



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 October 2025

by **A. J. Boughton MA (IPSD) Dip.Arch. Dip.(Conservation) RIBA MRTPI**
an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26 November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/W2845/W/25/3370998

Grey Barn Farm, Wappenham Road, Lois Weedon, Towcester NN12 8FN

- 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 and Mrs P Neville against the decision of West Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application Ref 2024/5681/FULL.
 - The development proposed is Formation of hardstanding and change of use of land for the siting of a Shepherd's hut for holiday accommodation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for Formation of hardstanding and change of use of land for the siting of a Shepherd's hut for holiday accommodation at Grey Barn Farm Wappenham Road Lois Weedon Towcester NN12 8FN in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 2024/5681/FULL, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plan: 2416.10.
 - 3) Prior to the first use of the hardstanding hereby permitted, details of the following matters shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority:
 - The appearance, colour and size of the proposed Shepherds Hut,
 - The location of visitor parkingThe use of the development hereby approved shall thereafter accord with these approved details unless otherwise amended with the written agreement of the local planning authority.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the open countryside and
 - whether the proposal would comprise sustainable development having regard to the provisions of the development plan and national policy.

Reasons

3. The proposal would involve the construction of a small area of hardstanding to station a 'Shepherds Hut', this being a wheeled structure designed to accommodate holiday visitors. Being a four-wheeled trailer-type vehicle (also without permanent connection to utilities) the 'Shepherds Hut' (Hut) itself is not a building for the purposes of Sections 55 or 57 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 [TCPA]. However, the appellant seeks permission both for the construction of the hardstanding and for the change of use of the parcel of land concerned such that the Hut may be permanently located for holiday use.

Character and appearance

4. The appeal site is a very small parcel of land at the edge of a large field set within open countryside which is notably rural and empty other than the existing cluster of farm buildings which lie some 60m to the north. Although the Council suggest the hardstanding would be an uncharacteristic feature, due to its nominal size within an expanse of grassland it would be no more apparent than any of the agricultural items scattered around that I observed in my visit. I do not consider the hardstanding itself would either be uncharacteristic or have an urbanising effect as it would be at ground level. However, the use of the land for the purpose sought would introduce a new feature in an otherwise wholly agricultural environment and, potentially, additional activity and parking for visitors.
5. The appellant has provided images of a 'Typical Shepherds Hut' (Hut) which, due to its small size¹ and setting against the adjacent hedge/treeline along the western edge of the field, would be apparent but not prominent. As the proposal will be set within the established agricultural use of the land for grazing and rearing of livestock which necessarily introduces vehicles and equipment to the setting of the proposed Hut I consider the visual or landscape impact of the introduction of a single unit such as that described, would be minor subject to matters of size, colour, and introduction of users vehicles being suitably controlled. Overall, I find little conflict with Policy SS2 of the South Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2 2011-2029 (SNLP) which seeks to set out general principles for development.

Tourism and Farm Diversification

6. Policy E7 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2014 (WNJCS) acknowledges the importance of tourism to the local economy and whilst the proposal would not generate additional employment and any economic benefit to local businesses would be small, the proposal would align with Policy R2 of the WNJCS which seeks to support farm diversification in that it would contribute to the operation and viability of the farm holding. Noting Paragraph 125 (a) of the NPPF, the proposal would be an effective use of rural land in that it would improve public access to the countryside and support the rural economy with negligible impacts upon the tranquillity, character and appearance of the location, as my previous paragraphs explain. Given the importance of supporting growth in a sustainable manner, the benefits of the proposal, although small, should attract significant weight to the extent that these benefits are not outweighed by environmental and social harm. There would be a small number of additional journeys to and from the

¹ 4.8mX 2.3m x up to 2.5m high

site, but these would be consistent with the normal pattern of activity generated by an agricultural holding.

7. I have found no measurable disbenefits would arise from the proposal, and overall, the proposal would accord with the development plan. Consequently, taking into account all matters raised, my reasoning directs that the appeal should succeed subject to the usual timing and plans condition together with conditions to ensure certainty as to size, colour and visitor parking.

Andrew Boughton

INSPECTOR