

The Planning Inspectorate

COMMENTS ON CASE (Online Version)

Please note that comments about this case need to be made within the timetable. This can be found in the notification letter sent by the local planning authority or the start date letter. Comments submitted after the deadline may be considered invalid and returned to sender.

Appeal Reference: APP/Y1138/X/26/3378579

DETAILS OF THE CASE

Appeal Reference APP/Y1138/X/26/3378579

Appeal By MR DEAN AGGETT

Site Address
Meadow Forge
Hillside Barn, Cadeleigh
Tiverton
Devon
EX16 8RZ

SENDER DETAILS

Name MR EDWARD VERNER

Address
19 St Osmund Close
Yetminster
Sherborne
Sherborne
Dorset
DT9 6LU

ABOUT YOUR COMMENTS

In what capacity do you wish to make representations on this case?

- ☐ Appellant
- ☐ Agent
- ☒ Interested Party / Person
- ☐ Land Owner
- ☐ Rule 6 (6)

What kind of representation are you making?

- ☐ Final Comments
- ☐ Proof of Evidence
- ☐ Statement
- ☐ Statement of Common Ground
- ☒ Interested Party/Person Correspondence

☐ Other

YOUR COMMENTS ON THE CASE

I am a retired resident land agent well acquainted with rural planning issues. I am happy to record the fact that when I met Mr Aggett at Meadow Forge in the spring of 2014, the forge was not only Mr Aggett's house, but his blacksmith premises, and at that time included a great deal of equipment as well as vintage vehicles in the course of being refurbished or faithfully restored, such as a gypsy caravan and an ancient lorry. I observed then, and have seen since, that indeed the forge would have been unworkable without the home, and realistically the home could not serve independently of the forge.

Forges and blacksmiths have drastically dwindled compared to historical levels, because modern practitioners face tight market pressures, and the blacksmith that caters to all local machinery has mostly vanished. This is partly because high energy prices, cheap imported goods, and real estate costs, have made maintaining a commercial workshop incredibly difficult. A contributing factor is the extreme difficulty in recruiting help; apprenticeships have vanished, and a surviving custom artist-blacksmith such as Dean Aggett has to rely entirely on combined home-and-forge premises to survive financially.

I would summarise these three points in support of Mr Aggett:

1. Financial viability: since observing the property since 2014, it has been clear that forcing the business to move to an independent site would introduce unviable overhead costs, and threaten a rare heritage craft.
2. Security and safety: Forges require hours of cooling time after fires are extinguished. Living on-site is essential for fire monitoring and protecting expensive bespoke tools and processes.
3. Historical continuity: the forge and home have operated as a single combined 'live-work' unit sustainably for a great many years, more than a decade to my own knowledge, without disrupting the local area.