



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 September 2025

by Jonathan Price BA(Hons) DipTP DMS MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 September 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/J0540/W/25/3368574

Home Farm, Guntons Road, Newborough, Peterborough PE6 7RU

- 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 Chris Fletcher against the decision of Peterborough City Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/01432/FUL.
 - The development proposed is demolition of agricultural building and erection of no. 1 dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The Council accepts its second refusal reason over the lack of an up-to-date ecological survey can be suitably addressed through a pre-commencement condition. I am satisfied that this is achievable and so this issue falls away. A further condition could ensure the prior demolition of the agricultural building benefitting from the fallback permission¹, should the appeal succeed. I accept there to be a greater than theoretical possibility of this approved development taking place, should this proposal not be allowed. Having had regard to the case law cited², the real prospect of this becomes a material consideration in this case and informs the main issue in this appeal.

Main Issue

3. Whether material considerations would indicate a decision otherwise than in accordance with the development plan, with particular regard to the existing fallback situation.

Reasons

4. The proposal relates to a farmyard largely cleared of its original structures, apart from a redundant agricultural building to the rear of the site. An approved replacement of the demolished farmhouse fronting the road has yet to be built. A residential caravan currently occupies the site. This proposal is for a second new dwelling fronting the road and would be adjacent to the approved replacement farmhouse. It would be of a simple rectangular form, of a similar character to the approved barn conversion to the rear.

¹ Council reference 22/01047/FUL

² *Mansell v Tonbridge and Malling BC & others* [2017] EWCA Civ 1314

5. The appeal site is along a straight road within the flat terrain of arable fenland to the side of urban Peterborough. This landscape provides long, open views across fields and is punctuated by relatively few trees, small amounts of ribbon housing and sporadic buildings mainly related to farming. Policy LP2 of the Peterborough Local Plan³ (LP) establishes a settlement hierarchy which guides the location and scale of development. The appeal site is within countryside outside Peterborough Urban Area boundary and defined village envelopes. Here residential development is restricted to rural exception sites allowed under Policy LP8 and conversions, replacements and essential rural worker's accommodation allowed under Policy LP11. Working alongside Policy LP2, Policy LP3 provides a spatial strategy for the location of residential development, focusing the majority in the urban area of Peterborough and extensions to it, with a lesser amount within villages.
6. This LP policy framework helps to protect the character of the landscape, by maintaining and reinforcing the distinction between built-up areas and countryside. By steering most new housing development to those larger places that offer the best access to services and facilities, both now and for the foreseeable future, it also helps reduce the need to travel, as well as making best use of existing infrastructure and previously developed land in built up areas. These policies are not peripheral to the LP. They form part of a central objective to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, through the provision of homes in a sustainable manner, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).
7. The LP is reasonably up-to-date and remains consistent with the policies of the Framework. These include avoiding isolated homes in the countryside, making as much use as possible of previously-developed land, focusing significant development on locations which are or can be made sustainable and recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. Although the proposal is just for a single dwelling and its individual degree of harm is proportionate to this, the conflict with a core part of the LP remains a matter of substantial weight.
8. Planning law requires this appeal be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The appellant accepts that this proposal conflicts with these aforementioned policies in being within the countryside and not meeting any of the exceptions that might provide support. My decision thus turns on whether the lesser harm of the proposal compared to the fallback scheme would outweigh this policy conflict.
9. The consented scheme is deeper into the site. Although quite prominent in approaching views, the conversion of this existing barn would cause limited harm to landscape character, given this includes isolated features. There would need to be a longer access into the site, but there is no reason to consider this would involve an unsightly engineered feature. A conventional gravelled drive, with suitable landscaping, would mean the fallback scheme would not cause a significantly greater degree of landscape harm than that proposed. The appellant greatly overstates the impact of the fallback scheme, which would not result in an incongruous pattern of development, given the sporadic arrangement of buildings in this open, farmland landscape. Conversely, replacing this barn conversion with a similarly designed building closer to the road would provide no appreciable public benefit by contributing positively to the character and local distinctiveness of the

³ Peterborough Local Plan 2016 to 2036 Peterborough City Council adopted 24 July 2019

area, relative to Policy LP16 over design and the public realm. The scheme would not replicate the farm buildings that once occupied the site and provides no heritage benefits in this regard.

10. A new build might provide better thermal performance than could be achieved by the conversion. However, the appellant has not accounted for the embodied energy differences between converting an existing building and constructing an entirely new dwelling. The energy conservation benefits, compared to the fallback option, would weigh only modestly in favour of the proposed scheme.
11. In the location proposed, a dwelling would be less affected by noise and disturbance from the resumption of farming activity on this site and have less impact on operations. However, this is a private commercial consideration and the appellant is not bound to implement the extant permission were this to significantly hamper agricultural activities. Any public benefits in this respect are negligible and confer very little positive weight to this proposal.
12. That the site historically contained other farm buildings, and that the demolition of the remaining barn means this proposal creates no net increase in built form across the site, is a further factor I consider lends little weight in favour of this scheme.
13. The public benefits of the proposed dwelling over the fallback development are quite marginal. The factors advanced would be heavily outweighed by the harm found from allowing a new dwelling both contrary to and undermining the adopted spatial strategy over the location of new housing.

Conclusion

14. The proposal would conflict with the LP as a whole and the material considerations advanced would not indicate a decision otherwise than in accordance with this. As a consequence, I conclude the appeal fails.

Jonathan Price

INSPECTOR