



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 November 2025

by David Smith BA(Hons) DMS MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18th November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/E2340/W/25/3373323

Land to the north east of Ing Farm, Colne Road, Barrowford, BB8 9QT

- 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 and Mrs P Leeds against the decision of Pendle Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/0499/PIP.
 - The development proposed is the erection of up to 2 no. dwellings.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and permission in principle is granted for the erection of up to 2 no. dwellings at land to the north east of Ing Farm, Colne Road, Barrowford, BB8 9QT in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 25/0499/PIP.

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 scope of the considerations is limited to location, land use and the amount of development. If permission in principle is granted, all other matters are dealt with as part of a subsequent technical details consent application.

Main Issue

3. This is whether the proposed dwellings would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to national policy. In particular whether the appeal site is grey belt land.

Reasons

4. The appeal site comprises part of a field next to the bungalow at Ing Farm. This section of Colne Road is largely undeveloped although Barrowford Reservoir lies on the north-western side of the road.
5. The Council's Green Belt Assessment of 2017 provides a useful starting point for the evaluation required by the appeal. This identified a total of 74 parcels of land for study and reviewed their performance against the Green Belt purposes set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. The appeal site lies within parcel P027. This is a roughly wedge shaped area between the B6247 and the M65. Its contribution to purposes a) and b) of paragraph 143 was judged to be "major" and therefore of considerable importance to those Green Belt purposes.
6. The PPG on *Green Belt* gives specific advice on how the contribution that land makes to the relevant Green Belt purposes should be assessed and how this should be used in the development management process. The Framework

indicates that, subject to other considerations, the development of homes should not be regarded as inappropriate development if it would utilise grey belt land. The emphasis is therefore on the land where development would take place rather than the wider area within which it lies. As a result, the focus in the appeal should be on the role of the site itself and whether it comprises grey belt land.

7. In respect of purpose a), Colne is a large built-up area and the site is near to the defined settlement boundary. In particular, on the other side of Wanless Water, the redeveloped former college campus at Grenfell Gardens is within it. However, this cluster of development juts out from the edge of the town and is adjoined by playing fields and other open land. It is therefore not connected visually to the more obviously urban character of Colne. The general impression is therefore that the area directly to the east of the appeal site is, in practice, one of transition between the town and the countryside beyond.
8. As a consequence, the linkages between the appeal site and the main built-up urban area of Colne are not strong. Grenfell Gardens is very much an 'outlier.' Therefore, the land is not at a critical point in containing or preventing the unrestricted sprawl of the town. Indeed, the role that it plays in this respect is limited. Two houses here would be seen in conjunction with the adjoining bungalow and the converted barn to the south-west rather than as the outward growth of Colne. As such, the proposal would not result in an incongruous pattern of development. Overall, the appeal site does not contribute strongly to the purpose of checking the unrestricted sprawl of a large built-up area.
9. The particular function of purpose b) in this part of Pendle is to prevent the towns of Colne and Barrowford from merging into one another. The gap between them is quite narrow. However, in isolation the development of the appeal site would not noticeably or markedly bring the two settlements closer together. Just because the identified larger parcels of land are important in achieving this strategic objective does not mean that all the land within them is equally significant. Indeed, the impact of two properties alongside the existing bungalow and converted barn along Colne Road would be a minor one in this respect.
10. Although parcel P027 is small the appeal site only occupies less than 3% of it. Whilst not decisive this statistic nonetheless illustrates that the value of the land in separating the towns is modest. The Council refers to the pressure to develop between them but provides no detailed evidence in this respect. In conclusion on this point, the appeal site does not strongly contribute to the Green Belt purpose of preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another.
11. Accordingly, the appeal site constitutes grey belt land as defined in the Glossary to the Framework. However, in order to conclude whether the proposal would be inappropriate development or not the provisions of paragraph 155 of the Framework need to be applied.
12. The PPG gives advice about how to assess whether the development would fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan. In reaching this judgement consideration should be given to whether, or the extent to which, it would affect the ability of all the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan from serving all five of the Green Belt purposes in a meaningful way. This is a high threshold.

13. The Council is concerned about incremental change weakening the Green Belt and the setting of a precedent if the appeal were to be allowed. However, national policy expects the assessment of whether a particular piece of land is grey belt or not to be done on an individual basis. It follows that the outcome of this appeal should not colour or influence that of any subsequent applications for development in this part of the Green Belt in Pendle. Nevertheless, it cannot be said that building two houses on this small site would “fundamentally undermine” Green Belt purposes. Indeed, the original Green Belt Assessment indicated that it may be possible for some limited development to take place within parcel P027.
14. As the Council only has a 2.8 year supply of housing there is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed. It is agreed that it would be in a sustainable location and the ‘Golden Rules’ do not apply. Therefore, the proposal should not be regarded as inappropriate as all of the criteria in paragraph 155 are met.
15. In view of this, the location of the two houses and the use of the land for residential purposes is acceptable. The amount of development proposed would also fit satisfactorily onto the site.

Other Matters

16. The proposal would be well separated from Barrowford Locks which is a Grade II listed structure. As such, and because of its scale, it would not adversely affect its setting or impinge on the openness of the canal corridor.
17. Other concerns have been raised in relation to residential amenity, character and design, ecology and biodiversity, trees and landscape and highways. These are either matters that would be addressed at technical details stage or ones, such as highway safety, where no insuperable objections to the location of development have been identified.

Conclusion

18. The appeal site is grey belt land and the proposal would not be inappropriate development within the Green Belt. No development plan policies have been cited but having regard to the Framework the proposed development is acceptable. Therefore, for the reasons given, the appeal should succeed and permission in principle should be granted.

David Smith

INSPECTOR