
Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 22 September 2021

by Alison Fish BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4 November 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/D0840/W/21/3277519

Land North Of Potters Lodge, Trenance Road, St Issey, Wadebridge PL27 7QY

- 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 18 Prosper Hill Ltd against the decision of Cornwall Council.
 - The application Ref PA21/02191, dated 24 February 2021, was refused by notice dated 21 May 2021.
 - The development proposed is construction of 4 dwellings and associated works.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The site has planning permission for the erection of two dwellings. The substance of this appeal relates to whether there are any adverse effects as a result of increasing the number of dwellings on the site from two to four.
4. The appeal site is roughly triangular in shape with the boundary closest to the neighbouring properties, known as 'Potters Lodge' and 'Green Oaks', being longer than the boundary on the opposing side of the field. The field has an existing access point from the highway which is positioned approximately centrally along the frontage and there is a dense hedge either side. The site sits up above road level.
5. Policies 2, 3 and 12 of the Cornwall Local Plan Strategic Policies 2010-2030 (LP) emphasise the need for development proposals to be high quality, demonstrate an understanding of its location and maintain and respect the distinctive character of Cornwall. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) underlines that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.
6. The appeal site is in an area where the general grain of existing development in the locality tends to have a spacious rural feel, developed organically over the passage of time with informal clusters of dwellings in a spacious setting. Vehicular parking tends to be informal too with some properties having clearly defined provision whilst others make use of the public highway. This mix of dwelling types, sizes and positioning gives the locality its distinctive character.

7. The appeal proposal provides for a singular point of access for the four dwellings. This results in a cul-de-sac arrangement whereby the dwellings are set up from the road and located cheek by jowl in a line at the rear of the site, with parking provision for each dwelling provided on the front of each plot. The provision of parking for twelve vehicles to the front of the properties would result in a development which would be dominated by car parking.
8. This density would be in stark contrast to the spacious rural character, appearing to be very suburban and not reminiscent of the informal character I have set out above. As a result, I find that there would be significant harm to the rural character of the area.
9. There appears to be no dispute between the main parties that the proposal would result in a 13% increase in the number of residential properties in Tredinnick. It has been put to me that an increase of 5% would be appropriate as this is referred to in footnote 35 of the Framework. Footnote 35 refers to entry level exception sites and that is not what is being proposed here so I afford this little weight. However, whether a development is of a reasonable scale is not necessarily a matter of numbers. Scale should also consider how the development would be viewed in its context.
10. Even if I found that a 13% increase in the number of residential properties in Tredinnick was acceptable in principle, it does not follow that the development itself would be acceptable. In this instance the development would be located with just two other properties, Potter's Lodge and Green Oaks. The development of the appeal site with four dwellings would represent a significant increase in the built form of development in this location. This would be at odds with the scale of development which currently exists. Given what I have set out above about the spacious rural feel at the appeal site, I find that the provision of four dwellings would be of a scale which is at odds with its surroundings, resulting in harm to the character and appearance of the area.
11. I accept that the presence and retention of the mature hedgerows around the boundary of the site would limit some of the views of the proposal and, as a result, could reduce its visual impact. However, it would clearly be seen at the entrance point to the site and from Potter's Lodge and Green Oaks. In any event, this would not override my findings in relation to the impact on the distinctive character and appearance of the area which relates as much to density, layout and positioning of the dwellings as it does to how it is viewed in the wider landscape.
12. Taken together, I find that the density and scale of the appeal proposal would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the area contrary to policies 2, 3 and 12 of the LP which seek to ensure that developments are of an appropriate scale and density, demonstrating a clear understanding and response to local distinctiveness. I also find that the appeal proposal is contrary to the Framework which seeks to encourage good design which is visually attractive in terms of layout and responds to its setting.

Other Matters

13. I have had regard to the positive contribution the dwellings would make towards the local economy and the housing stock and that it would involve the development of an underused site. However, I find that these benefits do not outweigh the harm I have identified above. I have also had regard to the 'fall

back' position of two dwellings on the site, but this does not justify increasing the number of dwellings on site in the manner shown on the submitted plans. Indeed, the fall back position is likely to have less of an impact, in terms of scale and density, compared to the proposed.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above, having considered the development plan as a whole, the approach in the Framework, and all other relevant material considerations, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Alison Fish

INSPECTOR