



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 August 2025

by G Roberts BA (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 August 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/D0840/W/25/3364018

Trevoole Farmhouse, Trevoole, Cambourne, Cornwall, TR14 0RN

- 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 Travis Stephens against the decision of Cornwall Council.
 - The application Ref is PA24/03731.
 - The development proposed is conversion of redundant barn to dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for conversion of redundant barn to dwelling at Trevoole Farm, Trevoole, Cambourne, Cornwall TR14 0RN, in accordance with the terms of the application Ref PA24/03731 and the plans submitted with it, subject to the conditions listed in the Annex to this decision.

Application for Costs

2. An application for costs was made by the Appellant against Cornwall Council. This application is the subject of a separate decision.

Preliminary Matters

3. I have adopted the description of development as on the Application Form.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is whether the appeal site is a suitable location for the proposed development having regard to development plan policy and the character and appearance of the building and surrounding area.

Reasons

5. The appeal site forms part of Trevoole Farm a complex of converted barns and properties including the original Farmhouse, used as a mixture of permanent homes and holiday lets. The appeal site is located at the western extent of this complex and is accessed off a shared track that leads north to the main road (the B3303). The appeal site is well related to Trevoole a small settlement that comprises a number of dwellings, three businesses and a travellers site.
6. The appeal building comprises a large detached single storey timber barn with a pitched roof set within land that is used for recreational domestic purposes in conjunction with the Appellant's own property, Trevoole Farmhouse. Other land in

the Appellants control is used as pasture as well as for recreational domestic use (gardens). As I observed on my site visit, the land included within the curtilage of the appeal site comprises well maintained lawns, raised flower beds, large rows of planting, grassed footpaths and a vegetable patch.

7. On the eastern side of the appeal site, adjoining the shared track, is a dedicated area for parking and to its north an existing detached timber clad garage that also forms part of the development site. There are a significant number of trees within and on the boundary to the appeal site and within the wider areas of land. Overall, the appeal site benefits from mature and well defined mostly tree lined boundaries.
8. The appeal proposal involves the conversion of the redundant barn to provide a two bedroom dwelling. The curtilage would broadly extend to the west and east of the barn and include two parking spaces, one in the garage and the other in the space adjoining this, referred to above. Ground mounted solar panels would be installed to the south west of the barn. The alterations to the building would be minimal and include new fenestration and the infilling of several areas of existing glazing with timber cladding to match existing.
9. Based on the submitted evidence it would appear that the existing barn was built in 2014 on the understanding that as it could be used incidental to the use of the Farmhouse and would thus be permitted development. Whilst it was used for this purpose and for storing classic cars, in October 2020 planning permission was granted to retain the building for horticultural use to support the more extensive use of the Appellant's holding. However, I understand those plans were abandoned due to the Covid 19 pandemic and the land was retained for recreational domestic purposes and pasture.
10. Whilst no application for a Lawful Development Certificate has ever been submitted the parties agree that the lawful use of the barn is for non-residential purposes and that it is 10 years old.
11. The spatial strategy for the area is set out in policy 2 of the Cornwall Local Plan Strategic Policies 2010-2030 (November 2016) (CLP). In relation to housing the policy seeks to manage the location and scale of new development. Policy 3 confirms that housing development will be accommodated in accordance with a hierarchy, with part 1 delivered through a Site Allocations Development Plan Document or Neighbourhood Plan for the identified main towns; part 2 through specific eco-communities; and part 3, for areas outside the main towns, through Neighbourhood Plans, infill, rounding off, previously developed land or rural exception sites.
12. Outside of these areas and within the open countryside, new housing is subject to policy 7 of the CLP. The latter states that the development of new homes within the open countryside will only be permitted where there are special circumstances, with part 3 stating that this will include the reuse of suitably constructed redundant, disused buildings that are considered appropriate to retain and would lead to an enhancement of the immediate setting. The building should also have an existing lawful use and be 10 years old.
13. Policy HT3 of the Crowan Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan 2018–2030 (September 2019) (NDP) also deals with the conversion of non-residential buildings to dwellings in the open countryside. Any proposal is to be subject to two criteria, the first being that the building is suitable for conversion, no substantial rebuilding is

required and the change to a dwelling does not cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the building or its landscape and countryside setting. The second criteria states that the conversion should not result in the loss of employment or local facilities or a community building.

14. The criteria to policies 7 and HT3 are slightly different which is not uncommon as neighbourhood plan policies often provide more local detail in interpreting and implementing local plan and non-strategic policies. Paragraph 31 of the NPPF advises that in such circumstances the policies of the neighbourhood plan should take precedence. That approach is reaffirmed in paragraph 12 of the Planning Practice Guidance chapter on 'Determining planning applications'.
15. In relation to policy HT3, the existing barn is suitable for conversion, no substantial rebuilding is required and the change to a dwelling does not cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the building or its landscape and countryside setting. The latter finding is based on my observations on site and the fact that the proposed external alterations to the barn are very modest. Whilst I accept that the appeal site is within the open countryside, it forms part of a well enclosed and defined area of land that has been used for recreational domestic purposes for a number of years. The boundary screening and position of the appeal building is such that it is not visible from any public vantage points.
16. The appeal site is also not isolated as it is surrounded by residential properties and other outbuildings, as well as a travellers site (to the west). It also relates well to the settlement of Trevoole. There would also be no visual impact from the ground mounted solar panels given their siting close to the existing barn and the well landscaped western boundary of the site. Even so, solar panels are a feature that is now commonly found and accepted in countryside locations. The proposal would reuse the existing barn, with the land around it, included within the curtilage, already well domesticated. In that sense, the appeal proposal would not encroach into the open countryside and the appeal site it is not an integral part of a large expanse of open countryside between two settlements.
17. The proposed external works to the barn would be sympathetic and result in a more traditional appearance, and thus the proposal would relate positively to its rural setting. Existing trees and formal and informal planting would be retained and thus its landscape setting would remain unaffected by the proposed conversion. The new curtilage would not have any affect or impact on its already domesticated and well maintained garden setting.
18. Overall, the appeal proposal does not represent the creation of a new built dwelling within the open countryside but the conversion of a redundant barn that would not be out of keeping with its well established landscape and countryside setting. It would not result in any harm to the Area of Great Landscape Value, within which it is located. In relation to the second criteria to policy HT3, the conversion would not result in the loss of employment or local facilities or a community building. Accordingly, the appeal proposal would comply with policy HT3 of the NDP.
19. Turning to part 3 of policy 7 of the CLP, the proposal would involve the reuse of a suitably constructed lawful redundant non-residential barn that is ten years old and considered appropriate to retain. In terms of 'appropriate', the evidence shows that the barn is structurally sound and that it can be converted without any substantial demolition or rebuilding operations, in line with the supporting text at paragraph

2.33. Policy 7 also requires proposals to enhance their immediate setting. Whilst this is not a requirement of policy HT3, which takes precedence, it is consistent with paragraph 84 c) of the NPPF. This states that new isolated homes in the countryside will be permitted where *“the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting.”* Leaving aside the fact that the appeal site is not isolated, there is no definition of ‘enhance’ in either the NPPF or in policy 7 or its supporting text.

20. As I confirmed earlier, the proposal would convert and reuse the barn as existing and would not involve any new extensions or major alterations. The external works include new fenestration and replacement of existing glazing with timber cladding to match existing. In my view, these works would enhance the appearance of the barn by giving it a more rustic and traditional appearance. In doing so, these works would improve the condition of the building. Its reuse as a dwelling would also prevent the barn from falling into disrepair, which could have a harmful impact on its rural setting. The sites mature landscaped boundaries would be retained as would existing trees within the site, thus preserving its positive landscape and rural setting, with the likelihood of these features being maintained and managed by the future occupiers of the dwelling.
21. Combined, these factors would, in my view, lead to the enhancement of the immediate setting of the barn. Accordingly, the appeal proposal would comply with policy 7 of the CLP.
22. The Council have referred to the impact of the increased domestication of the site but I fail to see how that would be harmful. There is no reference to ‘domestication’ in policies HT3 or 7 or in their supporting text, or within the NPPF. Even so and as I have confirmed, the appeal site forms part of an area of land that has already been domesticated and used for recreational/gardening purpose in conjunction with the Farmhouse. Other than the existing barn, most of the proposed curtilage includes existing well maintained lawns, raised flower beds, rows of planting, a vegetable patch and grassed pathways. As I also observed, on other parts of the land there are table and chairs, a play area, jacuzzi and small incidental outbuildings.
23. For all the above reasons, any further domestication of the appeal sites curtilage would be minimal and would not result in any harm to the sites rural or landscaped setting. Indeed, as I found earlier, the appeal site is not visible from any public vantage points and is not read as being part of a large expanse of open countryside or a wider landscape. Even so, there is nothing in the policy HT3 and policy 7 or in their supporting text that preclude domestic paraphernalia. It must also be inherent in the support that these policies provide for the conversion of redundant barns to dwellings that there will inevitably be a certain element of domestication.
24. In relation to policies 12 and 23 of the CLP I am satisfied for the reasons given above that the proposal would be compliant with their relevant requirements.
25. The Council have also referred to policies C1 and T1 of the Climate Emergency Development Plan Document (February 2023) (DPD). This DPD will have been prepared in conformity with the CLP and having regard to the NPPF as a material consideration. Paragraph 4.17 of the Council's Statement of Case (CSOC) draws attention to the climate change principles for new development set out in policy C1 seeking to mitigate and improve resilience to climate change, minimise greenhouse

gases and conserve and enhance the natural and historic environment. Only the natural environment is referred to again in the CSOC and as I have already found the appeal proposal would not result in harm to the character and appearance of the open countryside or landscape setting. The CSOC does not allege that there is conflict with any other principles of policy C1. Furthermore, as I interpret the policy it relates to new development, to be applied depending on the scale of any new development, and not to the reuse of existing barns. I also note that in the 'Conformity Grid', within the appendices to the DPD, this policy is shown as being in conformity with policy 2 of the CLP and further develops the requirements of that policy.

26. Paragraph 4.18 of the CSOC indicates that policy T1 refers to the requirement for new development to be designed and located so as to minimise the need to travel and support a modal shift away from the use of the private car. Again, the policy emphasis is on new development. This is reflected in the supporting text at paragraph 9.6 which states that new developments provide the opportunity to influence a behaviour change and achieve the necessary modal shift through, in particular, locating new development in areas that are well connected to public transport, walking and cycling, as far as possible.
27. The 'Conformity Grid' confirms that policy T1 conforms with policy 27 of the CLP in further developing the principles for sustainable transport. Policy 27 is not referred to in the reasons for refusal or in the CSOC.
28. Given the above, I am again not convinced that either policy C1 or T1 are directly relevant to the appeal proposal. It is notable that the DPD does not refer to the conversion of redundant barns or the exceptions for new housing in the countryside and neither does it state that these policies supplement, replace or supersede part 3 of policy 7 or policy HT3.
29. In addition, neither policy HT3 nor policy 7, or the NPPF require the provision of services within any specified distance of a converted barn or for those forms of development to be sustainably located. The supporting text to policy 7 states at paragraph 2.33 that the plan seeks to ensure that development occurs in the most sustainable locations in order to protect the countryside from inappropriate development. It continues by stating that the approach to sustainable new development is set out in policy 3 of the CLP, but continues by recognising that there may be the need for some new housing in the countryside. In these locations, the focus will be on the efficient use of existing buildings to meet those needs supported through the application of part 3 of policy 7, which, if acceptable, would not, therefore, represent inappropriate development in the countryside.
30. Furthermore, as with policy HT3 and paragraph 84 c) of the NPPF, policy 7 relates to exceptions and the special circumstances where a new dwelling will be permitted in the open countryside and not the locations covered by policy 3 of the CLP. Where new dwelling is permitted in the open countryside it will enable rural areas to continue to thrive and support local services, even where these are in nearby villages. As the Appellant also points out support for the proposal is also provided by policy 21 of the CLP which encourages the best use of buildings that are not of any high environmental value.
31. Even so, the evidence before me indicates that the appeal site lies within some 200 metres of bus stops that provide hourly services to local services and facilities at

Praze-An Beeble and Camborne. The proposed dwelling would, therefore, be well connected to public transport and provide the opportunity for trips to be made by public transport.

32. Both parties have referred to the inability of the Council, following the publication of the revised NPPF, to demonstrate a 5 year supply of housing land. I deal with this issue later, but in view of this the locational aspects of policies in both the CLP and NDP, insofar as they relate to housing supply (including defined settlement or development boundaries), will now be out of date. That does not apply to policy 7 and policy HT3, as both remain consistent with and in general conformity with the revised NPPF. They are, therefore, up to date and should be accorded significant weight.
33. Accordingly, I find that the appeal proposal would comply with policies 1, 2, 3, 7, 12 and 23 of the CLP, policy HT3 of the NDP, policies C1 and T1 of the DPD and the corresponding policies of the NPPF.

Conditions

34. The Council has suggested various conditions that I have considered against the advice in the NPPF and the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) chapter on the 'Use of planning conditions'. I have also had regard to the Appellants Final Comments.
35. Conditions relating to compliance with the approved plans, for the submission and approval of details of any boundary treatment and to require the development to be carried out in accord with the recommendations of the bat, owl and nesting bird survey and arboricultural impact assessment, are necessary and reasonable in the interests of proper planning, the visual amenities of the area and to safeguard protected species, biodiversity and mature trees.
36. In relation to suggest condition 3, I agree with the Appellant that the submitted structural report is satisfactory and as such the appeal building does not require any further structural investigation. The Council have not referred to any limitations within the submitted structural report and they acknowledge that no major structural additions or works are required. In relation to suggested conditions 4/5/6/7 I again concur with the Appellant that the appeal building is already constructed on land that it used for recreational domestic purposes. In addition, no ground works are proposed and as such there is no requirement for contamination surveys or reports or any mitigation. I find, therefore, that none of these suggested conditions are necessary or reasonable.
37. Turning to suggested condition 8, whilst the first part is acceptable, the PPG states that permitted development rights should only be removed in exceptional circumstances. I agree with the Appellant that those exceptional circumstances do not exist here and that in view of the recreational domestic use of the appeal site and wider land controlled by the Appellant and my earlier findings on character and appearance, the removal of such rights is not necessary or reasonable. Even so, in relation to suggested condition 11, I am satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances to justify the removal of other more major permitted development rights as this would enable the Council to assess the impact of further development on the visual amenities of the area.
38. In terms of suggested condition 12 I agree with the Appellant that this does not meet the test of necessity and may not be enforceable. I have, therefore, replaced

it with a condition that requires the parking spaces shown on the approved plan to be provided prior to the first occupation of the dwelling and retained thereafter. I have also added a materials condition.

Planning balance and conclusions

39. The appeal proposal would secure the reuse of an existing redundant barn and make full use of the existing lawful building. Whilst it would only secure one new dwelling it would respond to the recognised housing crisis in Cornwall and assist the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes as set out in paragraph 61 of the NPPF. It would also secure short term employment during construction and increase spend on local services and facilities. Combined, I attach moderate weight to these benefits.
40. In relation to the development plan the appeal proposal would comply with policy 7 of the CLP and policy HT3 of the NDP, and would also be compliant with policies 1, 2, 3, 7, 12 and 23 of the CLP. Whilst I am not convinced that policies C1 and T1 are directly relevant, as I have found, the appeal proposal would not be at variance with their general aims or objectives. As such, I find that the appeal proposal would comply with the development plan when read as a whole.
41. As the Council can no longer demonstrate a five year supply of housing land paragraph 11 d) ii of the NPPF is engaged and requires planning permission to be granted unless *"any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination."*
42. As the appeal proposal would not result in any adverse impacts, the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies and planning permission should be granted.
43. For the reasons given above and having taken all other matters raised into account, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

G Roberts

INSPECTOR

Annex – Conditions

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 06 Location and Block Plans; 04 Proposed Elevations; 03 Proposed Floor Plans; 12 Section C.
- 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall be to match existing or otherwise be as shown on the approved plans.

- 4) Prior to the erection of any gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure within the development site hereby permitted, details of the height, appearance and siting shall first be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The boundary treatment shall then only be provided in accordance with the agreed details.
- 5) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the recommendations included within Section 4 of the Bat, Barn Owl and Nesting Bird Survey prepared by Wheal Grey Ecology Ltd dated 14th May 2023.
- 6) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the recommendations contained in Section 6 'Arboricultural Impact Assessment' of the Arboricultural Report prepared by Wildwood Trees dated July 2024.
- 7) Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) (or any order revoking, re-enacting or modifying that Order), no development within Classes A, B, C, D, E and F of Part 1 of Schedule 2 to the said Order shall be carried out without an express grant of planning permission, namely: The enlargement, improvement or other alteration of the dwellinghouse; The enlargement of the dwellinghouse consisting of an addition or alteration to its roof; Any other alterations to the roof of the dwellinghouse; The erection or construction of a porch outside any external door of the dwelling; The provision within the curtilage of the dwellinghouse of any building or enclosure, swimming or other pool required for a purpose incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling house as such, or the maintenance, improvement or other alteration of such a building or enclosure; Hard surfaces incidental to the enjoyment of the dwellinghouse.
- 8) The development hereby permitted shall not be first occupied until the spaces shown on the approved plan, drawing No. 06 Location and Block Plans, for the parking and garaging of motor vehicles have been provided. The spaces shown on the approved plan for such purposes shall be retained and kept available for the parking and garaging of motor vehicles for the dwelling hereby permitted at all times. The garage shall not be converted to future additional residential accommodation without a further grant of planning permission.

End of Annex