Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 January 2026

by E Heron MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 January 2026

Appeal Ref: 6001643
Beacon Fell View Caravan Park, Higher Road, Longridge PR3 2TF

- 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 Beacon Fell Holiday Park against the decision of Ribble Valley Borough Council.
- The application Ref is 3/2025/0462.
- The development proposed is described as 'conversion of existing workshop to holiday cottage in association with Beacon Fell View Caravan Park. Proposed works to include creation of first floor and balcony, alterations to roof and insertion of new windows.'

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for conversion of existing workshop to holiday cottage in association with Beacon Fell View Caravan Park. Proposed works to include creation of first floor and balcony, alterations to roof and insertion of new windows,' at Beacon Fell View Caravan Park, Longridge, PR3 2TF in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 3/2025/0462, subject to the following conditions:

    1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.

    2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with drawing no's: GA3572-LP-01C (location plan); GA3572-PSP-01D (proposed site plan); GA3572-PPE-01A (proposed plans, elevations and 3D illustrations).

    3) The external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall be constructed in the materials shown on plan no. GA3572-PPE-01A.

    4) All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of the buildings or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner; and any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species.

    5) The development shall be carried out in complete accordance with the Recommendations and timescales contained within section 4.3.1 of the Bats: Building Inspection and Activity Surveys, Simply Ecology Limited, ref: SE/GANQ003/02, dated June 2025. The mitigation measures shall be retained in situ thereafter.

6) The development shall be occupied as holiday accommodation only and shall not be occupied as a sole or main place of residence or by any persons exceeding a period of 3 months in any one calendar year. An up to date register shall be kept and be made available for inspection by the local planning authority upon request. The register shall contain details of the names of all of the occupiers of the accommodation, their main home addresses and their date of arrival and departure from the accommodation.

Preliminary Matters

2. The Council has confirmed in its evidence that reason for refusal 2 has been withdrawn. This follows confirmation from the appellant's ecologist that a typographical error was included within the original planning application documents. Following my review of the evidence, I am satisfied that the correction overcomes the issue in respect of bats. I am also satisfied that no interested parties would be prejudiced if I were to proceed on that basis.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:

- the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area; and
- whether the requirements of biodiversity net gain are relevant to the appeal scheme, and if so, whether such requirements are met.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal site is an extensive and established holiday park sited on land that slopes downhill from north west to south east. Due to the land levels, caravans and other structures are sited on smaller parcels of land of varying heights, interspersed with winding, sloping access roads. The main amenities building is single storey. It is significantly raised above surrounding land at its south eastern side, atop a large, grassed bank. Due to its siting, scale and massing, this building is a dominant feature within the appeal site's context. Trees and grass slopes serve to soften the appearance of the caravan park.

5. The appeal building is adjacent to the access road, below the level of, and close to, the amenities building. It is set slightly within a raised grass bank to its rear, and is set within a backdrop of trees, sloping land and other structures positioned on higher ground. As such it appears nestled within the wider context of caravans, structures and varying landscaped levels. A public right of way passes around and adjacent to the building.

6. The development would result in a taller building. Its various features combine to give the design a vertical emphasis that draws attention to its height, together with the pronounced step in height between the two building elements. Whilst it would be taller than all other buildings and structures nearby, from most vantage points it would not protrude above the backdrop of sloping land and trees and would still appear nestled within the hillside. It would not compete with the reception and amenities building, due to its position at a much lower land level. More widely, it would be viewed in the context of the commercial style and scale of the amenities

building and other caravans. For these reasons and taking account of views from the public right of way, the proposal would not be visually at odds with the land levels of the site, or the wider visual context of the holiday park.

7. I am told that the site lies approximately 258 metres to the south west of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape, however it is viewed entirely within the context of a holiday caravan park. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, the development would not harm the setting of this protected landscape.

8. As such, I conclude that the development would not harm the character and appearance of the area. Accordingly, it would comply with the relevant provisions of Policies DMG1 and DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Borough Council, Core Strategy 2008 – 2028, A Local Plan for Ribble Valley, adoption version and Policy LNDP3 of the Longridge 2028, Neighbourhood Development Plan, 2018 - 2028. Amongst other things they require new development to be of a high standard of design which considers site context, and responds positively to the local character of surroundings, amongst other things.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

9. The mandatory requirements of BNG are for developments to deliver a net biodiversity uplift of 10%. However, there are statutory exemptions which mean that the biodiversity gain requirement does not always apply. One such exemption, as set out at Section 4 of The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024, is de minimis exemptions. This requires two tests to be met. Of relevance to this appeal, the development should not impact onsite priority habitats, and the development should impact less than 25 square metres of onsite habitat that has biodiversity value greater than zero.

10. There is no evidence before me to indicate that the development would impact onsite priority habitat. I observed during my site visit that there are two small areas of amenity grassland on either side of the appeal building. This tallies with the photographs supplied by the Council, and the appellant's ecology letter. There is no dispute between the parties, that on their own, these areas amount to less than 25 square metres of onsite habitat with a biodiversity value greater than zero.

11. There is a mix of sealed and gravelled hard surfacing laid to the front, wrapping around to one side of the building. These areas hold no biodiversity value. Adjacent to the southern, side elevation of the building is a low stone wall. This marks a clear physical transition between the grass associated with the side of the building, and the separate grass verge associated with the adjacent access road.

12. To the rear of the building, the grassed land is raised and retained by a gabion wall positioned on the southern bank. Whilst the appeal building abuts this land, a small portion of the rear of the building appears to be set down into this raised banking. This raised land is at the same level as an adjoining caravan, and other structures to the east. As such it is more closely associated with these features. Moreover, the development would not extend into this area, as the main proposed works involve the raising of the height of the building. As such, the grassed areas outside of those areas highlighted to me, are unrelated to the appeal building and would not be impacted by it.

13. For these reasons, I conclude that the development would impact less than 25 square metres of onsite habitat and is therefore exempt from the mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain requirements.

Conditions

14. The Framework sets out that conditions should be kept to a minimum and only imposed where they are necessary, relevant to planning and to the development to be permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects. I have assessed the suggested list of conditions on this basis and made some minor amendments where necessary to meet those tests.

15. I have attached a condition imposing a time limit for commencement, and a condition specifying the approved plans for certainty. I have imposed a condition requiring the finished appearance of materials to accord with those illustrated on the 'proposed plans, elevations and 3D illustration' drawing, to ensure the development sits comfortably in its context. To require materials to be agreed pre-commencement is unnecessary. I have also imposed a condition requiring the implementation of the landscaping scheme for the same reason. Given the very small external space associated with the building and the simplicity of the landscaping, the more detailed condition suggested by the Council is unnecessary.

16. I have attached a condition requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the recommendations contained within the ecology report, to protect breeding birds and mitigate for the loss of their breeding sites. I have attached a condition restricting the development to holiday accommodation to ensure the development is retained in this use. As well as the upkeep of a register for enforceability.

17. I have not imposed a condition requiring details of boundary treatments as none are proposed. I have not imposed a condition requiring the car parking area to be retained for this purpose. This is unnecessary given the wider availability of parking within the site. Neither have I imposed a condition requiring construction management. It has not been adequately explained why this would be required given the wider commercial and managed nature of the locality.

Conclusion

18. For the above reasons, the proposal would comply with the development plan and there are no other material considerations that indicate a decision other than on accordance with the development plan. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

E Heron

INSPECTOR