
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 December 2025

by **H Marriott MPlan MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 December 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/W3520/W/25/3373577

Snowdrop Cottage, Norton Road, Great Ashfield, Suffolk IP31 3HJ

- 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 L Finch against the decision of Mid Suffolk District Council.
 - The application Ref is DC/25/02641.
 - The development proposed is for the use of building as dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the appeal site is suitable for use as a dwelling having regard to the development plan.

Reasons

3. The appeal site relates to an existing building known as 'The Cartlodge', situated adjacent to Snowdrop Cottage. Planning permission was originally granted in 2010 for The Cartlodge, comprising a store and games room/ancillary accommodation¹.
4. Permission was subsequently granted for its use as a holiday let² (the holiday let permission). Condition 4 of that approval restricts the building to holiday use only, not as a main place of residence, and requires an up-to-date register of guests to be maintained. The reason for this condition was due to the site's location outside of any area where planning permission would normally be forthcoming for residential development, and to support tourism and the economy of the area.
5. There is no dispute between the main parties that the appeal site is located in the countryside, outside of any defined settlement boundary. Policy SP03 of the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan – Part 1 (2023) (LP) restricts development in such locations to specific circumstances, including compliance with policies listed under 2. c). The explanation to this policy states that development needs to be accommodated in settlements where the need to travel can be reduced, through good access to facilities and services. It also makes reference to the importance of recognising the intrinsic character of the countryside.
6. Among the policies listed under 2. c) is Policy LP04 of the LP, which supports conversions subject to meeting the requirement of parts 2 and 3 of that policy. Part 2 requires proposals to demonstrate that the structure is capable of

¹ Council ref: 2948/10 Demolition of existing brick store and erection of cart lodge and store

² Council ref: DC/20/05061 Conversion of and external alterations to detached garage to form holiday let; erection of front porch.

accommodating the use and the development would reuse redundant or disused building and enhance its immediate setting. Part 3 sets out additional criteria, including in relation to character and appearance, amenity, access and parking. Both parts broadly align with Paragraph 84 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).

7. In relation to part 2 of Policy LP04 of the LP, I observed during my site visit that the structure of The Cartlodge is physically capable of accommodating the proposed use. The appellant contends that the building is redundant or disused, as it has never been used as a holiday let and is currently unused. However, in my view, redundant or disused implies that the building is surplus to requirements or no longer needed for its intended purpose. While the appellant may not wish to operate the holiday-let, or even retain the building in its previous use should the holiday let permission only be part implemented, this does not in itself, demonstrate it is redundant or disused in land use planning terms.
8. Furthermore, limited details of additional landscaping have been provided, and it has not therefore been demonstrated that that such planting would amount to an enhancement of the immediate site setting. The proposal would not represent the subdivision of an existing residential building as additionally referred to in Paragraph 84 of the Framework since this should be taken to mean the subdivision of one physical building rather than a wider residential unit encompassing other buildings.
9. The proposal would broadly comply with the criteria listed in part 3 of Policy LP04 of the LP, primarily because the building already exists and the development would have no discernible effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding countryside. However, this does not negate the need for compliance with part 2 of Policy LP04.
10. Policy LP13 of the LP states that the Council will only support the removal of a holiday occupancy condition if evidence is provided that there is no demand for the ongoing use of the tourist accommodation, evidenced by sustained marketing for 6 months. While the proposal does not seek to remove a holiday occupancy, the effect of the proposal would be the same. Even though The Cartlodge has never been used for that purpose, no substantive evidence of sustained marketing has been submitted to demonstrate that there is no demand for the use of The Cartlodge as tourist accommodation.
11. The site's location, combined with the lack of footpaths along Norton Road and Ashfield Road, and its distance from the nearest settlement of Elmswell, would result in occupiers being isolated from everyday services and facilities. Although cycling may be an option, occupiers would remain heavily reliant on private vehicles. While this would also apply to holiday guests, permanent residents are likely to generate more frequent trips to a wider range of services, such as schools and healthcare.
12. Consequently, the proposal would conflict with Paragraph 84 and 110 of the Framework, as it would not meet any of the circumstances for allowing isolated homes in the countryside and would fail to promote sustainable patterns of growth, including promoting walking and public transport use.
13. I conclude that it has not been demonstrated that the appeal site is suitable for use as a dwelling having regard to the development plan. In this regard, it would be contrary to Policies SP03, LP04 and LP13 of the LP for the reasons outlined above.

Other Matters

14. Matters relating to biodiversity net gain, contamination, heritage, flood risk, parking, access and living conditions are not in dispute. The proposal would deliver an additional dwelling and, in environmental terms, would avoid the need for a new build, making use of an existing structure and land already occupied by a building. Occupiers would help to sustain local services and community facilities. It would make a modest contribution to the Council's housing supply and could provide accommodation suitable for first time buyers, families or those wishing to downsize. However, the Council can currently demonstrate a housing land supply in excess of five years, and there is no evidence of a critical need for additional housing in this location. In this context, these factors do not justify the harm identified.

Conclusion

15. The proposal conflicts with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

H Marriott

INSPECTOR