



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 August 2025

by Graham Wraight BA(Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 August 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/F4410/W/25/3365452

Land at ex-Yorkshire Water Services site, Former Sewage Works, Lands End Road, Thorne, Doncaster DN8 4JL

- 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 W Stead (WPS Developments) against the decision of City of Doncaster Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/01013/FUL.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a storage building for B8 use.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The appellant submitted a revised Transport Statement (TS) with the appeal. Whilst I acknowledge the Council's comments regarding the timing of the submission after their decision and that the original TS was based on a different scheme, they have sought the view of the Highway Authority who raise no objection. On that basis, I have not considered highway safety matters further.
3. An additional Flood Risk Assessment was also provided with the appeal. The Environment Agency have been consulted and do not raise an objection. However, there is still the matter of the sequential test to address in my determination of the appeal.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are:
 - i) Whether the proposal would be an acceptable form of development with particular regard to the provisions of local policies in respect of the location of development;
 - ii) The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area; and
 - iii) The effect of the proposal on flood risk.

Reasons

Location

5. Part 4 of Policy 25 of the Doncaster Local Plan 2021 (LP) sets out the instances in which new non-residential development will be permitted in the countryside policy area. The proposal would not have a significant adverse impact on the landscape,

and I will address matters relating to the rural character of the location in more detail in relation to the second main issue. There would not be a significant adverse effect on neighbouring uses or, as noted above, on highway safety.

6. However, Policy 25 also requires that the rural location of the enterprise is justifiable to support a prosperous rural economy in accordance with national policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). On the basis of the information that is before me, the proposal does not have any apparent connection with the local area in a way that might justify it in terms of it supporting a prosperous rural economy.
7. In conclusion therefore, the proposal does not demonstrate that it would meet all of the criteria set out in Part 4 of Policy 25 of the LP.

Character and appearance

8. The appeal site is positioned immediately adjacent to a sewage treatment works. There is other existing development further along Lands End Road including a Gypsy & Traveller site and a site to the north-east which is in commercial use. The appeal site is also directly opposite a large local plan allocation for employment use. That site has been the subject of a planning application, and it would appear likely that the development will come forward soon. This would greatly transform the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
9. Notwithstanding this, the appeal site itself is rural in its character and appearance. There would be harm caused through the inevitable urbanisation resulting from the proposed development, albeit the degree of harm would be limited owing to the presence of existing nearby development and in particular if the large-scale development is brought forward opposite. This harm would not be overcome by landscaping or screening and, even though the appeal site is currently somewhat overgrown, I do not consider that there would be a visual betterment resulting from the appeal proposal.
10. The harm that would result, even if on the limited end of the spectrum, means that the proposed development would fail to accord with Policies 25, 41, 46 and 48 of the LP, where collectively they seek to safeguard character and appearance.

Flood risk

11. The appeal site is located within Flood Risk Zone 3. A sequential test has been provided, and this identifies two other potential sites that would be preferable in flood risk terms. The site at Gliwice Way is said to be unavailable, although no evidence has been provided to show definitively that is the case. But, even if that site is accepted as being unavailable, the site at Carolina Way does not have any identified impediments in terms of being able to accommodate the appeal proposal and is not said to be unavailable.
12. The appellant considers that the appeal site should be favoured as it has better highway connectivity to the M18 motorway than the site at Carolina Way and vehicles would have to travel a lesser distance to reach that road. However, the aim of the sequential test is to steer new development to areas with the lowest risk of flooding. Siting the proposed development on the appeal site when there is an alternative site at a lower flood risk would not achieve this, and it is pertinent that the other site has no apparent constraints that would prevent the development.

13. Furthermore, the sequential test provided in the original Flood Risk Assessment considers sites with a gross site area between 1.50 and 2.50 hectares. Given that the appeal site area is stated to be 0.48 hectares, it is entirely possible that those parameters have served to exclude other potential sites. The two letters provided from land/estate agents do not address this or otherwise provide any comprehensive evidence that there are no sequentially preferable sites. Whilst the appellant refers to much of the area being in Flood Zone 3, it does not appear that the entire Council area is.
14. Therefore, the sequential test is not passed and consequently the proposal fails to accord with Policy 57 of the LP, where it requires development proposals to be considered against the Framework, including the application of the sequential test.

Other Considerations

15. The proposal would deliver a small industrial unit which the appellant considers would present an affordable option for a starter business, on a site which has excellent road connectivity. Paragraph 85 of the Framework states that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity. The proposal could also provide a biodiversity net gain on the site.
16. There is however no evidence to support the need for the development beyond a single letter expressing interest in buying the site, and the presence of the large employment allocation opposite in a development plan which was adopted in 2021 suggests that the Council is endeavouring to support economic growth. It is also not evidenced why the appeal proposal has a specific locational requirement to be on the appeal site, beyond the fact it has good access to the road network. Collectively, these are considerations to which I afford only limited weight in favour of the proposal.
17. The appellant refers to the appeal site as being brownfield land, which the Framework categorises as previously developed land. Although the site was previously part of the adjacent sewerage works and there is some area of hardstanding which can still be seen, the remains of the previous permanent structures or fixed surface structures have blended into the landscape. Therefore, the proposal does not meet with the definition of previously developed land as set out in Annex 2 of the Framework.

Planning Balance & Conclusion

18. The proposed development fails to accord with the development plan in strategic policy terms owing to its countryside location, because there would be harm to the character and appearance of the area and because it has not been shown that the flood risk sequential test has been passed. As a result, the proposal fails to accord with the development plan, taken as a whole. The benefits that would arise would not outweigh the conflict with the development plan. The appeal should therefore be dismissed.

Graham Wraight

INSPECTOR