



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 September 2025

by **N Armstrong BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16 October 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/N4720/W/25/3368129

High Ridings, Park Mount, Pool in Wharfedale, Otley, Leeds LS21 3BX

- 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 Carol Trousdale against the decision of Leeds City Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/06673/OT.
 - The development proposed is outline planning permission for one detached dwelling with some matters reserved.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of development used in the banner heading above is taken from the Council's decision notice. This is a more succinct description than that used on the application form, which includes comments on the history of the site, the manner of construction and the purported effects of the proposal. I have had regard to these comments, but I consider no injustice would be caused by basing my assessment on the description of development in the header.
3. The appeal scheme relates to an outline proposal, with layout to be considered at this stage, and with all other matters reserved for future consideration. I have considered the appeal accordingly. The proposed site plan indicates the access arrangements for an existing house at the property as well as access to serve the proposed dwelling. Information has been provided on the scale of the dwelling. I have taken these details into account insofar as establishing whether or not it would be acceptable, in principle, to erect a dwelling on the site.
4. Article 5(3) of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (the Order) states that where access is a reserved matter, the application for outline planning permission must state the area or areas where access points to the development proposed will be situated. Despite what is indicated on the proposed site plan, the appellant has suggested during the appeal that an alternative of both properties using Park Mount for access could be considered.
5. However, I am mindful that it is not the purpose of the appeal process to evolve a scheme, and it is therefore important that what is considered by the Inspector is essentially what was considered by the Council. In this case, and having regard to Article 5(3) of the Order, it is my view that the appeal should be determined on the basis of the plans as originally submitted to the Council and upon which it based its decision, and which have been subject to consultation. To do otherwise could

prejudice the interests of the Council and consultees, who have not been consulted on any alternative scheme and who may have observations to make.

Main Issues

6. The main issues are:

- whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Pool-in-Wharfedale Conservation Area (the CA);
- whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and relevant development plan policies;
- the effect of the development on the openness of the Green Belt;
- the effect of the proposal on highway safety; and
- if the proposal is inappropriate development, whether the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations so as to amount to the very special circumstances required to justify the development.

Reasons

Character and appearance

7. The appeal site and adjoining land at High Ridings are located to the south-western edge of the CA. High Ridings is a detached bungalow situated in an elevated position above Quarry Road and Leeds Road. Both parties describe the area to be developed as garden. The appeal site comprises the existing access road that sweeps through the wider site at High Ridings, which has an access point from the lower level of Quarry Road and Leeds Road, as well as from Park Mount. The dwelling would be constructed in a relatively narrow part of the site, which features a grassed area, but is predominantly overgrown with vegetation and features steeply sloping embankments either side of a more level area.
8. The remainder of the High Ridings site beyond the red line boundary comprises the tree and vegetation lined steep embankments above Quarry Road, a more clearly maintained garden area immediately adjacent to the bungalow, a grassed clearing within the area of a former quarry and wooded areas. There are two detached dwellings located further along Quarry Road, with other properties situated to both sides of and fronting Leeds Road at different levels given the steeply sloping nature of the land. Park Mount features a mix of single and two-storey properties situated at a higher level to the appeal site, and there are other dwellings at Park Terrace and in the wider area, as well as the Old Pool Bank Village Hall on Quarry Farm Road. A public right of way runs adjacent to the site, close to the position of the proposed dwelling, providing a pedestrian route between Park Mount and Quarry Road, both of which are also public rights of way.
9. The Pool-in-Wharfedale Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2009) (the CAAMP) identifies four character areas of the CA with different spatial characters and distinct form and functions generated by their uses, although the shared sense of history and connection to one another unifies them. The appeal site is within character area 3 – Pool Bank Quarry. This encompasses the area of

the former Pool Bank Quarry site and its associated worker's cottages, although I note that the main quarry area was further from the appeal site. The CAAMP describes the former quarry areas as now heavily wooded and an important green area within the CA. Whilst there are other larger undeveloped areas elsewhere within the CA, the appeal site and the surrounding area feature these characteristics. High Ridings and the buildings in the part of the CA surrounding the appeal site are identified in the CAAMP as making a positive contribution to the character of the area.

10. The significance of the CA is derived from its architectural and historic interest, including its attractive rural location, its landscape setting and surroundings. The appeal site contributes to the significance of the CA through its historical association with the former quarry area, the relationship with the surrounding positive buildings, and its more open and rural setting to the edge of the settlement. This is in contrast to other more densely developed parts of the CA and the groups of buildings outside of it to the south of the appeal site. The historical maps within the evidence indicate that the area around High Ridings and Quarry Road within the CA have retained a similar layout over time, which further contributes to its more rural character.
11. The development would subdivide the wider site and introduce a new dwelling into a more elevated and open part of the CA, which currently retains a predominantly rural feel. Despite existing landscaping between the site and Leeds Road that could mitigate some visual impacts, this would be more limited at times of leaf fall. The dwelling would also be seen at fairly close quarters from the adjacent right of way.
12. Full details of the proposal are not before me for consideration. However, the proposed dwelling, even of a modest scale, would not assimilate into the area without any detrimental impacts on its character and appearance. A dwelling in this location would erode the more natural and undeveloped nature of the site and undermine the contribution it makes to the rural qualities of the CA. In these respects, it would appear incongruous and so it would undermine the existing character and appearance of the site, its surroundings and this part of the CA.
13. I have not been provided with any details of planning history for housing development on the appeal site. I therefore cannot determine if any previous scheme has been approved and if this is directly comparable to the appeal scheme to weigh in its favour.
14. The contribution that the appeal site makes to the significance of the CA would be diminished and the development would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA, thereby harming its significance. The proposal would have a localised visual effect and so it would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of the CA when considered as a whole. Moreover, the extent of harm would be at the lower end of the scale in that respect, but nevertheless of considerable importance and weight.
15. Regardless of the level of harm, paragraph 212 of the Framework states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Paragraph 215 of the Framework requires the less than substantial harm to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

16. Public benefits have not been specifically outlined by the appellant in the appeal documents, although there is some reference of the development contributing to local housing supply. It would be reasonable to treat this as being a public benefit inasmuch that it would contribute to economic and social objectives set out in the Framework to support growth and ensure that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided. This public benefit associated with the delivery of a single dwelling is given limited weight and it would be insufficient to outweigh the considerable importance and weight to the less than substantial harm that I have identified would be caused to the significance of the CA.
17. For the above reasons, I conclude that the development would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA. It would therefore conflict with Policies P10 and P11 of the Core Strategy (as amended by the Core Strategy Selective Review 2019) Leeds Local Plan (the CS) and Policies GP5 and N19 of the Leeds Unitary Development Plan (Review 2006) (the UDP). Amongst other things, these aim to ensure that new development is a good design that is appropriate to its location, scale and function, that conserves and enhances the historic environment, and that preserves or enhances the character or appearance of conservation areas.

Whether inappropriate development

18. The appeal site lies within the Green Belt. The Framework states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. Development within the Green Belt is inappropriate, although with the exception of the types of development listed in paragraph 154 of the Framework, or if the circumstances in paragraph 155 apply. Policy N33 of the UDP is similar to the Framework in that it lists types of development that are permissible in the Green Belt. However, the list is not consistent with the exceptions as set out in paragraph 154 and 155 of the Framework and so the policy is afforded limited weight in my assessment. UDP Policy N33 also refers to further policies within Appendix 5 of the UDP that describe the acceptability of various types of development in the Green Belt.
19. The Council officer's report assessed the proposal in the context of paragraph 154 e) of the Framework that defines limited infilling in villages as not inappropriate development in the Green Belt. There is no dispute between the parties that the site lies within a village. The Framework does not define 'limited infilling'. However, Policy GB2 of Appendix 5 to the UDP states that infilling will only be permitted where the site has a frontage to the road and, the site is a small gap bounded by existing development.
20. Although there are other dwellings in the immediate area, the appeal site does not have a frontage to a road, and it does not comprise a small gap bounded by existing development. Therefore, I find the proposal would not be a form of infill development. Consequently, the proposal would not meet the exception at paragraph 154 e) of the Framework.
21. Paragraph 154 g) of the Framework defines the redevelopment of previously developed land as not inappropriate development in the Green Belt, provided it causes no substantial harm to openness. The parties agree the site is garden, although there is dispute over whether it is previously developed land. Of particular

relevance to this point is the definition of previously developed land as set out in the Framework and that it explicitly excludes land in built-up areas such as residential gardens. The appeal site comprises the access road associated with High Ridings and what is stated to be garden land. Despite parts of the access road being overgrown with moss and other vegetation, I observed hardstanding along its full length. The remainder of the appeal site comprises the partly grassed and considerably overgrown areas below the bungalow. Although High Ridings, the appeal site and this part of the CA is in a less developed area as established above, they are part of the broader developed context in the surrounding area, which features more densely developed dwellings. Notwithstanding my findings on harm to the CA, I consider the site falls within a wider built-up area.

22. Therefore, it is not previously developed land as defined under the terms of the Framework. On that basis, the proposal would not meet the exception at paragraph 154 g) of the Framework in respect of the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land. Furthermore, the proposal would not satisfy any of the other exceptions to inappropriate development in paragraph 154.
23. Paragraph 155 of the Framework sets out that development in the Green Belt should not be regarded as inappropriate where it utilises grey belt land. Under the definition as set out in the Framework, grey belt excludes land where the application of policies relating to the areas or assets in footnote 7 of the Framework (other than the Green Belt) would provide a strong reason for refusing development. Designated heritage assets are included in this list of exclusions.
24. I have already found that the proposal would harm the significance of the CA and that the public benefits of the development fail to provide clear and convincing justification for that harm. The Framework's policies on designated heritage assets provide strong reason for refusing the proposed development. Therefore, the site does not constitute grey belt land, and the proposal would not accord with paragraph 155 of the Framework.
25. For the reasons set out above, the proposal would not meet the exceptions of paragraphs 154 or 155 of the Framework. Also, it would not be a form of development referred to under UDP Policy N33 and Appendix 5 as being acceptable in the Green Belt. As such, it would be inappropriate development, which is by definition harmful to the Green Belt.
26. The reason for refusal also refers to Policy GP5 of the UDP, although I do not find this to be determinative to this main issue as it relates to detailed planning considerations rather than Green Belt matters.

Openness

27. Paragraph 142 of the Framework states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. Openness is an essential characteristic of the Green Belt and is capable of having both spatial and visual aspects.
28. The construction of a dwelling on the site would result in built development where there is presently none. It would also result in additional activity on the site, as well as comings and goings to and from the dwelling associated with a new residential use. Although I do not have full details, a new dwelling would likely be visible from Leeds Road and the adjacent public right of way. Notwithstanding the existing

dwelling at High Ridings and neighbouring dwellings in the vicinity, the openness of the Green Belt is evident in the area immediately around the appeal site.

Therefore, the development of the site would result in a harmful loss of openness, albeit this would be more limited given the scale of the proposal.

Highway Safety

29. Whilst access is a reserved matter, the application indicates that the new dwelling would be served from Quarry Road and the existing dwelling would be served from Park Mount, thereby separating out the use of the existing access road for the two dwellings between these two points.
30. The access from Quarry Road is a relatively steep and narrow track that was partly overgrown at its lower section. I have limited information before me to clearly demonstrate how the site has been accessed, although I note that it is possible to access High Ridings and the appeal site from both points and these are established and have historical use. From my observations, the access from Quarry Road appears to have been used less frequently than the access from Park Mount, which provides a more straightforward route to High Ridings from adjoining roads. Quarry Road also provides access for three other dwellings onto Leeds Road, which is a busier A classification road with a 40mph speed limit. The junction of Quarry Road and Leeds Road is hard surfaced, although notably of poorer quality and condition than Leeds Road.
31. Whilst there is an existing access point onto Quarry Road and Leeds Road, this has been used to serve a single dwelling, in combination with its access onto Park Mount. The proposal would see this route used as the main access for the dwelling. Despite the appellant's suggestion that the use of this route would be reduced, I consider that its use would likely intensify, albeit to a modest degree, than if the access was retained for use only by High Ridings alongside the alternative Park Mount access, as it would be the only option available for future occupants of the new dwelling. Although there are bus stops on Leeds Road, given the rural setting and the location of the site in relation to services and facilities, this would also likely result in greater reliance on a car for access to employment, leisure, education and other needs of future occupants, resulting in the increased use of the access by vehicles. I am not satisfied that the application demonstrates that a safe and suitable access to the proposed development would be achieved via Quarry Road.
32. The limited width of the access would restrict the possibility of vehicles passing safely to and from the site. The steep gradient of the route where it leads from Quarry Road, as well as the proximity to the junction with the busier Leeds Road, would exacerbate potential difficulties that may arise from vehicles manoeuvring in this area. This could include the possibility of reversing back to the junction of Quarry Road and Leeds Road. In addition, the Council highlight the inadequate visibility splays at the Leeds Road and Quarry Road junction relative to the speed on Leeds Road, which could result in drivers pulling out in front of oncoming vehicles in an unsafe manner. Whilst these situations may be relatively limited given the scale of development, the additional traffic movements on Quarry Road as a result of the proposal would prejudice highway safety.
33. I have limited information to clearly indicate the extent of the improvements that would be required to make the access point and the route acceptable, and how

such works would be secured. Furthermore, it is not clear if this would result in any subsequent additional impacts that would need to be considered, including potential effects on the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area. The appellant suggests that refuse collection would be accessed from Park Mount, although there would likely be constraints with using the adjacent public right of way due to the distance of the dwelling from this road and the narrow route that also features steps. Consequently, having regard to all of the above, I am not satisfied that it has been adequately demonstrated that a safe and suitable access for all users could be achieved to serve the development.

34. For the above reasons, and notwithstanding that access is a reserved matter, I conclude the development would have a harmful effect on highway safety. It would therefore conflict with Policy GP5 of the UDP and Policy T2 of the CS. Amongst other things, these look to ensure developments resolve matters of access and they are adequately served by existing highways and with safe and secure access.

Other considerations

35. I have had regard to the appellant's reference to works undertaken at a neighbouring property. I have not been provided with any specific details of this property or the development that has taken place. Whilst I observed neighbouring properties in the immediate area, and some indications of recent alterations, I have limited information before me on the extent of development and their planning status to determine if these are comparable to the appeal proposals. I therefore give this argument limited weight in favour of the development.
36. The appeal scheme would deliver some positive benefit in terms of contributing to the housing supply in the area, although I have not been provided with details of the overall supply. The appellant also references the construction of an eco-friendly dwelling. This suggests the potential for a dwelling with enhanced sustainability credentials, although full details of the design are not provided at this stage. Whilst these are noted, given the scale of the proposed development, the contribution the development would make to housing supply and environmental sustainability would be modest. Therefore, these factors attract limited weight in favour of the development.
37. Where the proposal has been found by the Council to be acceptable or no objections have been raised in other respects, these are neutral matters and do not weigh in favour of the development.

Green Belt Balance

38. The Framework requires that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt. For the reasons set out above, the proposal would be inappropriate development in the terms set out by the Framework. The Framework states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
39. I have also concluded that the development would result in harm to the character and appearance of the CA and to highway safety. This harm renders the development contrary to the requirements of the Council's aforementioned

development plan policies and in conflict with the Framework where it seeks the creation of well-designed places, the conservation of the historic environment, and for safe and suitable access to the site to be achieved for all users. Consequently, these other additional harms carry significant weight.

40. When taken together, the benefits of the development referred to in the other considerations section attract limited weight in favour of the proposal. The harm to the Green Belt would not be clearly outweighed by the other considerations and, therefore, the very special circumstances required to justify a grant of planning permission do not exist. Therefore, the proposal would conflict with Policy N33 of the UDP and the Framework.

Conclusion

41. The proposal would conflict with the development plan taken as a whole and there are no material considerations, including the Framework, to suggest the decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, for the reasons given, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

N Armstrong

INSPECTOR