
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: 16 July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/J9497/W/25/3361724

Barn at SX 72270 91952 Drewsteignton, West Devon EX6 6RD

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr & Mrs Cooper against the decision of Dartmoor National Park Authority (NPA).
 - The application Ref is 0056/24.
 - The development proposed is change of use of barn to bunk/camping barn, erection of lean-to extension and siting of a shepherd hut for ancillary use.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. Several amendments to the proposal were made before the NPA made its decision. These included the removal of the shepherd hut. I have considered the appeal on the basis of the amended scheme, however I have retained the original description of development above as it was not formally amended by the parties.
3. On 12 December 2024 the Government published its revised National Planning Policy Framework. Although this was after the date of the NPA's decision, the appeal timetable allowed for the main parties to provide any relevant comments.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are whether the proposal would be acceptable in principle, with regard to the relevant Policies of the development plan, and its effect on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

5. The appeal building is a small bank barn that is nestled into the topography, with the higher land to the north revealing a modest part of the top of the rear wall. The full building is accessible and fully visible from the lower level to the south and west. The site is in a rural location and outside of a settlement.
6. Policy 5.5 of the Dartmoor Local Plan 2018-2036 (LP) seeks to steer tourist accommodation to local centres and rural settlements. Part 2 of the Policy provides support for tourist accommodation in villages, hamlets and the open countryside, but is subject to an additional locational test. Given the site's countryside location, part 2 of the Policy applies, which states that permission will only be granted for new short-stay tourist accommodation where it is well related to tourist services.

7. The parties disagree over whether the appeal site is well related to either the Two Moors Way or Route 28 of the National Cycle Network. As no maps or further evidence are provided in relation to this I am unable to conclude either way. In any case, supporting text to the Policy suggests that tourist services might include a general store or a pub rather than a tourist attraction such as a walking route. The site is not well related to any such service or facility. A bus stop on the A30 is mentioned in the submissions, but there is nothing to show its location. Accessing it on foot would be via narrow country lanes that are unlit and without safe pedestrian routes, so would be unattractive for most to use, and would be unlike the situation at Linkincorn¹. Accordingly, the proposal would not be well related to tourist services and would therefore not satisfy the test set out at paragraph 2 a) of Policy 5.5 of the LP.
8. In terms of part b) of paragraph 2, the NPA is content that the proposal would be provided through the conversion of a suitable redundant historic building. I see no reason to take a contrary view on this as a matter of principle. For the proposal to fully accord with part b) it also needs to accord with strategic Policy 2.7 or 2.8.
9. Policy 2.8 of the LP is relevant to the appeal building and is a Policy the NPA referred to in its decision. Whilst not listed, the appeal building is a simple stone built former agricultural building and has some value as a modest historic building that retains its simple functional character and association with its landscape. Policy 2.8 does not specifically relate to non-designated heritage assets. It relates to historic non-residential buildings in the open countryside, which would apply directly to the appeal building, and would require a different assessment than the scheme at Marlin².
10. The proposal broadly accords with the criteria set out at 2 a) of Policy 2.8. As to whether the proposed use is the optimum viable use of the building, part 3 of Policy 2.8 suggests that high impact uses should be tested by marketing.
11. Table 2.4 suggests that a camping barn is a medium impact use, which is associated with proposals where significant alterations can be achieved with a minimalist approach, where new rooflights and flues are minimised and placed discreetly. Three rooflights would be inserted into the mono-pitched roof. Between these three rows of solar panels would be fitted, and the flue shown on the proposed plans has already been erected. As a result, the roof, which is a prominent and distinctive component of the building, would be cluttered and dominated by interventions that would point to its conversion. Its simple appearance would be eroded and the manner by which it sits quietly in the corner of the plot would be harmed.
12. The small site is generally well enclosed by large trees and other vegetation. However, the building is visible from the gateway. Furthermore, it is likely that intensifying the use of the building and the scheme's reliance on solar panels would create a desire to remove some of the trees in the future, thus making the building more prominent.
13. Not only would these changes harm the appearance of the building, they would also mean that the proposal would be more akin to a high impact use using the criteria set out at table 2.4; where alterations are difficult to achieve with a

¹ Planning Inspectorate Ref: APP/Q1153/W/23/3332821

² Planning Inspectorate Ref: APP/J9497/W/24/3341104

minimalist approach and any new rooflights and flues are placed prominently. Accordingly, Policy 2.8 suggests that the building should be marketed to see whether there is a less harmful use that it could be put to. This has not taken place. Therefore, the proposal would not accord with Policy 2.8, and consequently it would also not accord with Policy 5.5 of the LP.

14. In summary, the proposal is not acceptable in principle and would have a harmful impact on the character and appearance of the area. It would be contrary to Policies 1.1, 1.2, 1.5, 2.1, 2.8 and 5.5 of the LP, which together seek the delivery of National Park purposes and to protect Dartmoor's special qualities, to support the delivery of sustainable development, to secure good design and avoid landscape harm, to conserve historic non-residential buildings and direct tourist accommodation to locations that are well related to tourist services.

Other Matters

15. The building would secure a future use for a traditional building, and economic benefits would arise from the proposed use. Neither benefits would be sufficient however to outweigh my findings on the main issues. The visual benefit of introducing a more traditional slate roof finish would be outweighed by the introduction of solar panels, roof lights and a flue.
16. The appellant refers to several other decisions that have been made nearby. The schemes at Teigncombe Farm³, and Callisham Farm⁴ do not compare easily with the appeal proposal as the considerations focused heavily on farm diversification and Policy 5.9 of the LP, which is not relevant to the appeal proposal.

Conclusion

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

A Tucker

INSPECTOR

³ Planning Inspectorate Ref: APP/J9497/W/24/3341104

⁴ NPA Ref: 0275/22