



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 February 2023

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

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 March 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/Q1153/W/22/3305281

Pound Farm, Buckland Monachorum, Yelverton PL20 7LH

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant approval required under Schedule 2, Part 6 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015.
 - The appeal is made by Mr David Glanville against the decision of West Devon Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 3372/21/PAA, dated 10 May 2021, was refused by notice dated 22 February 2022.
 - The development proposed is a new machinery and hay store.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. Schedule 2, Part 6, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, permits the carrying out on agricultural land comprised in an agricultural unit of 5 hectares or more in area of (a) works for the erection, extension or alteration of a building; or (b) any excavation or engineering operations, which are reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture within that unit. Paragraph A.2.(2) of Class A requires (amongst other things) the developer to apply to the local planning authority for a determination as to whether the prior approval of the authority will be required as to the siting, design and external appearance of the building.

Main Issues

3. The main issues in this appeal are:
 - The effect of the development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area having regard to the siting and design of the agricultural building,
 - The effect of the development on the setting of Listed Buildings having regard to the siting and design of the agricultural building; and,
 - Whether the siting of the proposed development would be acceptable having regard to alternative sites.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

4. The site is remotely located away from the existing group of buildings at Pound Farm, and comprises part of a field which is partially enclosed by a low bank with mature trees, accessed via along farm trackway which is bounded by predominately open fields. The field forms part of a larger holding, is located outside of any settlement, and is situated within the countryside and Tamar Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (the AONB).
5. Policy DEV23 of the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan (March 2019) (the JLP) concerns landscape character and, amongst other matters, provides that development will conserve and enhance landscape character and scenic and visual quality, avoiding significant and adverse landscape or visual impacts. Policy DEV25 of the JLP concerns nationally protected landscapes and provides that the highest degree of protection will be given to the AONB, giving great weight to conserving the landscape and scenic beauty within the AONB.
6. The evidence before me confirms that the site is located within Landscape Character Type 2D: Moorland edge slopes, as defined within the South Hams and West Devon Landscape Character Assessment (June 2018). Its valued attributes are listed as, among others, a strong medieval field pattern with prominent Devon hedge banks and drystone walls and a pastoral character of fields contrasting with heathy moorland. The local landscape consists of undulating agricultural land which is grazed pasture, small to medium sized fields, winding lanes bounded by high hedges, small linear woods along shallow valleys, a sparse settlement pattern with small hamlets, villages and nucleated farmsteads.
7. The proposed building would be substantial in terms of height, and constructed with corrugated sheet roofing and timber boarding set on concrete walls. As noted above, the site is located away from the group of buildings at Pound Farm and accessed via a long winding trackway. The proposal would represent the spread of built form into an area of predominately open countryside.
8. Whilst no new boundary treatment appears to be provided which would divide the field, the proposed structure would be substantial in terms of scale and spread, occupying a significant portion of the field in which it would be located. Following construction, the proposed building would substantially and significantly reduce the overall area and scale of the field. That would be harmful to the established field pattern which, as noted above, forms part of the landscape character for the area.
9. The site is partially screened by the low bank and the small number of mature trees located at its eastern end. Nonetheless, the building would be in a prominent position on the side of a valley slope where there would be glimpsed and filtered views. Due to the dominance and prominence of the proposal, intervening landscape features including the low bank and trees would not mitigate for its unacceptably intrusive siting.
10. I acknowledge the Appellant's submissions with regards to the reasons of practicality, such as existing means of access and availability of water and power, as to why the site was chosen. However, such matters would not

overcome the identified landscape harm. The potential benefits of siting the building in this location, are discussed further below.

11. The proposed building would represent an encroachment into the undeveloped countryside and would not conserve or enhance the landscape or scenic beauty of the AONB. Due to its siting the proposal would, for the reasons outlined, be intrusive and dominant in the landscape setting which would undermine its scenic qualities. The proposal would therefore be contrary to the landscape considerations of Policies DEV23 and DEV25 of the JLP.

Heritage Assets

12. Located southwest of the site is the Garden House and associated gardens. The evidence before me confirms that the gardens are open to the public and that the Garden House and Gardens contain listed structures.
13. As above, the site would be partially screened by mature trees and other landscape features, but there would still be glimpsed views into the site from the adjacent public gardens. Whilst I appreciate that the site would not be highly visible from the adjacent gardens, the siting of the new building would draw the eye, and would thereby have an adverse effect on the setting of the listed structures at the Garden House.
14. On account of the separation distance and by reason of intervening features such as hedges and trees, in terms of paragraph 202 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) the harm to the significance of the heritage assets at the Garden House would be less than substantial. As such, in accordance with the Framework, that harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
15. The Appellant has put it to me that the new barn would allow for the removal of an existing barn that is located within the group of buildings at Pound Farm. The Appellant maintains that the removal of the existing barn would improve the character, significance and setting of the listed buildings at Pound House and the Stables located north of Pound House. The Appellant further contends that removal of the existing barn would improve the living conditions of occupants at Pound Farm and would improve the historic character, significance and setting of Pound Farm.
16. However, the buildings which comprise the group at Pound Farm are not listed buildings. Whilst it is acknowledged that the existing barn building is located closer to Pound House than the proposed new barn, it is positioned within the group at Pound Farm where it is viewed in that context and therefore is not unduly prominent. It is also noted that the existing barn is the subject of a current planning application. However, there is no certainty that planning permission would be granted. While the removal of the existing barn may result in some improvement to the living conditions of residents at Pound Farm, agricultural activity close to that residence would continue in adjacent fields and, in my view, the potential benefits associated with the proposed siting of the new barn would not outweigh the harm to the listed structures at the Garden House and gardens to which I attach great weight.
17. The new barn would therefore fail to accord with the provisions of the Framework in respect of conserving and enhancing the historic environment,

and would be contrary to Policy DEV21 of the JLP which concerns development affecting the historic environment.

Alternative Sites

18. Policy TTV26 of the JLP seeks to protect the special characteristics and role of the countryside and, amongst other matters, provides that development should respond to a proven agricultural, forestry or other occupational need that requires a countryside location. Policy DEV15 of the JLP concerns supporting the rural community, and provides that development will be supported which meets the essential needs of agriculture interests subject to such developments demonstrating how a positive relationship with existing buildings has been achieved, including scale, design, massing and orientation.
19. The Appellant has provided a 'Barn Location Options' plan which identifies three sites to include the appeal site, a site located north of Pound House, and a third site to the north, and isolated from, the buildings at Pound Farm. Those alternative sites appear to have been discounted by reasons of proximity to the listed buildings at Pound House, landscape effects and drainage concerns.
20. It is acknowledged that, in part, the abovementioned alternative sites would potentially result in similar levels of harm to the surrounding landscape and to designated heritage assets given that a new barn in those locations would also be significantly separated from other buildings.
21. However, no detailed evidence of the location of potential alternative sites, or the impact of development in those locations, that are not physically or visually separated from the group of farm buildings at the wider holding, have been provided such that I can be confident that all reasonable alternatives have been explored. Furthermore, as noted above, there does not appear to be any confirmation before me with regards to planning permission for the removal and replacement of the existing agricultural barn at Pound Farm and, as such, it has not been adequately demonstrated why that existing building would be unavailable. Consequently, the new barn would not accord with the aims of Policies TTV26 or DEV15 of the JLP.

Conclusions

22. I find that the benefits outlined by the Appellant do not outweigh the harm which would be caused by the siting to the appearance of the site, its historic surroundings or the wider landscape. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Mr A Spencer-Peet

INSPECTOR