



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 September 2025

by F Webber BSc (Hons), MSc, MRTPI, ACSM

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 October 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/W1145/W/25/3367688

Land at Grid Reference 232282 103239, Pyworthy, Holsworthy, Devon EX22 6JY

- 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 Damian Martin against the decision of Torridge District Council.
 - The application Ref is 1/1004/2024/FUL.
 - The development proposed is described as “retrospective application for stables and hardstanding”.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for stables and hardstanding at land at Grid Reference 232282 103239, Pyworthy, Holsworthy, Devon EX22 6JY in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 1/1004/2024/FUL.

Preliminary Matters

2. In the formal decision above I have amended the description of the development by removing the wording “retrospective application” as this is not an act of development in itself. I have taken the appeal site address to be that used in the decision notice of the Council, which has been transcribed to the appeal form and submitted by the appellant.

Main Issues

3. The main issues in this appeal are:
 - the effect of the development upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area; and
 - whether appropriate grazing land is or should be available.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal site lies in the countryside and the nearest residential property lies within a farmstead on the same side of the road, approximately 100m from the appeal site. The development comprises of a wooden stable block, with profile steel roof over and is mounted on a concrete base, hardcore hardstanding and wooden gates with post and rail fencing. Glimpsed views are afforded of one end of the stable block when approaching towards the village of Pyworthy. However, the topography of the surrounding land together with the substantial hedgerow, adjacent to the road, wholly screens the site when approaching from the village.

There are distant views of isolated homesteads in the wider landscape and there are similarly designed buildings in fields and paddocks in the area.

5. The stable block is set back from the road and is diagonally opposite the site entrance. The stabling has been orientated to give the equines an outlook over fields. The degree of separation from the highway is purposeful to reduce distress caused by road noise. The hardstanding surrounding the stables allows for turnout on a dry surface, when the fields are wet and muddy. The remaining hardstanding has been configured to allow sufficient turning space for lorries, for the storage of fodder and the parking of vehicles. The building appears modest within its setting and in keeping with other similar equestrian and agricultural buildings in the area.
6. I conclude that the development is of a scale appropriate for the purpose of housing and the care of four equines and is of a design, layout and location that does not have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the countryside and would not be contrary to Policy ST04 Quality of Development that seeks design that responds to the characteristics of the site and surrounding area, Policy DM04(a) and (b) Design Principles that seeks appropriate and sympathetic development in terms of layout appearance in relation to its location and Policy DM16(b) Equine Development that seeks to protect the character and landscape of the rural area, of the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan (NDTLP) 2011-2031.
7. As there were no existing buildings on site, prior to the construction of the stable block and given the separation distance from the farmstead there was no opportunity for the stable block to be well related to existing buildings, as prioritised within Policy DM16(a) of the NDTLP. Having regard to priority, this is not an absolute and consequently is not of relevance to the appeal site.

Grazing land

8. Concerns relating to the amount of the grazing land in comparison to the size of the building do not form part of the policy consideration within Policy DM16 of the NDTLP. There is no evidence of recommendations from British Horse Society being a fundamental consideration in relation to this policy. It appears that the appellant has other grazing land available to them. The ownership and availability of grazing land is not fundamental to whether buildings related to equine development are acceptable and compliant with this policy. Therefore, on this main issue, the development would not conflict with Policy DM16 of NDTLP.

Conditions

9. Given that this development is retrospective the condition to require development to be carried out in accordance with approved plans is not necessary.
10. In regard to the proposed condition, to secure landscaping of the site, it is noted that the appellant has in their statement of case suggested that the hardstanding could be bordered by a landscaped bund, if deemed necessary. Given that the site is already adequately screened and no reference was made to the need for screening in the Councils statement of case. I therefore conclude that such a condition would not be reasonable or necessary.

Other Matters

11. The Council has made reference to a shipping container and scrap. It is noted that the retention of the shipping container or use of the site for scrap storage does not form part of the development under consideration.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above the appeal should be allowed.

F Webber

INSPECTOR