



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 December 2025

by **J Hills MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4 December 2025.

Appeal Ref: 6000831

Lufflands Caravan Park, Sutcombe, Holsworthy EX22 7PJ

- 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 A Bryant against the decision of Torridge District Council.
 - The application Ref is 1/0938/2024/FUL.
 - The development proposed is described in the application as “retrospective permission for change of use to allow siting of 8 touring caravans”.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for change of use to allow siting of 8 touring caravans at Lufflands Caravan Park, Sutcombe, Holsworthy EX22 7PJ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 1/0938/2024/FUL, subject to the following conditions.
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the location plan received by the Council on 30th January 2025.
 - 2) The caravan pitches hereby approved shall be for holiday accommodation and for no other purpose (including any other purpose in Class C3 of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended, or in any provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification).

Preliminary Matters

2. The application form states that work began in January 2022 and at the time of my visit I saw that the proposed touring pitches were in place and mostly occupied. The application has been dealt with retrospectively, and I have treated it in the same way.
3. The description of development provided within the application form includes wording that is not an act or description of development. I have used a different description in the decision which removes the superfluous.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the development on highway safety.

Reasons

5. The appeal site has a long-established history as a caravan park. Within the wider site, a lawful caravan storage use was confirmed in 2002, with an undisputed claim it could accommodate up to 80 caravans. Caravan storage may not necessarily generate persistent transport movements, and it is noted that part of this area has

a recent permission for 18 touring pitches. However, given its scale and nature, the lawful storage use is likely to result in a good amount of toing and froing. This would include unrestricted movements of towed caravans entering and exiting the park.

6. The statement by Bellamy Transport Consultancy shows that overall occupancy levels at the wider caravan park are less than 40% of its capacity. Only 2 of the 8 proposed pitches subject to this appeal were occupied at the time of a 2-day survey, though this is merely a snapshot in time, rather than a robust analysis of actual annual occupancy. Therefore, while carried out over a summer bank holiday weekend where one might expect a proportionally high level of occupancy, it remains conceivable that more of these pitches could be occupied for good periods of the year.
7. Even so, based on year-round full capacity or overall average occupancy levels, the proposal would still only generate a proportionally small number of movements a day when compared with the wider site. Furthermore, whilst it is possible that the proposed pitches could generate movements involving towed caravans, those caravans sited at the time of my visit appeared well bedded-in amongst decking and BBQ areas. Based on my observations and the available evidence, I find it more likely that occupiers would use their smaller private vehicles for trips rather than constantly towing very large caravans.
8. There is no dispute between the parties that when exiting the appeal site in a vehicle, visibility in both directions falls short of the recommended distances set out in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges and Manual for Streets 2 (MfS). The Highway Authority is particularly concerned with the southern direction measurements which it describes as severely substandard.
9. However, unlike the appeal examples offered by them¹ that are in different locations and of different scales, the appellant has conducted a speed and traffic survey. This shows the average speeds along this stretch of road are below the national limit of 60mph, at around 44mph. The emergency stopping sight distance for the average recorded speed is 44m. With 45m of visibility available to the south, collisions could potentially be avoided. In that context, although a collision may have been recorded in the local area, the evidence indicates there have been none recorded at the appeal site entrance over the last 25 years. This includes over 2 years during which the proposed pitches have already been in place.
10. In that context, when approaching the appeal site from a southerly direction, the winding rural road alignments forced me to drive well below the speed limit. Furthermore, at some distance before the access, my attention was drawn to numerous caravans in the landscape. As such, although I intended to turn off, drivers of vehicles, particularly those familiar with the local area, would be likely to be alert to the possibility of towed caravans or smaller vehicles entering and exiting the road network in this vicinity. The large sign at the site entrance assists in this respect.
11. After standing at the site entrance for several minutes, I observed that the surrounding area was notably quiet, with any approaching vehicles clearly audible from a considerable distance. When exiting the appeal site to the right in my vehicle, I was able to achieve adequate visibility in both directions without

¹ Appeal refs: APP/W1145/W/22/3308069 and APP/W1145/W/19/3239892

encroaching onto the highway. This allowed for a calm and deliberate manoeuvre. Although no fast-moving vehicles approached from the south or beyond the crest to the north during my manoeuvre, the available sightlines did not appear unduly restricted, and neither did the overall experience feel unsafe.

12. Taking all of these factors into account, including the lawful storage use, while TMS research from MfS may not apply to this scheme, the overall effect on the volume of transport movements is likely to be negligible. The access could be better, but in the absence of any compelling evidence to the contrary, and for the reasons given, the scheme has not been shown to be unsafe, unsuitable, or generate unacceptable impacts on highways safety. This accords with paragraphs 115 and 116 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
13. I therefore conclude that the development is not likely to pose a risk to highway safety. As such, there is no conflict with Policy DM05 of the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan which, amongst other things, promotes safe and well-designed vehicular access and egress.

Other Matters

14. I have had regard to the concerns from a neighbour in respect of the main issue above, but also in terms of their comments about the visual effect of the development. I agree that caravans are visible, though the pitches proposed are set within the context of an existing caravan site, where their effect on the wider landscape is somewhat contained. Furthermore, the Council has raised no objection in this regard.
15. The Council recommends an informative be placed on any permission highlighting its own requirement for a varied site license. While noted, this issue is covered under separate legislation and will be a matter for the parties. Furthermore, informatives do not carry any legal weight and for the reasons given, I have not included one.
16. I have considered the appeal decision at Menherion. However, based on the evidence before me, the differences in location, context, and road characteristics are such that no meaningful comparison can be drawn. In any event, I have determined this proposal on its own merits.

Conditions

17. I have made some amendments to the Council's suggested conditions in the interests of clarity and to ensure compliance with the Framework.
18. In the interest of certainty, I have included a plans condition. To support the rural tourism industry, it is necessary to include a condition restricting the pitches to holiday accommodation.
19. A condition restricting movements would not be likely to pass the tests of enforceability and would not be necessary in this instance.

Conclusion

20. For the reasons given I conclude that the appeal should succeed.

J Hills
INSPECTOR