



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 January 2018

by **S R G Baird BA(Hons) MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22nd January 2018

Appeal Ref: APP/M2325/W/17/3184502

Ream Hills Leisure Park, Mythop Road, Weeton with Preese, Preston, Lancashire PR4 3NB

- 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 Ream Hills Lake Leisure Park against the decision of Fylde Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 17/0038, dated 19 January 2017, was refused by notice dated 21 March 2017.
 - The development is the erection of a replacement lodge.
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Preliminary Matter

1. At the time the application was submitted the lodge had been constructed. Accordingly, I shall deal with this appeal under S73 of the above Act.

Decision

2. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of a replacement lodge at Ream Hills Leisure Park, Mythop Road, Weeton with Preese, Preston, Lancashire PR4 3NB in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 17/0038, dated 19 January 2017, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) the holiday lodge hereby approved shall be occupied for holiday purposes only and not as a person's permanent, sole or main place of residence;
 - 2) the owners/operators of the holiday lodge hereby approved shall maintain an up-to-date register of the names of all owners of the holiday lodges on the site. The information held shall also include the owner's main home address. The information shall be made available at all reasonable times to the local planning authority;
 - 3) the development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Drawing Nos. RH/04514/001; RH/04514/002; RH/04514/003; RH/04514/004; RH/04514/005; RH/04514/006 and RH/04514/007.

Main Issue

3. The effect on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. Ream Hills Leisure Park covers a large area and comprises several holiday lodges, a touring caravan site, associated buildings set around an extensive car park and next to a fishing/wake boarding lake. All of the existing

buildings/lodges bar the appeal building are single-storey. Of the development plan¹ (DP) policies referred to, I consider Policies SP8 and TREC 6 to be the most relevant. Policy SP8 indicates that the expansion of existing businesses will be permitted where, amongst other things, the development would not have a significant harmful effect on the character and appearance of the countryside and the height of the proposed building(s) would not exceed the height of the existing buildings in the vicinity. Policy TREC 6 indicates that the development of holiday caravan and chalet sites will not be permitted where, amongst other things, the development would have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area. The emerging development plan² (EDP) is, I understand still be examined. Here, the relevant policy is Policy GD7, an overarching policy, which seeks to achieve good design and the protection of the countryside. In this context, the objectives of DP and EDP policies accord with the National Planning Policy Framework.

5. Although Policy SP8 does not define what is meant by vicinity, the Council, in this case, appears to consider it to be the holiday park in isolation. However, the commonly understood meaning of vicinity is "the surrounding area". This, in my view, is a more reasonable approach to take in assessing the effect of this development. The main public views of the holiday park and the lodge are medium to long distance views from the north-east, north and north-west. Whilst the lodge is the only 2-storey building on the site, in the above views it is seen against the extensive backdrop of mature trees to the south and in the context of the extensive, prominent and visually intrusive touring caravan park, and the large 2-storey farmhouse and tall agricultural buildings of Ream Hills Farm immediately adjoining the holiday park to the south-west. In these views, the height of the lodge is not exaggerated and is a minor element that has no material impact on the rural character or appearance of the immediate or wider area. Accordingly, I conclude that the lodge does not have a materially adverse effect on the rural character and appearance of the rural area and does not conflict with the development plan or emerging development plan and the appeal is allowed.

Conditions

6. For the reasons specified by the Council, I have imposed conditions restricting the occupancy and operation of the lodge for holiday purposes and in the interests of certainty a condition specifying the relevant plans.

George Baird

Inspector

¹ Fylde Borough Local Plan As Altered October 2005.

² Fylde Borough Local Plan to 2032.