



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 July 2025

by **A Tucker BA (Hons) IHBC**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/J9497/W/25/3359438

Land to West of Crockernwell, Devon

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant permission in principle.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Paul Nickells of SAS Europe Limited against the decision of Dartmoor National Park Authority (NPA).
 - The application ref is 0345/24.
 - The development proposed is erection of 5 residential units and 4 live/work units.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The proposal is for permission in principle. Planning Practice Guidance advises that this is an alternative way of obtaining planning permission for housing-led development. The permission in principle consent route has 2 stages: the first stage (or permission in principle stage) establishes whether a site is suitable in-principle and the second ('technical details consent') stage is when the detailed development proposals are assessed. This appeal relates to the first of these 2 stages.
3. The scope of the considerations for permission in principle is limited to location, land use and the amount of development permitted¹. All other matters are considered as part of a subsequent Technical Details Consent application if permission in principle is granted. I have determined the appeal accordingly.
4. A submitted plan shows how the development could be laid out. However, as this appeal does not relate to technical details, I will view the plan as illustrative only, as its title suggests.
5. On 12 December 2024 the Government published its revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). Although this was after the date that the NPA made its decision, the appeal timetable allowed for the main parties to provide any relevant comments.

Main Issues

6. Whether the site is suitable for residential development, having regard to its location, land use and amount of development.

¹ Planning Practice Guidance Paragraph: 012 Reference ID: 58-012-20180615

Reasons

7. The appeal site is a parcel of land at the western edge of the small village of Crockenwell. A track spans the length of the site to give access to two buildings that were used previously for storage and distribution. The rest of the site is undeveloped and was left to long grass at the time of my visit.
8. Policy 1.3 of the Dartmoor Local Plan 2018-2036 (LP) sets out the spatial strategy for the National Park. According to this Crockenwell is not a classified settlement. The site is therefore to be viewed as open countryside where development will only be accepted if it meets one of the listed exemptions. The proposal is not for farming, forestry or a land-based rural business; it is not for gypsy or traveller development or for a new business making use of existing redundant buildings. It is not householder development or necessary to sustain buildings of conservation value. It is not for the provision of infrastructure or needed to pursue National Park purposes. It would therefore not accord with the NPA's Spatial Strategy.
9. Crockenwell is a small settlement and would appear to have very limited services and facilities. Consequently, future occupiers of the dwellings would be likely to be heavily reliant on a car to meet day to day needs. Furthermore, the proposal would see the built form of the small settlement extended into a largely undeveloped area of the National Park. Developing the site to the extent proposed would not accord with the simple linear form of the existing village to the east, and would be likely to cause some landscape harm.
10. The two existing buildings mean that this part of the site should be viewed as brownfield land or previously developed land (PDL). These buildings sit within an associated area of hard standing. A modest access track connects them to the road. The area to either side of this is undeveloped grass, that has the appearance of an agricultural field. There is nothing before me to suggest that this extensive area should be viewed as the curtilage of the buildings or land that has been developed. As such, only a small part of the site is PDL.
11. Paragraph 125 c) of the Framework states that planning decisions should give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes. In this case the weight I should give to this paragraph is limited as the site is not suitable and neither should it be viewed as within a settlement within the context of the LP. Furthermore, the PDL only makes up a small part of the proposed site area.
12. The proposal at Dunsford Reservoir² is for the re-use of an existing building. The Inspector found that the site would represent PDL in the terms of the Framework, and that there was support for the proposal from Policy 1.2 of the LP with regard to the efficient use of an existing building on PDL. This would not be the case for the appeal proposal before me, and I find the similarities between the two schemes to be limited. Indeed, the proposal would not find support in Policy 1.2 of the LP as it would not minimise the need to travel, and would only partly relate to PDL.
13. In summary, with regard to the proposed location, land use and amount of development, the site would not be suitable for the development proposed. It would not accord with Policies 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and 3.1 of the LP, which together seek the delivery of National Park purposes and to protect Dartmoor's special qualities,

² Planning Inspectorate Ref: APP/J9497/W/22/3302228

to support the delivery of sustainable development, to meet housing need, and to establish a spatial strategy and guide new development to existing settlements.

Other Matters

14. Since the NPA made its decision, it has confirmed a Tree Preservation Order to cover the three oaks that grow in the vicinity of the existing buildings. As I am dismissing the appeal for other reasons this is not a matter that I need to consider further.

Conclusion

15. The proposal would be contrary to the development plan and there are no other material considerations, including the provisions of the Framework, that outweigh this finding. Therefore, for the reasons given, the appeal should be dismissed.

A Tucker

INSPECTOR