



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 June 2025

by **R C Shrimplin MA(Cantab) DipArch RIBA FRTPI FCI Arb MCIL**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 03 July 2025

Appeal Reference: APP/J0540/D/25/3364734

83 Pioneer Caravan Site, Thorney Road, Eye, Peterborough PE6 7UF

- 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 Mrs. A. Lyson against the decision of Peterborough City Council.
 - The application reference is 25/00133/HHFUL.
 - The development proposed is described in the application form as a “side porch extension, 1.5 metres by 2.5 metres”.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the construction of a side porch, at 83 Pioneer Caravan Site, Thorney Road, Eye, Peterborough PE6 7UF, in accordance with the terms of the application (reference 25/00133/HHFUL), subject to the conditions set out in the attached Schedule of Conditions.

Preliminary points

2. The appeal site is occupied by a caravan (rather than a building) and, notwithstanding the description of the development that was given in the application form, the nature of the proposed development can more clearly be expressed as the construction of a side porch. The description of the planning application as a “Householder” application for an “extension” is anomalous but that does not invalidate the appeal process.

Main issue

3. The main issue to be determined in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surroundings.

Reasons

4. The ‘Pioneer Caravan Site’ is a well established caravan park, with neatly laid out plots in a rectangular plan. In general, each unit is set in the middle part of its plot, with limited garden space around the unit. Nevertheless, there are a number of trees and other plants within the plots that create an almost suburban character. There is, moreover, a large open space in the southern part of the site, for the enjoyment of residents.
5. Number 83 is a caravan, with a wheeled chassis that appears to make the unit transportable and to justify its description as a caravan (within the meaning of the Caravan Sites Act 1968). It is, however, provided with a simple “skirt” feature that has a brickwork-style facing and which disguises its character as a caravan by

hiding the wheels. A short flight of steps alongside the caravan gives access to its entrance door.

6. In appearance, it is similar to many other units in the caravan park, although it is not always easy to distinguish whether units may have become more permanent as a result of construction works, at least without closer inspection. Some other units have steps and porches alongside or attached.
7. It is now proposed to construct a side porch alongside the caravan. The planning application does not provide construction details for the porch, however, and, although the materials specified in the planning application form indicate that it would be of permanent construction, the submitted drawings do not demonstrate that the porch would be permanently attached to the caravan.
8. The local planning authority have raised a legitimate concern about this, because a permanent residential building would no longer be classified as a caravan and different planning considerations would apply if such a conversion were brought about.
9. Both the 'National Planning Policy Framework' and the Development Plan for the area promote sustainable development and encourage good design. Among others, Policies LP1 to LP3 and Policies LP15 to LP17 of the 'Peterborough Local Plan 2016-2036' (adopted in 2019) identify various considerations which would need to be taken into account if a caravan plot were to be re-classified as a dwellinghouse.
10. In this case, the proposals do not specifically encompass such a re-classification, however. It is the intention to construct a side porch alongside the caravan, to facilitate access, especially in inclement weather, but it has not been proposed that the existing caravan should necessarily be altered in a way that would render it immobile and fixed to the ground.
11. In itself, the proposed side porch would be constructed of materials that would be in keeping with the surroundings and it would be of a scale and design that would not be out of place in the caravan park. It would not have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the surroundings and it would not be objectionable in itself. Indeed, its appearance would imitate other structures that already exist within the caravan park.
12. On the other hand, the effective conversion of the caravan to create a building structure, not in accordance with the Caravan Sites Act 1968, would clearly be unsatisfactory. The Council assert that "insufficient information" has been provided to make that judgement but I have formed the opinion that the application does provide sufficient information to enable the side porch to be permitted, subject to the provision of additional information to clarify the proposed detailing.
13. Evidently, it would be necessary for the additional details to be provided before the commencement of development, for the avoidance of confusion, and the Appellant has agreed to such a pre-commencement condition (in e-mail correspondence).
14. The new porch structure would need to be freestanding and detachable from the caravan (so that the caravan could be moved away independently of it). There would, no doubt, be implications for the construction of the porch and the way in

- which it could be used during its lifetime. That ought to be a matter of construction detailing, however, without calling into question the principle of erecting a porch.
15. Evidently, the proposed side porch would be a useful addition to the accommodation at 83 Pioneer Caravan Site that would provide a real benefit to the occupiers of the caravan or to a future replacement of it. The porch would not harm the character or appearance of the site or its surroundings and it would not otherwise be objectionable in planning terms.
 16. Thus, I have concluded that the project would not be in conflict with the Development Plan or the 'National Planning Policy Framework', in principle, and that the objections to the scheme which have been raised can be overcome by the imposition of a suitable pre-commencement condition.
 17. In short, I am persuaded that the scheme before me can properly be permitted, subject to conditions, and, although I have considered all the matters that have been raised in the representations, I have found nothing to cause me to alter my decision.
 18. I have also considered the need for conditions generally and, in imposing conditions, I have taken account of the conditions suggested by the Council in the usual way (without prejudice to their main arguments in the appeal), subject to modifications necessary, in my opinion, in the interests of clarity and enforceability. In particular, I have concluded that conditions are necessary, to define the planning permission and to ensure that quality is maintained. The materials to be used are to match the existing caravan.
 19. As explained, a specific pre-commencement condition is also necessary, to require the submission and approval of details of the proposed construction materials (since the drawings themselves provide only limited information in this respect), to ensure that the caravan does not become attached to the ground in a way that would take it outside the scope of the Caravans Act 1968.

Roger C. Shrimplin

INSPECTOR

SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved drawings:
 - drawing number 25-040 - FP 001 (Location Plan);
 - drawing number 25-040 - FP 002 (Block Plan, Plans & Elevations Existing);
 - drawing number 25-040 - FP 003 (Block Plan, Plans & Elevations Proposed).
- 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing caravan.
- 4) No development shall take place until drawings (at appropriate scales) of the construction details to be used in the construction of porch hereby permitted shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority, to demonstrate that the porch would not render the existing caravan immobile and fixed to the ground. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.