



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 July 2025

by E Heron MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 5 September 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/T2350/W/25/3365142

Tan Yard Farm, Ribchester Road, Preston PR3 3XA

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Woodhouse Bespoke Ltd against the decision of Ribble Valley Borough Council.
- The application Ref is 3/2024/0268.
- The development proposed is Erection of six holiday cottages at Land South of Ribchester Road, Preston.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The appeal scheme relates to an outline proposal, with access to be considered at this stage, and with all other matters reserved for future consideration. I have considered the appeal accordingly. Plans have been submitted which indicate how the proposed development could be accommodated on the site. Those parts of the plans that relate to the reserved matters have been considered for illustrative purposes only.
3. As part of the appeal process, the appellant submitted a revised site plan showing a pedestrian access and crossing point, a visibility splay drawing, and a revised location plan to demonstrate ownership. The plans provide clarification and introduce a very minor change. Therefore, I do not consider the additional plans make a substantial difference or fundamental change to the development when compared with the plans upon which the Council made its decision. The Council has also had the opportunity to review and comment on this evidence. The Council has indicated that the amended plans satisfactorily address the third reason for refusal of the application, which relates to highway safety. While there is no longer a need for this matter to be addressed as a main issue, it still forms part of the consideration of this appeal. I have therefore considered the amended plans in the determination of this appeal on this basis.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are:

- the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area; and
- whether the appeal site would be a suitable location for the proposed development, having regard to local development strategies.

Reasons

Character and appearance

5. The site is adjacent to Ribchester Road, outside of the settlement of Longridge. Along the stretch of road in the vicinity of the appeal site, are large individual houses set within spacious plots. These are interspersed with extensive runs of hedging with views towards the open countryside beyond. Hedgerow bordered fields, including the appeal site, and a bend in the road provide a significant visual break between the sporadic housing close to the appeal site, and the slightly more intensive linear residential development further to the southeast. These undeveloped fields contribute significantly to the rural character of this area. The appeal site is bordered on all sides by hedgerow and mature trees.
6. Indicative proposals suggest a linear arrangement of holiday cottages, each with two designated parking spaces and individual gardens. The plans also indicate a road with turning head and a landscaped area.
7. Whilst other ways of developing the site may be possible, I consider that a development of this nature, including its associated car parking requirements, would be highly visible from the adjacent section of Ribchester Road, in part due to the opening up of the access and the required lowering of the hedgerow to achieve the required visibility splay. The built form, even if single storey, would significantly erode the sylvan gap between the sporadic and rural development to the northwest and the more intensive linear development to the southeast. Closing this gap with built development, even with additional landscaping, would harmfully erode the character and quality of this location.
8. The site is large enough to accommodate the proposed development, and it is close to other built form, as required by Policy DMB3 of the Core Strategy 2008 – 2028, A Local Plan for Ribble Valley, Adoption Version (Core Strategy). However, this does not outweigh the harm that I have found in relation to the erosion of the gap between developments.
9. Consequently, I conclude that the development would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area. In this regard it would conflict with the relevant provisions of policies DMG1, DMG2 and DMB3 of the Core Strategy. Amongst other things, these policies require new development to be of a high standard of design, sympathetic to its surroundings, and that does not undermine the character, quality or visual amenities of the area.

Location

10. Key Statement EC3 of the Core Strategy, encourages proposals that contribute to and strengthen the visitor economy of Ribble Valey. In its recognition that recreation and tourism development are often well suited to rural areas, Policy DMB3 of the Core Strategy permits development proposals that extend the range of tourism and visitor facilities subject to a range of criteria. This includes the accessibility of a location and its relationship with the surrounding area. The policy wording does not indicate an either / or approach, which indicates to me that all criteria must be met in order for development to be considered acceptable in principle.

11. Within open countryside, policy DMB3 of the Core Strategy, requires new development to be in keeping with the character of the landscape, and to acknowledge the special qualities of the area by virtue of its size, design, use of materials, landscaping and siting. By virtue of my foregoing findings in relation to character and appearance, the development fails to accord with this requirement.
12. I am advised that there are bus stops within 220 metres from the site. I consider this distance to be within a reasonable walking distance. The bus stops provide hourly services towards the principal settlements of Clitheroe, Whalley, Longridge and further afield. The stops are also accessible for pedestrians via a pavement on the opposite side of Ribchester Road from the appeal site. I observed on my site visit that the pavement was narrow in places, particularly at the road bend to the southeast of the access, which would make wheelchair and pushchair access difficult, however the bus stops and the settlement of Longridge are located northwest of the site, where intervisibility between traffic and pedestrians, and the width of the pavement is better. The proximity to a bus stop and pavement therefore reduces reliance on the private car.
13. The site is well related to the existing highway in terms of proximity. There is no evidence before me to suggest that traffic associated with the proposal would lead to undue problems or disturbance, in terms of the capacity of the existing road network.
14. Notwithstanding these considerations, and for the reasons previously given, the development would be out of keeping and would fail to respect the special qualities of the area.
15. Consequently, I conclude that the development would not be a suitable location for the proposed development in principle, and in this regard, it would conflict with the relevant provisions of policies DMG2, DMG3 and DMB3 of the Core Strategy. Whilst these policies allow small-scale uses where appropriate to a rural area, they also require that such developments should not undermine the character, quality or visual amenities of the area.

Other Matters

16. The appellant has directed my attention to other examples of rural tourism developments in the borough¹. The scale of the Pendle View development is noted, as is the linear infill type development of the Dewhurst Farm scheme. However, from the plans, neither of these examples share a similar, prominent roadside location with important gap characteristics. Consequently, the examples do not alter my conclusion on the main issues.
17. The proposal would contribute to meeting the demand for tourism accommodation, and it would bring economic benefits and increased spend in the local area, through short stay visits by tourists. This is a benefit that is recognised within the Core Strategy. However the Core Strategy also requires tourism development to be appropriately located and to respect the character of an area.
18. I acknowledge the concerns raised by third parties in respect of road safety. However, the evidence before me, demonstrates that access into and out of the site is capable of being made safe for vehicle users and pedestrians. Therefore,

¹ 3/2019/0894: Pendle View, Primrose Lane, Mellor BB2 7EQ; 3/2019/0671: Dewhurst Farm, Longsight Road, Langho BB6 8AD

and in common with the Council and the highway authority's conclusions, I am satisfied that safe access at the site itself, can be achieved.

19. The site is in flood risk 1 and is not at high risk of surface water flooding, therefore I am satisfied that drainage could be dealt with by condition.
20. I also acknowledge other third party concerns in respect of noise and disturbance and light pollution. I am mindful that the proposal has been made in outline, and as such these factors could be addressed through the imposition of planning conditions. In the event of another application being submitted, further ecological survey work would be required alongside mitigation and enhancement measures, in line with the recommendations of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report.

Conclusion

21. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the proposal would conflict with the development plan as a whole and there are no material considerations that would outweigh the conflict. Therefore, the appeal is dismissed.

E Heron

INSPECTOR