



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 October 2025

by R Gravett BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/F4410/W/25/3370873

Moss Lodge, Haywood, Doncaster DN6 0EG

- 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 Thomas Stollery against the decision of City of Doncaster Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/00405/PIP.
 - The development proposed is described as “proposed 3 bed detached dormer bungalow self-build in existing garden.”
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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 (or permission in principle stage) establishes whether a site is suitable in-principle and the second (‘technical details consent’) stage is when the detailed development 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 permitted¹. 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.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are whether the site is suitable for residential development, having regard to its location, the proposed land use and the amount of development, in relation to:
 - whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework and relevant development plan policies;
 - the effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt;
 - whether the location is suitable for housing, having regard to the development strategy for the area, and access to public transport, services and facilities; and

¹ PPG Paragraph: 012 Reference ID: 58-012-20180615

- whether any harm by reasons of inappropriateness, and any other harm, would be clearly outweighed by other considerations, so as to amount to the very special circumstances required to justify the proposal.

Reasons

Whether inappropriate development

5. The appeal site is in the Green Belt. It comprises a small parcel of land with a frontage to Bar Croft Lane, located to the north-east of a detached dwelling known as 'Moss Lodge' and close to a railway crossing.
6. Policy 1 of the Doncaster Local Plan 2015-2035 (2021) (LP) outlines that, within the Green Belt, national planning policy will be applied including the presumption against inappropriate development except in very special circumstances.
7. Paragraph 153 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) requires substantial weight to be given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness, stating that inappropriate development should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless one of the exceptions in paragraphs 154 and 155 of the Framework apply.
8. The appellant's case is that the appeal site is previously developed land (PDL). Therefore, the exception at paragraph 154(g) is relevant, which is the "limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land (including a material change of use to residential or mixed use including residential), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt."
9. The Framework defines PDL as including the following, "land which has been lawfully developed and is or was occupied by a permanent structure and any fixed surface infrastructure associated with it, including the curtilage of the developed land." However, the definition explicitly excludes "land that is or was last occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings."
10. The planning application describes the existing use of the site as 'garden off Moss Lodge.' However, I observed on my site visit that the site is physically separated from Moss Lodge by an access track and is partly enclosed by a post and rail fence. Although the appeal site predominantly comprises grassland, one corner is being used for the storage of wood, and it does not have the appearance of a residential garden. Furthermore, the appellant's evidence is that the site has no viable agricultural use and has been unused for 40 years because it is too small to use for modern farming. An old, but undated photograph shows an open fronted structure on the western boundary of the appeal site which the appellant states was formerly used to store animal feed and to house agricultural vehicles.
11. Therefore, on the evidence before me, the land was last occupied by an agricultural building. Accordingly, it does not constitute PDL and does not meet the first part of the exception set out in paragraph 154(g) of the Framework.
12. 'Grey belt' land is defined in the Framework as land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to the Green Belt purposes at (a), (b), or (d) of paragraph 143.

These are: to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas; to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another; and to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.

13. Even if I were to accept that the appeal site does not strongly contribute to these purposes, to be regarded as not inappropriate, the development would need to meet all the criteria at paragraph 155 of the Framework. The evidence before me is that the Council can demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites and meets the required housing delivery over the previous three years. Criterion b) of paragraph 155 would not therefore be met which requires a demonstrable need for the type of development proposed.
14. The appeal site is to the north-east of Moss Lodge and there is another dwelling on the opposite side of Bar Croft Lane. However, the appeal site forms part of a loose cluster of built form rather than comprising part of a village. Moreover, land directly to the north is open farmland. The proposal would not therefore fall within the exception at paragraph 154 (e) of the Framework which allows for limited infilling in villages.
15. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposal would not fall within the exception at paragraph 154 (g) or (e) or under paragraph 155 of the Framework. No other exceptions are relied upon by the appellant. Therefore, the proposal constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Effect on openness

16. The essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence. The PPG provides advice on the factors that can be taken into account when considering the potential impact of development on the openness of the Green Belt, with openness capable of having both spatial and visual aspects.
17. The specific location within the site, and design of the proposed dwelling are ultimately matters for the Technical Details Consent stage. Nonetheless, it is inevitable that the introduction of a dwelling and associated domestic paraphernalia would give rise to a spatial loss of openness on the appeal site as it would result in development where there is presently none.
18. Although views would be partially screened by the mature hedgerow along its frontage, the form, bulk and massing of any residential development on this site would still be apparent, particularly from along Bar Croft Lane. It would also be readily visible from Moss Lodge, from the dwelling on the opposite side of the road, and from the bridleway which runs alongside the western boundary of the site. The appeal site would therefore appear notably more urbanised than is presently the case.
19. Consequently, although it would be localised, the proposal would result in harm to the openness of the Green Belt and would conflict with the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open.
20. Therefore, I conclude that the appeal site is not suitable in principle for residential development, having regard to its location, the proposed land use and the amount of development. It would conflict with LP Policy 1 insofar as it requires the provisions of national policy to apply to development in the Green Belt.

Suitable location

21. LP Policy 1 provides support for new development in locations within 'development limits' and directs most new homes to the 'Main Urban Areas', 'Main Towns' and 'Service Towns and Villages'. The appeal site is within a loose cluster of built form along Bar Croft Lane and Haywood Lane, which are rural lanes beyond any 'development limit,' as defined on the LP policies map.
22. Approximately a 10-minute drive to the west is Askern, which is a 'Service Town and Village' identified in the LP as providing a good range of services meeting its own needs and the needs of the local area. The appellant suggests the appeal site is only a 15-minute bike ride from Askern, but I am not certain this is realistic, nor do I have persuasive evidence that this would be a safe or convenient cycle route. Moreover, although Askern is said to have a doctor, pharmacy and dental practice, I have little information regarding the location or accessibility of other important day-to-day services, such as employment opportunities, shops, or local schools.
23. A bus stop to which the appellant refers was not evident on my site visit. Even if the nearest bus stop is a manageable 20-minute walk, I observed that there are narrow country lanes in either direction from the appeal site with no footway or streetlamps. This would likely make walking to the bus stop an unattractive proposition for future occupiers of the proposed dwelling, despite the lanes being lightly trafficked. Realistically, the vast majority of journeys would have to be made by the private car.
24. Although paragraph 110 of the Framework recognises that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, in this case the location is such that there would be no genuine choice of means of transport, or adequate access to services.
25. Therefore, I conclude that the site would not be a suitable location for housing having regards to the development strategy for the area, and access to public transport, services and facilities. It would conflict with LP Policies 1 and 13 insofar as they require the location and scale of development to be informed by the settlement hierarchy and seek to ensure that access can be made by a wide choice of transport modes, including walking, cycling, and public transport.

Other Considerations

26. The primary reason for the proposed dwelling would be to enable the appellant to live close to family in a small, more rural community, rather than a built-up area. The dwelling has been described as a self-build. The Framework requires opportunities to be sought to support small sites coming forward for self-build housing and identifies people wishing to commission or build their own homes as a group in the community that should be assessed and reflected in planning policies.
27. I understand that the appellant has considered alternative properties and sites locally and none have proven suitable in terms of availability or affordability. However, I have little evidence there is a need for the self-build dwelling to be in this location, or that there is a shortfall or a local unmet need for such forms of housing. The PPG² sets out that planning obligations cannot be secured at the permission in principle stage, and the description of the proposed development

² PPG Paragraph: 022 Reference ID: 58-022-20180615

alone would not provide me with the necessary certainty that a self-build dwelling would be delivered as intended. As there is not an appropriate mechanism for me to ensure that a self-build would be secured, delivered and safeguarded, I can afford this only minimal weight.

28. Nevertheless, the Framework seeks to significantly boost the supply of homes. It advises that small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area. As the land currently serves no agricultural function, the proposal would also support the development of under-utilised land. However, due to the small scale of the proposed development, I attach modest weight to these benefits.
29. I have also had due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty contained in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. This requires me to consider the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it. Protected characteristics include a person's age. I understand that the appellant wishes to live close-by to help with aging family, but I have very little evidence that such support could not be provided from elsewhere. Therefore, whilst I have given them very careful consideration, I ascribe these personal circumstances modest weight.

Other Matters

30. My attention has been drawn to two examples of applications approved by the Council, considered by the appellant to be similar to the appeal proposal. I note the Council's evidence that both examples are in a service town or village, in areas identified for residential development. Whilst I have been provided with a postcode and planning application reference, in the absence of full details of these examples, it is not possible for me to ascertain whether they are comparable in location to the appeal site. Consequently, they lend little support to the proposal which, in any event, I have considered on its own individual merits.
31. I observed that the Barcroft Crossing House at the railway crossing is unused and is in a poor state of repair, detracting from the character and appearance of the area. In contrast, the appeal site is maintained grassland and is not a degraded site, as asserted by the appellant. Therefore, it is not comparable to the gate house, nor am I persuaded that it would attract similar neglect should the appeal not be successful.
32. Finally, I acknowledge that the appellant considers that the proposal is small scale and has been carefully designed to minimise visual and environmental impact and would use building materials which would reflect the local style, in keeping with the character of the area. However, such detailed matters would be assessed at the second Technical Details Consent stage.

Green Belt Balance and Conclusion

33. The proposal constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt which would also cause harm to the openness of the Green Belt. I attach substantial weight to the associated Green Belt harm. Furthermore, the proposal would not be a suitable location for housing, having regard to the development strategy for the area and the accessibility of the site to services and facilities, and by public transport. This is an additional harm to which I assign significant weight.

34. Very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. Taken together, the other considerations put forward carry modest weight. It follows that the substantial weight to be given to Green Belt harm, together with the significant weight to which I have given to the other harm identified, are not clearly outweighed by other considerations in this case. Thus, the very special circumstances required to justify the proposed development do not exist and it would conflict with the Framework and LP Policy 1.
35. For the reasons set out above, the appeal site is not suitable in principle for residential development. The proposal conflicts with the development plan and material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. Therefore, I conclude that the appeal is dismissed.

R Gravett

INSPECTOR