



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 September 2025

by **G Roberts BA (Hons) MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 08 October 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/D0840/W/25/3367335

Grampus Gwell, Quarry Lane, Sheffield, Paul, Penzance, TR19 6TW

- 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 Daniel Norris against the decision of Cornwall Council.
 - The application Ref is PA25/00299.
 - The development proposed is agricultural repair/fabrication workshop.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. Whilst there is only one reason for refusal it raises two issues, namely, (a) whether the location of the appeal site would be suitable for the development, and (b) the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

Suitability of location

3. The Council refer to policies 1, 2, 3 and 12 of the Cornwall Local Plan Strategic Policies 2010-2030 (CLP). These require, amongst other matters, that new development provides a sustainable approach to accommodating growth, taking account of, in particular, location, layout and design that maintains the dispersed development pattern of Cornwall. Policy 2, in particular, seeks to manage the scale and location of all new development and to direct it to appropriate locations whilst at the same time supporting the expansion of existing businesses and the indigenous business of agriculture. Policy 3 requires new housing and employment growth to be delivered through a hierarchy, starting with the Site Allocation DPD and Neighbourhood Plans, eco-communities and for areas outside the main towns through infill, rounding off, and previously developed land.
4. Policies C1 and TC5 of the Climate Emergency Development Plan Document (DPD) have also been referred to, which, amongst other matters, require new development to be sustainable and actively support walking and cycling, rather than the use of the private car, as well as encourage rural services development within or adjoining existing settlements.
5. There is no specific CLP policy in relation to new industrial buildings. Even so, part 1 of policy 5 relates to new business and employment uses, including those uses proposed in the open countryside. These should be of a scale appropriate to their

location or demonstrate an overriding locational and business need to be in that location. The supporting text at paragraph 2.7 states that supporting the continued growth of the agricultural industry will be critical to Cornwall's future long term prosperity.

6. The above policies are consistent with those in the NPPF, including paragraph 88 which states that planning decisions should enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of businesses in rural areas, and the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses.
7. The appeal site comprises a large open field with a further field to its north also owned by the Appellant. The site is largely enclosed by Cornish Hedging apart from a gated access in its south eastern corner. The latter leads to an unmade track (Quarry Lane) that links to the east with the B3315. To the south is the former Sheffield Quarry now a wildlife site and open fields. To the east are further open fields, a farmstead and the small settlement of Sheffield. Open fields are also to be found to the west and include some agricultural buildings.
8. The appeal proposal involves the construction of a detached agricultural repair and fabrication workshop with a mezzanine level to provide an office, restroom, kitchen, WC, shower and storage. It would be accessed via the existing track and include a permeable hardstanding for parking and access to the south with the building itself sited a short distance from the site's southern boundary and a rainwater attenuation and wildlife pond. The proposed building would be just under 6.0 metres high to the ridge with a footprint of some 186 square metres.
9. The appeal site is not within, adjacent or close to any defined settlement and is within the open countryside. Based on the evidence before me, it is not a location that is well served by public transport or communications infrastructure, and the proposal is not an extension of an existing building (criteria a), b) and d) to part 1 of policy 5 of the CLP). As to its scale (criteria c), the proposal is for a large industrial (repair and workshop) building that is not, in my view, of an appropriate scale to the site or its open countryside location. As I confirmed, the site comprises a large open field within which there are no other permanent agricultural buildings or structures.
10. Whilst I note the Appellants reference to the building approved in 2013 to the west of the appeal site, I have not been provided with the full planning background for this this approval, but my understanding is that this was approved to serve an existing farm, was for agricultural storage and replaced an agricultural building, not on the site, but further to the east that was demolished to make way for a new dwelling. It would appear, therefore, that it was considered acceptable as it was for agricultural use and I assume related to the agricultural use of the land (or farm). I understand that the appeal site was last in agricultural use but is not regarded as being of high value. Even so, the appeal proposal is not being promoted in support of an existing agricultural use or farm business on the land, but as a repair/fabrication workshop for clients whom I understand are located throughout the Penwith area.
11. The approval also dates from 2013 and therefore predates the adoption of the CLP, DPD and the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Given the above, the circumstances and considerations that led to that approval appear, on the basis of the evidence before me, to be materially different to those that arise in

the current appeal. As such, it is a material consideration to which I have only accorded limited weight. In addition, its existence does not negate the need for the appeal proposal to be assessed and determined on its individual merits, as is required, having regard to the specific circumstances of the case and the prevailing planning policies.

12. In relation to demonstrating an overriding locational and business need to be on the appeal site, the Appellants Statement of Case (ASOC) states that the workshop is required to replace the Appellants existing unsatisfactory unit, to provide sufficient accommodation and facilities within one building for the repair/fabrication business, easy and quick access to the farms/clients it serves, the ability to return to the workshop to retrieve equipment or for agricultural machinery, that needs to be worked on, to be easily transported to the workshop.
13. The ASOC continues by emphasising that various allocated employment sites in the CLP, within the Penwith area, including greenfield sites, have not come forward and that there is currently no evidence that they will be delivered in the short term, leading to a shortfall of available sites. The Council appear to acknowledge that some sites have not been delivered. The ASOC also states that vacancy rates for employment sites are low, industrial locations such as those at Newlyn (including the Stable Hobba Industrial Estate) are constrained, not practical and lack available units, and that there are no suitable redundant farm buildings. As such, the ASOC contends that only a new build as proposed on the appeal site would meet the Appellants requirements.
14. However, all of these statements are simply that and largely a general commentary on the alleged position. There is no substantive evidence before me to support any of these statements or to clearly demonstrate that the appeal site represents the only suitable, viable and available alternative to accommodating the Appellants requirements. In relation to the Stable Hobba Estate, I note that the road to the site is of a good standard, with links to the A30. In terms of on street parking within the Estate, that is a common feature of similar estates, and there is no evidence before me to suggest that this or other issues in anyway constrain existing businesses or precludes access to the Estate for larger vehicles.
15. It may well be that there are no suitable, viable or available sites or buildings within the area of search, but at present, the evidence before me does not demonstrate or support that finding. For example, there is no schedule of sites and buildings that the Appellant has considered and then dismissed, and the reasoning for this. It is also unclear as to whether the Appellant has sought to agree parameters for the search with the Council and the sites, existing buildings and land adjoining existing settlements or allocated, that should be considered as part of that assessment. In my view, that evidence is a pre-requisite in reaching a firm finding on whether there is an overriding locational and business need for the appeal proposal to be located within the open countryside.
16. I am not satisfied, therefore, that the submitted evidence demonstrates or provides sufficient justification for a new industrial building in this open countryside location.
17. Accordingly, I find that the appeal proposal fails to comply with policies 1, 2, 3, 5 and 12 of the CLP, policy C1 and TC5 of the DPD and the corresponding policies of the NPPF.

Character and appearance

18. Policies 2 and 12 of the CLP require new development to be of a high quality, to ensure that Cornwall's enduring distinctiveness is maintained and enhanced, and that its distinctive natural character and landscapes are conserved. Policy 23 of the CLP continues by requiring development to protect and where possible enhance Cornwall's natural environment and assets according to their international, national and local significance. Development should also be of an appropriate scale and recognise and respect landscape character.
19. The same approach is set out in policy C1 of the DPD and policy CC-5 of the Penwith Local Plan (PLP). The latter states that development will not be permitted within Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) where it would cause significant harm to the character and amenity of the area. All of these policies reflect a key objective that underpins the CLP of protecting the quality and natural beauty of the open countryside from inappropriate development.
20. The appeal site forms part of a larger field located within rolling open farmland with a scattering of agricultural and other farm buildings. It is surrounded by similar open undeveloped fields other than the agricultural buildings to the west. The proposed building would be sited well into the field with a traditional Cornish access track leading to the new building from Quarry Lane. A permeable hardstanding area is shown to the south linked by a side track to a permeable hardstanding area to the north of the new building. The combined extent of the latter would be substantial, and the proposed building itself would be significant in terms of its height, footprint and scale. The visual prominence of the proposed building would be accentuated by the number of windows included within the design.
21. Whilst I have considered the revised plans included with the ASOC and accept that this would remove the glazing and simplify the design and are thus an improvement I understand that the buildings height, footprint and scale would remain unchanged. The revised plans would not, therefore, affect my findings on this issue. I note that the Appellant contends that the scale of the building cannot be reduced albeit it is unclear as to whether that could not be achieved by, for example, relocating the mezzanine amenity areas to the ground floor or reducing the extent of that space.
22. The appeal proposal would detract from the rural and undeveloped character of the appeal site and its surrounds, which forms part of a valued designated landscape. It would be highly visible and prominent within the landscape and in public views from the track to the south which forms part of a public bridleway and the Public Rights of Way to the north of the appeal site. As I also observed on site, it would be visible in long range views and result in a building that would have no physical or visual links to an existing farmstead or other similar buildings.
23. Based on the evidence before me and my observations on site and notwithstanding my earlier findings on the considerations that led to the 2013 approval to the west, the appeal proposal would appear to be more prominent within the local landscape. It would sit on a small, elevated plateau and be sited more centrally within the field, whereas the 2013 approval is sited close to its field boundary and is adjacent to other low profile agricultural buildings.
24. The key characteristics of the local landscape for the AGLV mirror those set out in the Cornwall Character Area description for CCA 01 West Penwith South. These

include: a gently rolling open countryside with dispersed settlements and scattered isolated farmsteads and agricultural buildings; a traditional field system enclosed by Cornish Hedging with limited woodland cover that gives a strong sense of openness; a highly valued recreational destination; a strong rural and tranquil setting with good experience of dark night skies. The proposal would, in my view, result in harm to a number of these key characteristics.

25. In relation policies 1, 2, 12 and 23 of the CLP and policy C1 of the DPD, insofar as these require development to ensure or secure Cornwall's enduring distinctiveness, maintain and enhance its distinctive natural character and where possible enhance its natural environment and assets according to their international, national and local significance, the appeal proposal would, for the reasons given, conflict with the aims and objectives of these policies. The latter are consistent with paragraphs 135 and 187 of the NPPF, emphasising the importance of planning decisions contributing to and enhancing the natural and local environment, and recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the open countryside.
26. As I found earlier, the existence of the agricultural building to the west, approved in 2013, does not affect my findings or provide on its own justification for the appeal proposal. I also accept that the application was supported by interested parties and by clients, but that does not negate the need for the appeal proposal to be properly assessed against the prevailing development plan policies particularly in terms of the acceptability of the location and its impact on the open countryside and valued landscape.
27. Whilst I also recognise the wildlife and biodiversity benefits that the proposal would secure, including those being promoted on the Appellants field to the north, and the potential for new planting, these would not provide sufficient mitigation to offset the harm I have identified. In some respects, such as biodiversity net gain, they are legal or standard requirements that all new development must provide for.
28. I do sympathise with the Appellant's situation and recognise their need to relocate the business to a more suitable and bespoke premises, but neither these considerations nor the employment benefits are sufficient to outweigh the harm I have identified or the lack of substantive evidence demonstrating an overriding need for the proposal to be located within the open countryside.
29. Accordingly, I find that the appeal proposal would, on balance, result in harm to the character and appearance of the area contrary to policies 1, 2, 5, 12 and 23 of the CLP, policy C1 of the DPD and the corresponding policies of the NPPF.

Conclusions

30. For the reasons given above and having taken all other matters raised into account, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

G Roberts

INSPECTOR