matters

9. The appellant has advanced an argument regarding a 'fall-back' position and that the proposal constitutes a replacement dwelling under Policy 7 of the LP. Even if I considered that it was a replacement dwelling under the policy, the harm I have identified above to the character and appearance of the area results in a development which is unacceptable and is not a realistic fall-back position when compared to the sympathetic conversion and retention of an existing traditional building.
10. I have considered the biodiversity gains, sustainable building methods and problems with water runoff which the appellant has drawn to my attention but I consider that the harm which would arise from the development in terms of the adverse effect on the character and appearance of the area is not outweighed by the wider environmental benefits highlighted by the appellant.
11. In addition, I have considered the conditions suggested by the Council which have been agreed by the appellant but none of them make the development acceptable.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Alison Fish

INSPECTOR