



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 April 2022

by M Bale BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16 May 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/D0840/W/21/3288228

39 Lower Pengegon, Camborne TR14 7UJ

- 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 Kevin Voller against the decision of Cornwall Council.
 - The application Ref PA21/05117, dated 13 May 2021, was refused by notice dated 3 September 2021.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing dwelling and erection of two flats.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Applications for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mr Kevin Voller against Cornwall Council. That application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Main Issues

3. The Council refused permission for two reasons. It has since been confirmed that the second reason relating to surface water flooding has been addressed.
4. Therefore, the main issues are the effect on the significance of the Camborne and Redruth Mining District World Heritage Site (WHS); and the effect on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

5. The site is part of a collection of old buildings surrounded by modern suburban development. Unlike some nearby terraces, these buildings do not appear to be unified by architectural design or detailing, but they nevertheless share a simplicity and common scale. They sit in a pocket with another group of dwellings on the opposite side of an access track from Lower Pengegon.
6. The site is within the Camborne and Redruth Mining District area of the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site (WHS). The area was a rural mining district which produced a major proportion of the world's supply of copper during the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth century. The WHS includes mining villages and mineworkers' smallholdings as well as other key features of interest.
7. The appellant's heritage statement explains that this area was the most heavily industrialised, with the most significant urban centres of mining population. Although the site did not historically adjoin the built-up area of Camborne, there were mine workings very close by. The appellant's heritage statement

- contains no particular evidence about the origin of this group of older dwellings or to refute the Council's suggestion that the site would have been connected with mining activity.
8. The WHS is very large with 10 identified areas over 2 counties. In this context, the dwelling at the site is very small. It is not, in itself, prominently located or obviously connected with important people or key historical events. Rather it appears to be a workers' cottage or similar, that would likely have been numerous across the WHS. On that basis, I find insufficient evidence that it should be considered a non-designated heritage asset in itself.
 9. Nevertheless, while the appeal site itself and many of the older dwellings around it may have been adapted and now include a range of modern additions and finishes, these dwellings are clearly distinct in style and scale from the modern suburban ones that surround them. Whether or not the site itself should be deemed a non-designated heritage asset, I, therefore, find that the site is a tangible link to the past being indicative of historic activity and thereby contributes to the significance of the WHS.
 10. The loss of this historic component would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the WHS. While it may be possible to demolish the building under permitted development rights, there is no compelling evidence that such would occur in the absence of any permission for redevelopment. The prospect of demolition does not, therefore, lead me away from this finding.
 11. While the value of this particular site may be relatively low in the context of the WHS as a whole, Policy 24 of the Cornwall Local Plan 2016 (LP) and the National Planning Policy Framework nevertheless indicate that the conservation of designated heritage assets should receive great weight. Any harm to the significance should be balanced against public benefits and I shall return to this later in my decision.
 12. There are a range of building materials and styles in the locality. The proposed choice of materials may be reflective of those in the wider surrounding area, but there is no substantive evidence as to how the overall design concept would reflect the older group of cottages. In particular the proposed replacement building would include a projecting 'clipped' gable towards the garden area and two part-dormer windows facing the access. These features would create somewhat fussy elevations at odds with the clear simplicity of the cottages.
 13. While not prominent in the townscape, the clipped gable would be visible and its wide proportions and jarring roof form would sit awkwardly in the building group. I note that an extension was permitted in 2014, but that did not include the projecting gable or dormers. An earlier application for an additional dwelling showed a conventional gable and in any case this was not permitted, so it is not indicative of an appropriate form, and does not influence my decision.
 14. The area is not a conservation area but the group of cottages does have a distinct identity, standing apart from the wider modern, suburban townscape. In the absence of substantive evidence to the contrary, I find no clear basis for the proposed design to depart from the influence of the more historic group to which it would be attached. I, therefore, find that the proposal would detract from the character and appearance of the area and diminish local identity.

15. Accordingly, the proposal would conflict with Policy 12 of the Cornwall Local Plan that seeks to ensure that development respects Cornwall's enduring distinctiveness and maintains and enhances its distinctive natural and historic character.
16. Despite its contribution to the character of the group in which it sits, the existing dwelling, is in very poor condition. Considerable works are required to achieve modern standards and the resulting dwelling would be very small. Its replacement with a new building may well be the most efficient means to secure higher quality housing on this site. The improved accommodation and additional dwelling would add to local housing supply in an accessible location, with additional benefits associated with its construction and long-term occupation.
17. However, only one additional dwelling would result, so I give little weight to the benefits associated with the construction of the flats. As great weight must be given to the conservation of heritage assets, I find that the public benefits associated with the scheme do not outweigh the harm to the significance of the WHS that I have identified. The proposal would conflict with those aims of LP Policy 24 that seek to avoid harm to the WHS and require any harm to designated heritage assets to be weighed against public benefits.
18. For the above reasons, the proposal would conflict with the development plan, read as a whole. Material considerations do not otherwise indicate that permission should be granted.
19. Accordingly, the appeal is dismissed.

M Bale

INSPECTOR