



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 June 2025

by **J D Westbrook BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 June 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/T2350/W/25/3361340

Le Dale Mobile Home Park, Longsight Road, Clayton Le Dale, Blackburn, BB1 1EX

- 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 Mrs Naomi Beard against the decision of Ribble Valley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 3/2024/0384.
 - The development proposed is installation of 11 static holiday caravans.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. This appeal relates to refusal of an outline planning application with all matters reserved for subsequent approval.
3. I do not have before me a version of a plan with the site edged red, but from the submitted location plan it would appear that the appeal site is a plot of land immediately to the north of the existing mobile home park, and bounded by open land to the north and west, and land associated with Myre Fold House to the east.
4. The application form refers to the existing use of the site as residential and static holiday caravans, and also as vacant. The previous use is referred to as an ad hoc storage enclosure. From my site visit, it would appear that the site is not vacant and that the main use is ad hoc storage. This issue, including the lawfulness of the situation, is covered in my considerations below

Main Issue

5. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposed installation of 11 static caravans on the open countryside to the north of Blackburn.

Reasons

6. The appeal site is a parcel of land situated to the north of, and accessed from, an existing Mobile Home Park (the Park) which lies to the rear of Tiggis Bar and Restaurant. Tiggis Bar and the adjacent Shazan Restaurant are sited on the A59, Longsight Road, either side of the access road to the Park and Myre Fold House.
7. It would appear that planning permission for the installation 13 mobile homes or holiday lodges at the Park was granted in 2017, and a further permission for 3 more mobile homes/lodges was granted in 2019. At the time of my visit there were significantly more mobile homes/lodges on the Park, and the application form

indicates the exact number to be 28. Access to the Park is via a gated entrance at the south-eastern corner, and the current appeal site lies at the far northern end of the Park, beyond the holiday accommodation. Access to the appeal site is open from the Park, at which point the surfaced roadway of the Park ends and the unsurfaced appeal site begins.

8. The area around the site is open countryside, with only a few buildings in the immediate vicinity, including the two restaurants; Myre Fold House to the north, with an associated caravan site; a small number of residential properties fronting the A59; and Northwood caravan site, further to the west. There are no substantial settlements in the vicinity, and the nearest villages of Salesbury, Mellor and Ribchester would appear to have very few facilities or services for residents of the Park. There is a bus route along the A59 but I have no details of regularity or timings of services. In any event, I consider that residents of the proposed caravans would be largely reliant on private car transport to access day-to-day facilities, there being very little that would be readily walkable or cyclable in easy reach.
9. At the time of my visit, the appeal site was in use for intensive storage of a wide range of items, including vehicles, tyres and miscellaneous pieces of equipment, few of which would appear to be related to routine maintenance or management of the adjacent Park. Two parts of the site were separately fenced off. One part, adjacent to the entrance to the site, surrounds a modern mobile home/lodge, and the other, in the north-western corner of the site appeared to include a range of structures. These fenced off areas do not appear as such on the aerial photograph of the site submitted by the appellant and dated 2024.
10. Policy DMG1 of the 'Core Strategy 2008 – 2028: A Local Plan for Ribble Valley' (LP) indicates that all development must be sympathetic to existing land uses in terms of its size, intensity and nature as well as scale and massing, while particular emphasis will be placed on visual appearance and the relationship to surroundings, including impact on landscape character.
11. Policy DMG2 of the LP indicates that outside defined settlement areas, development must meet at least one of a number of considerations. These include that the development should be essential to the local economy or social well-being of the area; that the development is for small scale tourism or recreational developments appropriate to a rural area; and that the development is for small scale uses appropriate to a rural area where a local need or benefit can be demonstrated. Moreover, within the open countryside development will be required to be in keeping with the character of the landscape and should acknowledge the special qualities of the area by virtue of its size, landscaping and siting.
12. Policy DMB3 of the LP indicates that planning permission will be granted for development proposals that extend the range of tourism and visitor facilities in the borough, subject to certain criteria being met. These include that the proposal must not conflict with other policies of the plan; that the proposal must be physically well related to an existing main settlement or village or to an existing group of buildings; and that the development should not undermine the character, quality or visual amenities of the plan area by virtue of its scale and siting.
13. The Council contends that the proposal would result in a significant amount of built form within an open countryside location, above that considered to be small scale, with resultant urbanising impacts having a harmful effect on the rural landscape.

14. The appellant contends that the proposal would represent a modest viable tourism facility as an extension and completion to the caravan site, which would ensure the Park and other local enterprises supported by visitor spending could maintain or improve staffing, especially over winter, and make a significant contribution to the local economy through the year. Furthermore, it would not impact unacceptably on the general landscape, but would represent a visual improvement on the existing situation. Finally, she contends that the appeal site is not open countryside and the scheme would represent a rounding off of development in the vicinity.
15. The appeal site, and the small settlements around it, lie within wider open countryside to the north of Blackburn. The A59, in the vicinity of the junction with Showley Road, has a small number of properties along its length, largely of a ribbon development nature. On the north side of the road, there is a caravan site (Northwood), which appears to project back into the countryside by a small amount, and Myre Fold House/Farm and caravan site at the end of an access road that also serves the Park and the appeal site. I have no details as to the history of these caravan parks. The existing Park, however, already appears to project further back and beyond the current northern extent of the Northwood caravan site. The proposed extension would result in additional incursion northwards from the A59 into what would otherwise be classed as open countryside.
16. I acknowledge that the appeal site is currently used for storage. Many of the items on site would appear to be unusable, including a number of large commercial vehicles, and few would appear to be linked to the operation of the Park or to any other specific business. The appellant contends that the site has been in use for some considerable time and that it should not be considered open countryside. I note that this issue has been discussed with the Council and that the appellant has been advised to pursue a Certificate of Lawfulness to clarify the matter. However, I have no evidence before me relating to past use of the site, nor is there a Certificate of Lawfulness available. On this basis, I find that the appeal site, regardless of visual appearance, should be considered part of the open countryside, and that development for additional caravans would be harmful to the character of the surrounding area, by way of an increase in permanent or semi-permanent built form.
17. The issue of whether the proposal should be considered small-scale is a matter of interpretation. In this case, the proposal would result in a significant increase in the size of the existing Park, which already extends well into the area behind the line of the development along the A59, and, in my opinion, it would not be small-scale.
18. I acknowledge also that a carefully designed and landscaped extension to the Park may be a visual improvement on the existing appearance of the site. However, I have no information to support any possibility of the lawfulness of the existing use and, under such circumstances, to accept the existing unattractive appearance of the site as an acceptable and valid reason to approve a more visually appealing development, especially if the existing use did happen to be unlawful, could potentially encourage undesirable forms of site degradation in other cases. In any case, other elements of development plan policy also must be taken into account.

Other Matter

19. The appellant contends that the proposal would be beneficial to the local community and economy, by providing more tourist accommodation, and creating

more and/or more stable jobs. Given that the existing facility is in a relatively unsustainable location with regard to access to services and facilities, it is unclear how the proposed extension would benefit the local community and economy, other than possibly in a very minor and localised way. The application form indicates that matters relating to employment are not applicable, and so it is not possible to determine whether the proposal would result in any significant direct additional employment benefits. It would seem unlikely.

Conclusion

20. In the light of the above, I find that the proposal, by reason of its size, scale and siting, would be harmful to the open-landscape character of the surrounding countryside area to the north of Blackburn, and that it would not represent a small-scale development. It would, therefore conflict with Policies DMG1, DMG2 and DMB3 of the LP. In addition, I have concerns regarding the sustainability of the location of the existing Park, and an extension to it could be considered to conflict with the sustainability principles of the National Planning Policy Framework with regard to the rural economy, as set out in paragraphs 88 and 89. I therefore dismiss the appeal.

J D Westbrook

INSPECTOR