
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 October 2025

by **N Unwin BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10th November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/N2345/W/25/3367914

The Croft, Eaves Lane, Preston PR4 0BH

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant permission in principle.
 - The appeal is made by Mr A McKnight against the decision of Preston City Council.
 - The application ref is 06/2025/0345.
 - The development proposed is described as: erection of one detached bungalow.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The proposal is for permission in principle. Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) advises that this is an alternative way of obtaining planning permission for housing-led development. The permission in principle consent route has 2 stages. The first stage (permission in principle) establishes whether a site is suitable in principle. The second stage (technical details consent) is when detailed proposals are assessed. This appeal relates to the first of these 2 stages.
3. The scope of the considerations for permission in principle is limited to location, land use and the amount of development permitted. All other matters are considered as part of a subsequent technical details consent application if permission in principle is granted. I have determined the appeal accordingly.
4. Indicative site layout, and proposed elevations and floor layout plans were submitted as part of the application. I have treated this as being for illustrative purposes only.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is whether the site is suitable for residential development, having regard to its location, the proposed land use and the amount of development.

Reasons

6. The appeal site comprises a triangular section of garden area to the north of The Croft, Eaves Lane, on the opposite side of the highway to a farm shop with the surrounding land sparsely developed. The appeal site adjoins Eaves Lane with land to the north and west undeveloped. For planning purposes, the appeal site is in the open countryside outside of a settlement boundary.
7. Policy 1 of the Central Lancashire Core Strategy (2012) (the Core Strategy) sets out the Council's locational development strategy. This directs development in

accordance with the settlement hierarchy. In this context, the appeal site falls under policy criterion f) other places, these being small villages, substantially built-up frontages and Major Developed Sites. Such development will typically be small scale and limited to appropriate infilling, conversion of buildings and proposals to meet local need. Policy EN1 of the Preston Local Plan 2012-2026 (2015) (the Local Plan) limits development in the open countryside with exceptions including for the purposes of agriculture and forestry, the re-use of existing buildings, and infilling in building groups in smaller rural settlements.

8. The appellant contends that 'infill' can mean the use of vacant or underutilised land within an already developed area. Nonetheless, my attention has been drawn to appeal decision APP/N2345/W/20/3265110 in which the Inspector uses the Planning Portal definition of infill which is the development of a relatively small gap between existing buildings. They go on to say that while this is not national policy or guidance, it is an accepted definition that reflects common usage of 'infill' as relating to the filling of a gap. As such, given the absence of development to the north and west of the appeal site, I do not consider the proposal to be infill development.
9. Despite the dwelling immediately to the south of the appeal site and the adjacent farm shop, the area comprises a limited cluster of development with open undeveloped countryside surrounding this. The area is therefore rural in character with a swathe of open agricultural land to the north and west. Even if the appeal site could be considered part of a smaller rural settlement, the absence of development to the north and west combined with the limited amount of development within the vicinity means that the proposal would not infill a gap, nor would it be part of a substantially built-up frontage. Further, the development would not be for the purposes of agriculture or forestry, nor would it demonstrably meet another identified local need. Therefore, the proposal would not be a type of development permitted under Policy 1 of the Core Strategy or Policy EN1 of the Local Plan.
10. Therefore, I conclude that the site is not suitable for residential development having regard to its location, the proposed land use and amount of development. It would conflict with the spatial development and rural housing aims of Policy 1 of the Core Strategy and Policy EN1 of the Local Plan.

Other Matters

11. The description of the proposal is the erection of one detached bungalow. I acknowledge that the proposal would contribute a single dwelling to the existing housing stock, and the important contribution small sites can make to meeting the housing requirement of an area. Nevertheless, given the scale of the proposal, this benefit would be modest. The benefits of a single dwelling in this location would not outweigh the above identified conflict with policy.
12. At the time the Council considered the application, it was unable to demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply and therefore the paragraph 11d) of the Framework, presumption in favour of sustainable development, applied. However, the Council's recently published Housing Land Position Paper demonstrates a 6.7-year supply. As such, paragraph 11d) presumption in favour of sustainable development no longer applies.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

N Unwin

INSPECTOR