



Penderfyniad ar Apêl

Ymweliad safle a wnaed ar 31/01/11

**gan Emyr Jones BSc(Hons) CEng
MICE MCMI**

Arolygydd a benodir gan Weinidogion Cymru

Dyddiad: 15/02/11

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31/01/11

**by Emyr Jones BSc(Hons) CEng MICE
MCMI**

an Inspector appointed by the Welsh Ministers

Date: 15/02/11

Appeal Ref: APP/H6955/A/10/2139731

Site address: Eisteddfod Farm, Allt Eisteddfod, Gwynfryn, Minera, Wrexham LL11 5TR

The Welsh Ministers have transferred the authority to decide this appeal to me as the appointed Inspector.

- 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 Mr Ron T Davies against the decision of Wrexham County Borough Council.
- The application Ref P/2010/0133, dated 12 March 2010, was refused by notice dated 04 May 2010.
- The development proposed is the conversion of a vacant building into one self-catering holiday unit.

Decision

1. I dismiss the appeal.

Procedural matters

2. The description of the proposal given on the application is the 'renovation of a dwelling to form a holiday self-catering unit'. However, the Council is of the view that the residential use of the building has been abandoned for quite some time. The original Structural Appraisal states that it was last used as a domestic hereditament in 1986, some 25 years ago, and anecdotal evidence from interested persons indicates a much earlier date. The refusal describes the proposal as 'conversion of vacant building into one self-catering holiday unit' and I am of the opinion that this is a more accurate description.
3. The Updated Structural Appraisal, submitted with the application, refers to the need for a farm worker to be present at most times. That is clearly not relevant to a proposal for a self-catering holiday unit.
4. The second reason for refusal states that insufficient information was submitted to assess the impact of the development on nature conservation interests. However, a bat and bird assessment has subsequently been submitted and the Council's Statement confirms that it does not intend to continue to defend its reason for refusal in respect of protected species issues.

Main Issue

5. I consider the main issue in this case to be whether the proposal accords with local and national policies on the conversion of existing rural buildings.

Reasons

6. The Inspector who determined appeal Ref: APP/H6955/A/09/2106988 stated that 'Eisteddfod Farm overall has the appearance of an abandoned ruin rather than a predominantly intact dwelling'. He noted that the remaining structure would need extensive rebuilding, with the building having no floors, doors or windows, and a new roof and internal plastering would have to be provided. He also indicated that lintels have been removed from a number of doorways and would need replacing, and the lean to structures would need their walls, floors and roofs rebuilt.
7. The original Structural Appraisal notes that a single storey outrigger on the rear elevation has partially collapsed. It also records that the rear wall to the cottage is in poor condition due to local collapse of the random rubble wall and draws attention to a further area where the rubble infill has caused the wall to expand and crack resulting in a partial collapse. The Updated Structural Appraisal comments on the previous appeal decision in respect of structural soundness and scale of proposed extensions, but it does not address my colleague's concerns on the extent of rebuilding necessary.
8. *Local Planning Guidance Note No 3: Converting Rural Buildings* lists various categories of buildings which are not suitable for conversion. This includes where the proposals involve rebuilding more than 10% of the walls if the roof structure needs to be rebuilt. Neither the appellant nor the Council have attempted to calculate how much of the walls require rebuilding. However, in my view, rebuilding the roof structure and the wall rebuilding likely to be necessary would amount to extensive rebuilding/major reconstruction. This would effectively be tantamount to the erection of a new structure in the open countryside where local and national planning policies seek to strictly control new development. As a result, the proposal conflicts with *Wrexham Unitary Development Plan* policy CLF9 and *Planning Policy Wales*.
9. I note that the present condition of the building results, in part at least, from unfinished works commenced before the application was submitted. Nonetheless, I can only consider the appeal on the basis of its current condition not that at the time the building was purchased.
10. Interested persons are concerned that the proposal would result in additional traffic on Allt Eisteddfod. Nonetheless, I do not consider that the limited additional traffic likely to be generated by a modest holiday unit would materially exacerbate any existing problems. Furthermore, the Council's Operational Manager Traffic and Transportation raises no concerns in that respect.
11. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

E Jones

Inspector