

# Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 June 2015

**by Martin Andrews MA(Planning) BSc(Econ) DipTP & DipTP(Dist) MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government**

**Decision date: 1 July 2015**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/D0840/A/2229060**

**Sea Acres Holiday Park, Kennack Sands, Kuggar, Ruan Minor, Helston, Cornwall TR12 7LT**

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
  - The appeal is made by Parkdean Holidays against the decision of Cornwall Council.
  - The application, Ref. PA14/05228, dated 19 May 2014, was refused by notice dated 18 August 2014.
  - The development proposed is the stationing of static holiday caravans at Sea Acres Holiday Park.
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## Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

## Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, with particular reference to the site's location within the Cornwall Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

## Reasons

3. The Council correctly observes in its appeal statement that in the absence of a current development plan for Cornwall, the proposal should be evaluated against Government policy in the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 ('the Framework') and supplemented by the Planning Practice Guidance ('the PPG', published in March 2014 but as an online resource regularly updated). However as an emerging development plan, the Cornwall Local Plan 2010-2030 is a further material consideration, as is the Cornwall AONB Management Plan 2011-2016.
  4. Turning firstly to the Framework, paragraph 7 explains there are three dimensions to sustainable development in the form of environmental, economic and social roles to be performed by the planning system. In this appeal I do not consider the social role to be relevant.
  5. In respect of the environmental role, paragraph 115 of the Framework advises amongst other matters that great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in AONBs, which have the highest status of protection in relation to those considerations. In this context I note that Policy
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23 of the emerging Local Plan requires development to protect Cornwall's natural environment. This includes ensuring that proposals within the AONB conserves and enhances its natural beauty and special qualities, and delivers the objectives of the AONB Management Plan.

6. Given that national and local policies set the bar at the highest possible level for development proposals on the site, I consider that the threshold of acceptability is rather more than producing photographic evidence that views of the site are non-existent or negligible from a variety of vantage points, important though this is. To my mind the additional factor involves ensuring that the site itself maintains an appropriate balance between the extent to which caravans cover it and the retention of the semi-natural landscape. The latter applies in particular to the grass sward to the east of the caravans stretching down to the coast at Kennack Sands and the coastal areas close by, and the views from these areas back towards the site.
7. To illustrate this point a proposal for, say, three or four new rows of caravans on this part of the Holiday Park may well not significantly alter the appearance of the site from the vantage points in the photographic analysis because of their position on the lower part of the slope. However this scale of additional units would effectively ruin the character and appearance of the site itself and its immediate surroundings and have a major impact on the setting of Kennack Sands.
8. Clearly the addition of a single row would not have these consequences but nonetheless there would be an incrementally adverse effect in terms of the site itself and its immediate setting. Policy GP08.2 of the AONB Management Plan says that particular regard should be had to increases in scale, massing and associated development, including at Kennack Sands. In my view the addition of as many as 10 static caravans on arguably the most environmentally sensitive part of the Holiday Park would not be consistent with that Plan's approach and have an unacceptably adverse effect on this part of the AONB.
9. Turning to the economic role of sustainable development in the Framework, the Council acknowledges that additional accommodation may contribute generally to the local economy but argues that there is no convincing evidence that the proposal would satisfy an unmet need in the locality. However, I consider this requirement to be too onerous and accept that more capacity of the type proposed inevitably increases the potential for more spending in the area, with a further multiplier effect that would facilitate local economic growth.
10. This is an advantage of the scheme but the economic benefit has to be restrained by the environmental capacity and I do not consider that in itself it justifies the appeal scheme. This is particularly so, bearing in mind that the proposal was originally part of a 21 van scheme and 11 of these have been granted permission under planning application reference PA13/08977. In the light of this permission I conclude that although of economic benefit, the further financial fillip of the 10 unit scheme would not outweigh the environmental effects referred to above.
11. Overall, I conclude that the appeal proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area and in particular would not conserve the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB. The scheme would not be sustainable

development as defined in the Framework and would additionally be contrary to the PPG, Policy 23 of the emerging Local Plan and the guidance in the AONB Management Plan. I shall therefore dismiss the appeal.

12. With reference to the suggestion by the Cornwall AONB Partnership of a 2 plus 3 van scheme at the southern and northern ends of the proposed row respectively and with associated landscaping, this is not a matter within my remit in this appeal. If that scheme is now put forward it will be a matter for the Council to decide in the first instance. However it will be clear from the reasons for my Decision that my objections relate to the scale of the current scheme rather than the principle.

*Martin Andrews*

INSPECTOR