



Appeal Decision

Hearing held on 4 February 2025

Site visit made on 4 February 2025

by P Storey BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 March 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/U2750/W/24/3351341

Cliffe Meadows Holiday Park, Turnham Lane, Cliffe, Selby, North Yorkshire YO8 6NQ

- 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 E Finney against the decision of North Yorkshire Council.
 - The application Ref is ZG2024/0309/FUL.
 - The development proposed was originally described as the change of use of the existing reception lodge unit to managers accommodation and reception.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters and Background

2. An update to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published on 12 December 2024. At the hearing, the main parties agreed that the changes to the Framework relevant to the appeal were limited to revised paragraph numbering. Therefore, I have dealt with the appeal on this basis.
3. The appeal site is part of a holiday park that was originally granted planning permission in 2019¹ (the 2019 permission). The description of development included: “[...] the siting of up to 5 static caravans (one to be used as a reception/site office) [...]”.
4. At the hearing, the appellant clarified that they purchased the site after the 2019 permission was granted. A subsequent planning application was submitted and approved in 2022² (the 2022 permission), securing a revised site layout along with other changes to the scheme granted in the previous approval. The approved development description for the 2022 permission states: “*Repositioning of tarmac access road to serve 5 static caravans including the reception/site office [...]*”.
5. It was further confirmed at the hearing that only the 2022 permission had been implemented and the site is now fully operational. Additionally, the lodge referred to in the banner heading above is the same static caravan described as a reception/site office in the 2022 permission. This caravan is in situ, with no changes proposed to its siting or structure.

¹ 2018/0904/COU

² 2021/1479/FUL

6. Notwithstanding, the description of development in the banner heading above is taken from the planning application form. At the hearing, the main parties agreed that the description should be amended to refer to a “caravan” rather than a “lodge”, to ensure consistency with the implemented 2022 permission. The agreed description of development is: *“Siting of static caravan for use as manager’s accommodation and reception”*. I have determined the appeal on this basis.
7. The red line on the submitted location plan encompasses the static caravan and its immediate adjoining land, extending to include the access from Turnham Lane. The remainder of the holiday park, which is also under the appellant’s control, is outlined in blue and does not form part of the appeal site. It was agreed at the hearing that any relevant consents on the blue line land would remain unaffected by this proposal.
8. Prior to the hearing, the appellant submitted a draft statement of common ground (SoCG), which was later edited and resubmitted by the Council. At the hearing, the main parties confirmed their agreement to the most recent version, and I was provided with a signed copy. The SoCG agrees that the site is located within the countryside and the proposed development would be considered as an isolated home. The main parties also agreed that the proposed development would not be harmful in terms of the character and appearance of the area, living conditions of nearby properties, highway safety, flood risk, drainage, or minerals and waste. Therefore, these matters are not in dispute.

Main Issue

9. Taking account of the above, the main issue is whether the proposed development would accord with local and national planning policy with regard to its countryside location, and whether there is an essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at the site.

Reasons

10. Policy SP2 of the Selby District Core Strategy Local Plan, Adopted Version 22 October 2013 (the CS) sets out the Council’s spatial development strategy. Under SP2 A.(c), development in the countryside is limited to certain circumstances. Paragraph 4.31 of the CS, forming part of the supporting text to Policy SP2, states that the Council will resist new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances such as the essential need for a rural worker to live at or near their place of work in the countryside.
11. At the hearing, the appellant contended that Policy SP2, due to its age and restrictive nature, does not allow a planning balance or judgement to be made and is therefore inconsistent with the Framework. However, the supporting text outlined above confirms that rural worker’s dwellings may be acceptable in the countryside in certain circumstances, which broadly align with paragraph 84.a) of the Framework. As such, I find Policy SP2 remains broadly consistent with the Framework in relation to isolated homes in the countryside.
12. The appellant has other business interests, including a farm gates business that requires frequent travel and extended time away from the site. Site management during these times is either handled remotely or with the help of family and friends who live locally. The appellant stated at the hearing that their experience of

running the holiday park has led to the realisation that a full-time, on-site manager is necessary to run the site effectively and to the highest standards.

13. Whilst the Council's written submissions note that the caravan is currently being lived in, the appellant clarified at the hearing that it is not continuously inhabited by any specific individual, nor has a site manager yet been appointed. Instead, the appellant occasionally stays overnight to oversee operations. When unavailable, their local network of family and friends may occasionally stay overnight for the same purpose, as a favour.
14. The appellant advised at the hearing that alternative arrangements, such as hiring wardens to work in shifts, had not been given serious consideration due to difficulties in recruiting staff for night shifts. They also refer to the Council's acceptance of the need for a night watchman, stating that this would logically justify a full-time site manager. However, whilst the Council's evidence does refer to a night watchman, it does not explicitly agree that overnight presence is essential, advising at the hearing that this would be more a convenience.
15. Regarding guest arrivals and departures, the appellant asserted that an on-site presence is necessary due to the broad time window over which these can occur. However, a condition of the 2022 permission restricts arrivals and departures to between the hours of 0800 and 2130 daily, allowing staff to plan accordingly. Given this, I am not convinced that the hours are sufficiently unpredictable or widespread to require a permanent on-site presence.
16. The appellant further contends that a permanent on-site presence is essential for maintaining order, handling guest concerns and responding to emergencies. It was specifically emphasised at the hearing that touring caravans can attract large groups, often including children and dogs, which could increase the risk of disruptive behaviour.
17. However, I am presented with limited substantive evidence, such as records of past incidents, to support this claim. Additionally, I am unconvinced that a permanent on-site presence is necessary to effectively manage these issues. Limited justification has been advanced as to why alternative measures, which could include remote surveillance, the provision of detailed guest information, or an emergency off-site out-of-hours contact number, would be insufficient. As such, even if a dedicated manager or managers were employed, the evidence does not demonstrate a need for them to permanently reside on-site. Moreover, the most serious incidents would invariably require the attendance of emergency services, and I am not persuaded that the presence of an on-site manager would be a decisive factor in preventing such situations.
18. The Planning Practice Guidance (the PPG) provides further clarification on assessing whether there is an essential need for rural worker's accommodation under paragraph 84.a) of the Framework. This includes evidence of the specific necessity to live at or near the site, such as the presence of farm animals, or other agricultural processes requiring 24-hour on-site attention, where there would be a risk to human or animal health or crime, or to quickly deal with emergencies. Considerations could also include evidence of the viability of the business, and whether the need could be met via other means.
19. The appellant's own justification clearly reflects a strong preference for a permanent on-site manager, which I can appreciate from a business perspective.

Additionally, I acknowledge that a resident manager may have a vested interest in the site and provide a guest experience that may be more difficult to achieve with casual staff.

20. However, the test set out in the development plan, the Framework and the PPG, is for an *essential* need to be demonstrated for a rural worker to live permanently at the site. This is a high threshold, and the evidence provided in this case does not persuade me it has been met.
21. I also acknowledge the appellant's significant investment in the business, and my observations at my visit indicated that it is a busy and well-functioning operation. However, I am presented with limited substantive detail to give confidence it will remain viable for the foreseeable future, as set out in the PPG. Furthermore, no compelling evidence has been presented to demonstrate that a resident manager is necessary for the site's continued success.
22. For these reasons, I conclude that the development would not accord with local and national planning policy with regard to its countryside location, and it does not sufficiently demonstrate an essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at the site. As such, the proposal would conflict with Policy SP2 of the CS and the relevant provisions of the Framework, the aims of which have previously been set out.

Planning Balance

23. I acknowledge that allowing the caravan to be occupied permanently by a site manager could provide some operational benefits to the holiday park. It may also contribute to the site's continued success, supporting rural tourism and generating economic benefits in line with other policies of the development plan and the Framework. Additionally, if the proposal were deemed acceptable, conditions could be imposed to prevent uncontrolled residential use in the future.
24. However, I am presented with limited substantive evidence of the scale of any benefits arising in these terms. Given the identified conflict with the development plan and the significant weight this carries, I am not persuaded that these potential benefits would justify a departure from the development plan.
25. At the hearing, the appellant stated that they were not aware of any similar sites operating without dedicated manager's accommodation. Their written evidence references a scheme at Sheriff Hutton³, also approved by North Yorkshire Council, which included a dedicated warden's lodge.
26. The holiday park at Sheriff Hutton appears similar in scale and type to the park in this appeal. However, whilst both applications were determined by North Yorkshire Council, this is a relatively new unitary authority formed through the merger of several former district and borough councils. As a result, the 'legacy' development plans of these former councils still apply within their respective boundaries. In this case, the appeal site falls within the former Selby district, whereas Sheriff Hutton was in the former Ryedale district. For planning purposes, they therefore remain subject to different policies.
27. I have not been provided with full details of the policies that informed the Sheriff Hutton decision. Additionally, the considerations in that case appear to have

³ ZE23/01660/MFUL

differed from those relevant to this appeal, particularly regarding essential need. As such, the Sheriff Hutton decision does not persuade me to alter my previous findings.

Conclusion

28. The proposal conflicts with the development plan and there are no material considerations, including the provisions of the Framework, to indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

P Storey

INSPECTOR

APPEARANCES

FOR THE APPELLANT:

Mark Simmonds	Agent
Angela Simmonds	Agent
Ronald Finney	On behalf of the appellant

FOR THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY:

Gareth Stent	Principal Planning Officer
Jac Cruickshank	Senior Planning Officer