



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 March 2026

by **S McIntyre BSc (Hons), CEng, MICE, MCIHT**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 March 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/E3335/W/25/3376877

Land at Whitecross Lane, Minehead, Somerset TA24 8BZ

- 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 Elaine Thorne against the decision of Somerset Council.
 - The application Ref is 3/21/25/008.
 - The development proposed is outline application for a single dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The appeal is for outline planning permission for one dwelling with all matters reserved except for access. I have determined the appeal having regard to access only, with all other matters subject to future consideration.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on highway safety.

Reasons

4. Whitecross Lane is narrow, typically not of sufficient width for cars to pass. The road is subject to a 30mph speed limit and there are no footways. To the south of the appeal site, Whitecross Lane rises and bends to the west, with high vegetation bounding the carriageway. This results in very limited visibility for drivers approaching the proposed site access from the south.
5. I did not observe any vehicles using this section of Whitecross Lane during my site visit. It serves a limited number of dwellings and, given the standard of road and location, is not an attractive through route. On this basis it is reasonable to assume that traffic flows are typically low.
6. Vehicles approaching the appeal site from the south would be travelling on a down gradient, but the alignment of the road, combined with limited width and visibility, is likely to limit vehicle speeds to some extent. However, no vehicle speed survey results have been submitted, and therefore actual vehicle speeds are unknown.
7. The appellant has not demonstrated that there is sufficient manoeuvring space for a driver to turn a car around within the site. While some drivers may choose to reverse into the proposed access, some may not. To reverse into the access, a driver would first need to drive past the access, before then reversing. This may not be possible if there is an oncoming vehicle on Whitecross Lane. However,

given the road is lightly trafficked, this situation is likely to be a rare event. A vehicle reversing in or out of the access could interfere with the free flow of traffic along Whitecross Lane, however as the traffic flow is likely to be very low this is not a significant issue.

8. No details have been provided by the appellant, to demonstrate appropriate visibility splays would be provided at the proposed access, having regard to vehicle speeds on Whitecross Lane. From my site visit, it was evident that a driver, or a cyclist, travelling north on Whitecross Lane, approaching the proposed access, would have very limited visibility to a vehicle leaving the site. Similarly, a driver leaving the site, even in forward gear, would have very limited visibility looking right. The visibility for a driver reversing out of the access would be reduced further, as the position of the driver would be significantly further back from the edge of Whitecross Lane, when compared with a driver leaving in forward gear.
9. Representations have been made by the appellant, Council and neighbours of the site, regarding the past use of the site for parking. The highway safety issue under consideration relates to conflict between vehicles on Whitecross Lane and vehicles using the proposed access. An increase in vehicle movements at the access would result in more conflicts and therefore increase the likelihood of accidents. There is insufficient information before me to demonstrate that the proposal would not increase the number of vehicle movements onto and off the site, at the location of the proposed access, when compared with any lawful use.
10. The visibility available does not appear sufficient for a driver to safely reverse out of the proposed access, having regard to likely vehicle speeds on Whitecross Lane. An increase in vehicle movements at the location of the proposed access would increase the risk of accidents and result in substantial harm to highway safety. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, I conclude that the proposal would result in unacceptable impact on highway safety, contrary to guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).

Other Matters

11. Set against the harm identified, the proposal would provide a new home in a sustainable location. This would support the Government's aim of significantly boosting the supply of homes and improve the current shortfall in the Council's housing land supply. However, one dwelling would make only a very small difference to the overall shortfall of housing, and I attach limited weight to this benefit. There would also be temporary and ongoing economic benefits from the development but given these relate to a single house the benefit would also be limited.

Planning Balance

12. The proposal would result in unacceptable highway safety which I have determined to be a substantial harm.
13. The Council advises that it cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites, with a supply of 3.94 years for the former West Somerset area. This shortfall is assessed to be moderate in this instance. In these circumstances the Framework advises that permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts

would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

14. While the proposal does not conflict with any locational policies in the development plan it would result in unacceptable highway safety which conflicts with policies in the Framework.
15. As described above, the benefits associated with a single dwelling are limited, consequently the substantial harm to highway safety that would arise would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. As a result, the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply.

Conclusion

16. The proposal conflicts with the Framework when taken as a whole and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it.

S McIntyre

INSPECTOR