



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 November 2025

by Jonathan Price BA(Hons) DipTP DMS MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/W3520/D/25/3373659

Woodlands Farmhouse, Bildeston Road, Ringshall, Suffolk IP14 2LY

- 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 C Drinkald against the decision of Mid Suffolk District Council.
 - The application Ref is DC/25/01539.
 - The development proposed is erection of detached cartlodge building, garden gazebo, new entrance gates to vehicular access and installation of below ground LPG storage tank.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed insofar as it relates to the erection of a detached cartlodge building and new entrance gates to vehicular access. The appeal is allowed insofar as it relates to the other two elements of the development proposed and planning permission is granted for garden gazebo and installation of below ground LPG storage tank at Woodlands Farmhouse, Bildeston Road, Ringshall, Suffolk IP14 2LY in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref DC/25/01539, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with drawing nos 25/395-01 (in respect of the garden gazebo and installation of below ground LPG storage tank only) and 25/395-03.

Preliminary Matter and Main Issues

2. Like the Council, I find no harm to arise from either the proposed garden gazebo or the installation of a below ground LPG storage tank. These elements are entirely separable from the remainder of the proposal and so a split decision is feasible, based on the following main issues. These are whether (i) the accommodation proposed within the cartlodge would be appropriate in relation to development plan policy for the provision of such, and (ii) the new entrance gates and detached cartlodge would preserve the setting of the grade II listed Woodlands Farmhouse.

Reasons

(i) Annex policy

3. The Grade II listed Woodlands Farmhouse occupies very spacious grounds and is in the advanced stages of extension and refurbishment. Prior to reaching the farmhouse, the

entrance drive runs between a large, modern storage building and a much smaller structure closer to the dwelling, which might have once been a granary. The cartlodge would be sited on the opposite side of the entrance drive to the smaller building and farmhouse, against the nearer gable end to the large storage building. Supported on green oak posts and beams, the roof space would provide studio/annex accommodation served by an end staircase and located above four open sided car parking bays. The closed sides would be clad with stained timber boarding, with a tiled roof above. The roof space accommodation would be lit by two windows, one in an end gable and the other within a front dormer.

4. Policy SP03 of the Joint Local Plan¹ (JLP) addresses the sustainable location of new development. According to the supporting text, restricting most new development where it would be located beyond defined settlement boundaries recognises the intrinsic character of the countryside, reduces the need to travel and supports good access to facilities and services. This site is within the countryside, outside of either a defined settlement boundary or development allocation. Neither what is now paragraph 84 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) nor any made Neighbourhood Plan applies. Therefore, the cartlodge proposal falls to be addressed by any applicable policy listed in Table 5 below JLP Policy SP03. As the cartlodge proposes residential annex accommodation within the roof space, JLP Policy LP02 is relevant.
5. The supporting text preceding JLP Policy LP02 acknowledges that the creation of annexes, whether inside or outside settlement boundaries, can create additional accommodation for a dwelling and help to create more flexible use of the accommodation to respond to changing family circumstances over time. It continues by stating that residential annexes should be designed so that they are ancillary in use and scale to the main dwelling unit and provide genuinely flexible accommodation that can be adapted and re-adapted to meet the changing needs of an extended family over time. This should include the option of absorbing the annex back into the main dwelling accommodation, if necessary, by the same or future occupiers. To meet these requirements, it is essential that the main and annex accommodation are either directly connected by an internal link or have a close spatial relationship with shared facilities and space.
6. The planning history provided in the Council's report refers to the two-storey rear extension to Woodlands Farmhouse, now nearing completion, incorporating an annex for elderly relatives, suggesting that such a need might already have been met². Even if this has not been provided, the cartlodge provides a significant amount of floorspace for further such annex accommodation within a fairly substantial building that is set some distance apart from the main house. As such, the accommodation would not be sufficiently subordinate in scale to the host dwelling to gain the support of part 1 a) of JLP Policy LP02. Neither is it designed to easily allow the annexe to be integrated later into the main building as a single dwellinghouse when the accommodation need no longer exists, given its position away from the farmhouse. It thus also fails to satisfy part 1 c) of this policy.
7. For these reasons, the proposal would not gain the support of JLP Policy LP02 as a residential annex and be in conflict with Policy SP03 over the sustainable location of new development. The harm found derives from this proposal undermining the rationale for this policy. As this is consistent with the Framework in respect of achieving sustainable development, the policy conflict is attributed significant weight. On this basis, the

¹ Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan Part 1 adopted in November 2023.

² Council references DC/23/01103 and DC/23/01104.

accommodation proposed within the cartlodge would not be appropriate in relation to development plan policy for the provision of such.

(ii) Setting of Woodlands Farmhouse

8. The significance of Woodlands Farmhouse as a designated heritage asset derives not just from its physical presence, but also from its setting. As a historic farmhouse, its open rural location relates to its significance as a designated heritage asset. Because of the relatively long drive serving the property, the road entrance is some distance apart from the main dwelling. Nevertheless, the character of this main entrance provides a significant announcement to that of the farmhouse. Although not overly ornate, the new entrance is provided by three substantial brick pillars, capped with reconstituted stone, supporting separate timber pedestrian and automated vehicular gates. The rather formal and suburban character of this new entrance bears little relation to the rusticity of the sixteenth and seventeenth century farmhouse and, as its main entrance, would set a discordant tone. Furthermore, there is no architectural or historic support for the design of cartlodge proposed, which due to its large scale and atypical dormer design would compete harmfully with the character and appearance of the listed farmhouse, detracting further from its currently better preserved setting.
9. The new entrance gates and cartlodge would have an inharmonious impact on the setting of Woodlands Farmhouse, detracting from its significance as a designated heritage asset. Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservations Areas) Act 1990 requires I have special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of this listed building, which this proposal would fail to achieve. The level of heritage harm would be less than substantial, and the Planning Practice Guidance recommends the extent of this be clearly articulated. I concur with the Council that there would be a low to medium level of such less than substantial harm.
10. Irrespective of the level of harm, Framework paragraph 212 advises that, when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Paragraph 215 states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. There are no appreciable public benefits deriving from this proposal to weigh against a low to medium level of less than substantial harm. Assessed against the Framework and JLP Policy LP19, I find that the detached cartlodge and new entrance gates would fail to preserve the setting of the grade II listed Woodlands Farmhouse, which weighs further against the acceptability of these parts of the proposal.

Conclusion

11. As part of a split decision, I conclude that the garden gazebo and installation of below ground LPG storage tank be allowed, subject to the standard three year time limit and plans compliance conditions. However, for the reasons given, the appeal is dismissed insofar as it relates to the detached cartlodge and new entrance gates.

Jonathan Price

INSPECTOR