



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 September 2021

by C McDonagh BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 October 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/U2370/W/21/3275045

Camberley Farm, Union Lane, Out Rawcliffe PR3 6SS

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mrs Harrison against the decision of Wyre Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20/01176/FULMAJ, dated 24 November 2020, was refused by notice dated 30 March 2021.
 - The development proposed is change of use of land to form extension to existing caravan storage yard (B8).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Application for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mrs Harrison against Wyre Borough Council. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Preliminary Matters

3. During the course of the appeal, the revised National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021) (the Framework) was published. Parties were provided with an opportunity to comment on the relevance of this, and I have taken any subsequent comments received into account in my determination of this appeal.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

5. The appeal site comprises an agricultural field located to the east of farm buildings and an existing caravan storage area at Camberley Farm. The surrounding landscape is predominantly flat and open, with long range views punctuated by sporadic farm buildings and detached dwellings. This creates a tranquil and open character. The proposal seeks to extend the existing caravan storage area and earth bund across the field into the appeal site. A woodland belt would also be created to screen views of the proposal.
6. The site is located in a prominent position close to the junction of Union Lane and Lancaster Road. This is confirmed within the submitted photomontages which clearly show the earth bund and the tops of some caravans in views from the local area. At present, the appeal site is open, effectively offsetting some of

the loss of this field to the existing caravan store. This is particularly evident when travelling along both roads bordering the field. The proposed incursion into this part of the field would further reduce this open character and by extending the bund and increasing the number of caravans and hardstanding, would urbanise an area of intrinsic rural character and appearance. This would be compounded by the woodland belt, which, while providing some biodiversity benefits, would appear visually discordant in the context of the predominantly open landscape.

7. The proposed woodland belt would, however, reduce the visual impact of the caravan storage in that it would screen the caravans in views from most vantage points. In combination with the bund, it would also screen much of the existing area of hardstanding whereby caravans are already stored. However, any trees planted would take time to fully develop and may not provide full screening during winter months. This would be the time when storage would be most in demand. A planning condition is suggested to secure effective landscaping measures, while it is also suggested the expansion of the existing bund would afford the opportunity to improve its appearance. In any event, this would not overcome the visual harm that would be imposed by the proposal in the short term and the effect on the character of the area in the longer term. Unacceptable landscape harm would therefore be apparent even once the proposed boundary planting had matured.
8. I acknowledge that the proposal would help in the expansion of a rural business, and I note the need for the additional storage is not in dispute between the parties. The Framework states planning should enable the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses in paragraph 84(b). However, the support for rural economic development in the Framework is not unconditional, or at the expense of ensuring that all development integrates appropriately with its surroundings. Whilst there would be economic benefits of the scheme, there is no precise quantification of these to enable me to balance them relative to the harm. There is also no suggestion that the existing business as it stands would be adversely affected by the absence of this proposal. As such, whilst I acknowledge there would be benefits to the scheme, I accord them only moderate weight.
9. While the Council did not engage a landscape architect in assessing the impacts of the proposal, this is invariably a matter of planning judgement by the decision maker. The lack of an industry standard Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) does not justify granting planning permission on this basis alone. I acknowledge the appellant's LVIA concludes there would be localised and minimal harm. However, for the reasons given above, and on balance, I conclude that the harm would outweigh any benefits identified.
10. To conclude, the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area. This would be contrary to policies SP4, CDMP3 and EP8 of the Wyre Local Plan (adopted February 2019). These policies state, among other things, that development which adversely impacts on the open and rural character of the countryside will not be permitted unless it is demonstrated that the harm to the open and rural character is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh the harm. The proposal would also be contrary to the design aims of the Framework, which seek to ensure through paragraph 130 that development

is sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting.

Conclusion

11. The proposal would conflict with the development plan taken as a whole. There are no material considerations that indicate the decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, for the reasons given, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

C McDonagh

INSPECTOR