



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 October 2025

by J M Tweddle BSc(Hons) MSc(Dist) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 March 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/R2330/W/25/3362404

Parkers Farm, Cowhill Lane, Rishton, Lancs BB1 4AS

- 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 Darren Clegg against the decision of Hyndburn Borough Council.
 - The application reference is 11/24/0262.
 - The development proposed is described as 'retrospective planning for the erection of an annexe to the host dwelling and change of use of the land to which the annexe sits'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The development has commenced, with the building having been constructed and fully furnished for residential use at the time of my visit. However, for the avoidance of doubt, my assessment is based solely on the documentation, plans, and drawings submitted with the appeal.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - Whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and any relevant development plan policies;
 - The effect of the development on the openness of the Green Belt;
 - The effect of the development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area;
 - Whether the proposal would preserve the settings of nearby heritage assets, and;
 - Whether any harm by reason 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

4. The appeal site is located in the countryside, and within the Green Belt. The appeal proposal is for the erection of a single storey building to be used as an annex to Parker's Farmhouse. The building has a footprint of approximately 17.9 by 6.7 metres, with a dual pitched roof covered in grey roof tiles. Its elevations are faced with sandstone and include grey uPVC framed windows and doors.

Whether inappropriate development

5. The Framework acknowledges that the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. 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 permanence. Paragraph 154 of the Framework establishes that development in the Green Belt is inappropriate, subject to specific exemptions. One such exception being the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.
6. Policy DM34 of the Hyndburn Borough Council Local Plan Development Management DPD, adopted in January 2018, (the DMPDP) is broadly consistent in this regard. It states, amongst other things, that the extension of a building will be permitted where the proposal would result in an increase of no more than 50% of the volume of the original building in both Green Belt and the Countryside Area.
7. The development is detached from the host building, and so would not be an extension in the traditional sense. However, the Courts have established that a detached domestic outbuilding can be considered as an extension to a dwelling, for the purposes of applying Green Belt policy if it is regarded as a 'normal domestic adjunct'.
8. There is no single definition of a normal domestic adjunct, but it is generally understood to mean a structure that, although separate from the host dwelling, functions in a way that is normally associated with a domestic residential use. Therefore, in my view, to qualify as a normal domestic adjunct, a building would need to be intimately associated with the host dwelling such that it would be viewed as part and parcel of it, and its use would also need to be clearly associated with the occupation of the host dwelling.
9. In this case, the proposed annexe is sited approximately 50 metres away from the host dwelling. This is a significant distance and therefore does not have a close physical relationship. Instead, the building appears as separate dwellinghouse and has all the facilities and furnishings necessary to be occupied as an independent dwelling, including kitchen, washing facilities, living and sleeping accommodation, and its own separate garden area. Furthermore, there is very little evidence before me to demonstrate how the building would be physically or functionally associated with the occupation of Parker's Farmhouse.
10. Consequently, the development cannot be regarded as a normal domestic adjunct, and so it cannot benefit from the exemption set out at paragraph 154(c) of the Framework.
11. Paragraph 154(d) also provides an exemption for the replacement of a building, providing the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces. In this regard, the appellant is of the view that the development would replace a derelict single-storey agricultural outbuilding that has been disused for many decades and is shown on the 1891 Ordnance Survey Map of the area. An aerial photograph has been provided, which appears to show the remnants of some built form in the location of the appeal site. However, this photograph is undated, and it appears to show mature vegetation, including trees, growing from within the remnants of any previously existing built form. It is also worth noting that the Appellant's Heritage Consultant States that *"To put the building in context, at the*

*time of my survey of the main farmhouse in 2023, the outbuilding was not recorded as it was not relevant to the forthcoming application and also because so little of it remained standing*¹ (my emphasis).

12. Accordingly, there is very little evidence before me to demonstrate that an agricultural outbuilding, of greater or equivalent scale to the proposal, previously existed at the appeal site for the development to replace.
13. In addition, there is no firm evidence before me to substantiate the appellant's claim that the previous outbuilding may have been used as residential accommodation associated with Parker's Farmhouse. In my view, it is more likely that the land and any associated structures at the appeal site were last used for agricultural purposes, particularly as the appellant accepts that the former building was derelict and had not been used for many decades. An agricultural use is not the same as a residential use, and so, in addition to the reasons set out above, the development cannot benefit from the exemption at paragraph 154(d) of the Framework.
14. Consequently, the proposal is inappropriate development in the Green Belt, which is, by definition, harmful. It therefore conflicts with the Framework and Policy DM34 of the DMDPD, which together seek to protect the Green Belt from inappropriate development.

Openness

15. Openness is an essential characteristic of the Green Belt that has both visual and spatial aspects and so implies freedom from built form. Notwithstanding the presence of neighbouring properties and agricultural buildings, the appeal site is located in a remote upland landscape where the openness of the Green Belt is clearly evident and can be appreciated.
16. The development has introduced a single-storey building with 2 bedrooms, living room, kitchen, bathroom and an integral garage/workshop. In addition, boundary fencing and areas of hardstanding have been created as part of the development. In the absence of clear evidence to demonstrate that the proposal has replaced a building of a similar or greater scale, the development has undoubtedly harmed the visual and spatial aspects of openness. Furthermore, the use of the appeal site for residential use is likely to give rise to the introduction of garden furniture and other domestic paraphernalia associated with its use, resulting in further harm to openness.
17. Given the scale and nature of the proposal, I find that the development has resulted in a moderate loss of openness. Consequently, the development would not preserve the openness of the Green Belt, and, in this regard, it would also conflict with the Green Belt purpose of safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

Character and appearance

18. The surrounding area is characterised by open countryside as part of an upland landscape that is interspersed by traditional farmsteads and clusters of agricultural buildings. Given the site's elevated upland location, it is highly visible in medium and long-range views taken from the surrounding landscape.

¹ Alteration and conversion of outbuilding at Parker's Farm (11/24/0262) Additional Heritage Statement, by Garry Miller Heritage Consultant

19. The development has the appearance of a modern bungalow. Therefore, despite the use of facing stone to its elevations, it has introduced a suburban form of development that is completely at odds with the rural character of the site and the surrounding agricultural landscape. In these respects, the proposal fails to integrate with its surroundings and appears as a discordant feature.
20. For these reasons, the development is harmful to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Therefore, it is in conflict with Policies ENV6 of the Hyndburn Borough Council Local Development Framework The Core Strategy, adopted January 2012 (the CS), Policies DM26 and DM34 of the DMDPD, and the associated policies of the Framework, which together require development proposals to achieve high quality design that conserves and enhances the borough's urban and rural environments.

Heritage assets

21. The Framework defines the setting of a heritage asset as the surroundings in which it is experienced. The extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral. The Framework is clear that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight is to be given to the asset's conservation; the more important the asset, the greater that weight should be. In this regard, the Framework also advises that the significance of a designated heritage asset can be harmed or lost through development within its setting, and such harm requires clear and convincing justification.
22. The appeal site lies to the west of Parker's Farmhouse, a substantial yeoman freeholder house dating from circa 1600 and included on the statutory list at Grade II* (formerly listed under Cowhill Fold, Blackburn Road). To the southeast is Rose Cottage, a former 17th century farmhouse included on the statutory list at Grade II. The appellant does not dispute that the appeal site forms part of the settings of these listed buildings.

Special interest and significance

23. Parker's Farmhouse is listed for its special architectural and historic interest as a rare surviving example of an early post-medieval farmhouse. The listed building is an unusually complete example of a three-bay baffle-entry two-storey house and comprises a plan-form that is increasingly rare. It is therefore an excellent and authentic example of a traditional farmhouse of the period. Surviving features such as a two-storey gabled porch with Tudor-arched doorway, double chamfered stone mullion windows, an outshut stair turret, and large projecting gable-end chimney stack are notable features which demonstrate high architectural value with significant survival of historic fabric. Its Grade II* listed status signifies that Parker's Farmhouse is a particularly important building of more than special interest.
24. Rose Cottage is also a well-preserved example of a 17th century farmhouse of traditional vernacular construction that is typical of its era. Its architectural value resides in its age, materials, and form, while its historic interest derives from origins as an early farmhouse and its contribution to understanding how the local landscape was settled for agricultural production prior to rapid industrialisation.

Settings and contribution to significance

25. Both listed buildings derive further significance from their remote upland landscape settings. The continuity of the surrounding rural landscape character reinforces the buildings' ability to be understood in their authentic historic context as part of a dispersed pattern of early farmsteads, the activities of which have defined the surrounding agricultural landscape.
26. Accordingly, the setting of both listed buildings, which includes the appeal site, makes an important and positive contribution to their heritage significance by preserving their authentic rural agricultural surroundings, and which is essential to understanding the buildings' historic function and origins. Their settings reinforce the listed buildings' heritage value as early farmhouses, and demonstrating pre-industrial rural settlement patterns. Therefore, retaining the rural and agricultural character of the surrounding landscape is important for the understanding and appreciation of the historical origins and significance of the listed buildings.

The effect of the proposal

27. Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) states that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, special regard shall be had to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest. I have considered the appeal proposal in light of this weighty statutory duty.
28. The appeal proposal would not impede, obscure or otherwise draw attention away from the listed buildings. Nevertheless, the proposal would ultimately introduce a residential use, and suburban form of development, that would erode the rural and agricultural character of the listed buildings' settings. It would therefore appear as a discordant feature within the setting of both listed buildings. By extension, this would result in a degree of harm to the significance of the listed buildings, and how they are appreciated and understood.
29. Bringing these points together, the proposal would fail to preserve the settings of nearby heritage assets. As a result, the development does not satisfy the statutory duty set out at s66(1) of the Act. For these reasons, the proposal is also contrary to Policy DM22 of the DMDPD, which requires listed buildings and their settings to be preserved and enhanced.

Heritage balance

30. Paragraph 212 of the Framework advises that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Paragraph 213 goes on to advise that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification.
31. In accordance with paragraphs 213 and 214 of the Framework, in finding harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the magnitude of that harm should be assessed. In this case, given the scale, nature and positioning of the proposal and its consequent effects, this would result in a medium level of less than substantial harm to the significance of Parkers Farmhouse. Whereas I consider the harm to the significance of Rose Cottage to be at the lower end of the spectrum of less than substantial harm, owing to development's positioning and spatial

relationship with this heritage asset. However, less than substantial harm does not equate to less than substantial weight in the planning balance and, therefore, these harms are of considerable importance and weight. Under such circumstances, the Framework advises that the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

32. No public benefits are advanced in favour of the proposal. From the submitted material it appears that the proposal would amount to only private benefit for the appellant through the creation of additional residential accommodation. Consequently, in this case, the harm is not outweighed by any demonstrable public benefit, and therefore the proposal clearly conflicts with the Framework's aim to conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.

Other considerations

33. As set out above, the proposal is inappropriate development in the Green Belt and there is harm to the openness of the Green Belt. I am required to give substantial weight to these harms. 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.
34. Beyond the issues discussed above, the appellant has not put forward any other considerations to justify the proposal.

Conclusion

35. The proposal would be inappropriate development in the terms set out by the Framework, which is, by definition, harmful. There is also a harmful loss of openness and conflict with the Green Belt purpose of safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. These harms attract substantial weight.
36. In addition, the development is harmful to the character and appearance of the surrounding area, and it fails to preserve the settings of Parker's Farmhouse or Rose Cottage - resulting in harm to the significance of these designated heritage assets. No public benefits are put forward to outweigh these harms.
37. No other considerations have been advanced by the appellant, and so the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development do not exist.
38. Consequently, for the reasons given, the proposal is in conflict with the above cited policies of the development plan, and no material considerations have been put forward to indicate a decision other than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, the appeal must fail.

J M Tweddle

INSPECTOR