
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 September 2025

by Elaine Moulton BA (Hons) BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 September 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/K3415/W/25/3363547

**Huddlesford House Farm, Huddlesford Lane, Huddlesford, Lichfield,
Staffordshire WS13 8PY**

- 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 Andrew Cope against the decision of Lichfield District Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/00842/COU.
 - The development proposed is change of use of agricultural building to form 2no. dwellinghouses with associated works including demolition of plant room and erection of replacement extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The main parties agree that the proposed development is not inappropriate in the Green Belt. Based on the evidence before me, I concur.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether appropriate living conditions would be provided for the future occupiers of the proposal with particular regard to noise and disturbance experienced within the gardens.

Reasons

4. The appeal site forms part of a tightly knit cluster of agricultural buildings at a working farm. Close to the rear of the appeal building are several large partly open sided barns. Other farm buildings and silage compounds are also located close by.
5. At the time of my visit the open sided barns were housing a significant number of cattle. There was limited noise from within them, and the noise level in the vicinity of the appeal site was generally low. Accordingly, the evidence before me supports the conclusion that noise within the proposed dwellings could be suitably addressed through a mitigation scheme. Even so, given the very close relationship between the gardens of the new houses and the farm buildings, there is the potential for the occupants to experience significant noise and disturbance when using their private amenity space.
6. I acknowledge there has been a move from dairy to beef farming which reduces the volume of slurry and, due to factors including the removal of fixed plant, is quieter. However, although I did not experience much noise on my visit, that was a snapshot in time and was not necessarily representative of the conditions that

would be experienced by the occupiers of the proposed dwellings from within their gardens.

7. Even with the discontinuation of the use of the adjoining silage compound as well as the cessation of cattle storage within the nearest open sided barn as suggested by the appellant, it is credible to consider that the housing of cattle within the remaining barns could, on occasion, result in significant disturbance given the limited separation distance from the appeal site. Due to the large numbers involved, the movement of cattle in and around the appeal site could also be harmful to the enjoyment of the gardens as could other farm activity nearby. Furthermore, whilst cattle storage may not take place within it, the nearest open sided barn would remain on site and could be used for purposes that would also generate noise and disturbance.
8. Although a Technical Note has been provided, this does not contain a detailed impact assessment of the noise generated by the movement and housing of cattle near to the appeal site, and the effect this would have on the enjoyment of the proposed gardens. Accordingly, there is nothing before me that demonstrates that noise and disturbance would not be at an unacceptable level when experienced within the proposed private amenity space or could be made acceptable through mitigation measures.
9. Noise from farm animals and machinery is not unusual in rural areas and I acknowledge that the open sided barns will not be used all the time. It is reasonable to assume that there will be greater use of the barns during winter, when use of the gardens would be less frequent. However, as I observed on my visit, cattle are also housed within them during the summer period, when people would be more likely to be sitting out and enjoying their gardens. Accordingly, an unacceptable level of noise could be generated throughout the year.
10. As such, insufficient evidence has been submitted to demonstrate that the living conditions of the occupiers of the proposal, when using their gardens, would not be adversely affected by the activities within the working farm, including the storage of cattle. In addition, I cannot be certain that the living conditions of the occupiers of the proposal could, in this regard, be made acceptable through the imposition of planning conditions.
11. I note that 1 and 2 The Villas are located nearby. Nonetheless, the gardens to those dwellings are a greater distance from the agricultural buildings than the appeal site. As such, they are not directly comparable to the proposal, and, therefore, the absence of complaint from the occupiers of those properties does not provide a clear or convincing reason to allow the proposal. Furthermore, the general support for conversion of existing redundant buildings derived from Policy RA6.3 of the Lichfield Design Code does not justify the harm to living conditions that I have identified.
12. I therefore find that appropriate living conditions would not be provided for the future occupiers of the proposal, due to noise and disturbance experienced within the gardens. It would be contrary to Core Policy 3 and Policy BE1 of the Local Plan Strategy, adopted 2015, which seek to ensure that development is of a nature appropriate to its locality and protect the amenity of residents. It would also conflict with the similar aims of the Sustainable Design Supplementary Planning

Document and paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).

Other Matters

13. Based on the evidence before me, the appeal site lies within the Zone of Influence of the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation which is vulnerable to recreational disturbance. However, notwithstanding the submitted unilateral undertaking which could secure mitigation against any adverse impacts on this habitat site, because the scheme is unacceptable for other reasons, there is no need for me to consider the implications of the proposal upon it.
14. The Council has a 3.65-year supply of housing and, therefore, paragraph 11d) of the Framework applies. This states that planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when considered against the policies of the Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.

Planning Balance

15. The proposal would contribute to the Government's aim of boosting the housing supply. However, as only two dwellings are proposed, it would not address the Council's under delivery and consequent shortfall in housing in a meaningful way. Furthermore, economic benefits arising from the conversion works, and from its occupation as dwellings, would be limited due to the small scale of the development. Accordingly, such benefits carry moderate weight in the planning balance.
16. On the other hand, the adverse impacts I have identified in respect of the living conditions of the future occupiers of the proposal would be substantial and long lasting and would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits in this case. As such, the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in paragraph 11d)ii) of the Framework does not apply.

Conclusion

17. The proposed development conflicts with the development plan when considered as a whole and there are no material considerations, either individually or in combination, that outweigh the identified harm and associated development plan conflict.
18. I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Elaine Moulton

INSPECTOR