



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 January 2025

by **L C Hughes BA (Hons) MTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24 January 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/U2370/W/24/3349170

Ranch House, Head Dyke Lane, Pilling FY6 0PG

- 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 Mr Philip Smith against the decision of Wyre Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/00147/FUL.
 - The development proposed is Change of use of ancillary accommodation to residential dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. On the 12 December 2024 the Government published a revised National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework). The revised Framework is a material consideration which should be taken into account from the day of publication. Insofar as it is relevant, its content has not been materially altered in respect of the main issue before me, and therefore it has not been necessary to go back to the parties in this regard.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the proposed development is in a suitable location for housing, having regard to the spatial strategy set out in the development plan, and accessibility to services and facilities.

Reasons

4. Policy SP1 of the Wyre Local Plan (2011-2031- incorporating partial update of 2022) (2023) (LP) highlights that the Council's spatial approach to development is one of sustainable extensions to the borough's towns and rural settlements in accordance with a settlement hierarchy.
5. The appeal property is ancillary accommodation to a residential dwelling, and there are other properties and buildings along Head Dyke Lane. Although not physically isolated, the appeal site lies outside of a defined settlement boundary and therefore would not accord with the spatial strategy in this respect.
6. The site is reasonably close to the nearest rural service centre of Preesall which has services including schools and commercial, recreational and retail facilities which could therefore provide for the needs of future occupants. New residents could contribute to the vitality of those services and facilities.

7. However, Preesall is around a 5 minute bike ride or approximately a 20 minute walk from the appeal site, along a road which, whilst well lit, in many places has no footpath to segregate pedestrians from vehicular traffic. Moreover, there is very little space along the road for pedestrians or cyclists to take refuge from passing vehicles.
8. The appeal site is located on the A588, which in proximity to the appeal site has no footpaths, limited lighting, and has a 60mph speed limit. Part of the journey to the nearest settlements would involve walking along a section of this road, which Lancashire County Council Highways Authority have indicated is a high accident route where there have been multiple collisions within a short distance of the proposed property.
9. The absence of a welcoming environment for pedestrians and cyclists is likely to cause conflict with the movement of motor vehicles, which would potentially be travelling at greater speeds. This conflict is likely to deter travelling by foot or bicycle and, in turn, encourage travelling by private car.
10. Whilst there are bus stops in proximity to the appeal site, which would provide a good service to nearby schools, I have not been provided with any information regarding the level of frequency of the buses available at other times of the day, or whether they would be likely to provide a high degree of flexibility in terms of times of travel. Therefore, in all probability, whilst future occupiers of the dwelling may choose to access services and facilities by bus, on foot or by bicycle, it is likely that future residents would be heavily reliant on the private car to meet their everyday needs.
11. There are other longstanding properties in the vicinity which are a similar distance from services and facilities. However, I have no information as to the policy context under which previous dwellings were permitted, and I have considered this appeal on the site-specific circumstances of this case, its planning merits and with regard to the adopted development plan.
12. The number of vehicle movements arising from a single dwelling would be modest, and the appeal property is already in use as ancillary accommodation. The Framework notes that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas. Nevertheless, the site's poor connectivity to facilities and services point to it being in a location where sustainable travel modes could not be prioritised, contrary to the provisions of the Framework.
13. As a result, the proposed development would not be in a suitable location for housing, having regard to accessibility to services and facilities. It would therefore conflict with Policies SP1, SP2 and CDMP6 of the LP with regards to spatial strategy, ensuring accessible places, and reducing car reliance.

Other Matters

14. The appeal site is located within 3.5km of the Morecambe Bay Ramsar Site and Special Protection Area (SPA). I have a duty under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 to assess any impact the proposed development would have upon the SPA. However, given my findings in respect of the effect of the proposal on the spatial strategy and accessibility to services and facilities it is not necessary for me to ascertain the appropriateness of the scheme or the

necessity for mitigation within an Appropriate Assessment. Consequently, as I am dismissing the appeal for another reason, I have not taken this matter further.

15. There were no objections received from neighbouring properties, the Environment Agency or Wyre Council's Drainage Officer. However, the absence of objections does not change my conclusions on the appeal scheme.

Conclusion

16. The proposal conflicts with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it.
17. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

L C Hughes

INSPECTOR