
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 January 2026

by R Sabu BA(Hons), MA, BArch, PgDip, RIBA, ARB

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 2 February 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/D3505/W/25/3367919

Valley Farm, Flowton Road, Flowton, Suffolk IP8 4LH

- 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 T Hitchcock against the decision of Babergh District Council.
 - The application Ref is DC/25/00116.
 - The development proposed is single storey annexe ancillary to house.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for single storey annexe ancillary to house at Valley Farm, Flowton Road, Flowton, Suffolk IP8 4LH in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref DC/25/00116, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

Preliminary Matters

2. I note the description of development in the decision notice. However, I have taken the description from the application form for the banner heading and decision above, in the interests of certainty.
3. The Council determined the scheme on the basis of Block Plan - Proposed 02C and Floor Plan - Proposed 422-04E. I have therefore necessarily assessed the scheme on this basis.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is whether the proposal would accord with the Council's development plan strategy for residential annexes.

Reasons

5. Policy LP02 of the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan-Part 1 November 2023 (LP) supports residential annexes where the proposal a) Is ancillary and subordinate in scale to the host dwelling; b) Does not involve the physical subdivision of the residential curtilage; and c) Is designed to easily allow for the annexe to be integrated later into the main building as a single dwellinghouse when the need no longer exists.
6. The supporting text for the Policy states that the creation of annexes, whether the host dwelling is located inside, or outside settlement boundaries can create additional accommodation for a dwelling and can help to create more flexible use of the accommodation to respond to changing family circumstances over time.

7. It goes on to say 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. The text adds that it is essential that the main and annexe accommodation are either directly connected by an internal link or have a close spatial relationship with shared facilities and space.
8. The main farmhouse at Valley Farm is sited at the end of a driveway. The proposed annex would be located to the north of and perpendicular to the farmhouse. It would be sited in close proximity to the farmhouse, adjacent to a shared wall and store building. There are farm buildings nearby that are arranged such that they face a parking area that would be shared with the annex. The proposed annex would also face the shared parking space.
9. Accordingly, given the arrangement of the farmhouse, farm buildings and proposed annex around a shared parking space in the farm yard, and the single access drive for these buildings, the proposal would have a close spatial relationship with the surrounding farmhouse and farm buildings and have a shared parking area and access.
10. The proposed annex would contain a bedroom as well as a bathroom, kitchen and living area. As such, it would contain the facilities for independent living. However, the rear access to farmhouse is sited in close proximity to the proposed annexe and a door in the side elevation of the proposed building would facilitate access to the host building. From the evidence, the annexe would be for use by a family member in connection with the succession arrangements of the farm. In the long term the proposed building would provide additional accommodation for the farmhouse. Therefore, the proposal would provide functional support to the main dwelling. Accordingly, the proposed annex would be physically and functionally ancillary to the main dwelling.
11. In addition, the annex would be significantly smaller than the main farmhouse in height and footprint. The scheme would therefore be ancillary and subordinate in scale to the host dwelling and meet the first criterion of LP Policy LP02.
12. There is a wall to the north of the farmhouse, which the proposed annex would be attached to. The wall would restrict some views between the farmhouse and the annex. However, given the close proximity between the two buildings, and that there would be access from the annex to the farmhouse, the wall would not hinder any external connection between the buildings or shared parking area and access.
13. There is also a wall that separates the area to the front of the house that faces the driveway, from the rear garden area. In addition, the evidence indicates that there are windows of the farmhouse that directly face the garden area that would be shared with the annex. Therefore, it is unlikely that the existing wall would be used to create a separate garden space for the farmhouse. Accordingly, the proposal does not involve the physical subdivision of the residential curtilage. Moreover, the scheme does not propose separate gardens or parking areas. I am therefore satisfied that the proposal would accord with the second criterion of LP Policy LP02.
14. Given the siting of the annex and that it would be joined to the wall near the farmhouse, I see no reason why modest interventions could not allow the building to be integrated into the main dwelling in the future. Accordingly, the proposal would accord with the third criterion of LP Policy LP02.

15. Consequently, the proposal would accord with the Council's development plan strategy for residential annexes.

Other Matters

16. Valley Farm is Grade II listed and the existing building proposed to be demolished is not curtilage listed. The farmhouse has 16th century origins with later alterations. Its significance, insofar as it relates to this appeal, lies in the evidence of historic vernacular rural architecture and evidence of the evolution of a historic farmstead. The proposal includes the demolition of the existing outbuilding and construction of an annex. Given the form, materials, scale and massing of the proposal, it would not result in harm to the setting or significance of the listed building.
17. I note the comments of the Inspector for the case at All Saints Barn. However, as the proposed annex in that case was located away from the main house with separate vehicular access, parking and garden, it is not directly comparable with this appeal and has not altered my overall decision.
18. Given my findings above, the proposal would not constitute new housing. Therefore, LP Policies SP03 and LP01 are not directly relevant to this appeal.

Conditions

19. The conditions relating to time limit and specifying plans are necessary in the interests of certainty.
20. The conditions relating to external materials, eaves and verge, fenestration, flues and mechanical ventilation, boundary treatments and hard surfacing are necessary to safeguard the significance of the listed building and character and appearance of the area.
21. The condition relating to biodiversity is necessary in the interests of enhancing biodiversity on site.
22. A condition restricting the occupation of the building is necessary in order to comply with LP Policy LP02. I have amended the suggested condition to remove wording that are not necessary.

Conclusion

23. For the reasons given above, the appeal should be allowed.

R Sabu

INSPECTOR

SCHEDULE OF 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: Site Location Plan, Proposed Plan And Elevations 422-04E, Proposed Block Plan-02C.
- 3) No development above ground level shall take place until details of the external facing materials to be used in the development have been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. The submission shall include details for all external walls, roofing materials, and any cladding proposed. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to first occupation of the development.
- 4) Prior to the installation of the roof, details of the eaves and verge shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The submission shall include appropriately scaled drawings showing the design and finish of the eaves and verges. The approved details shall be implemented in full prior to first occupation of the development and retained as such thereafter.
- 5) Prior to the installation of any fenestration, fenestration details shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The submission shall include scaled elevations and cross-sections showing the design, materials and finishes of all windows and doors. The approved fenestration shall be installed in full prior to the first occupation of the development and retained as such thereafter.
- 6) Prior to the installation of any flue or mechanical ventilation equipment, details shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The submission shall include the location, dimensions and materials of the proposed flue and any external ventilation grilles or units. The approved equipment shall be installed in full prior to the first occupation of the development and retained as such thereafter.
- 7) Prior to the commencement of any external landscaping works, details of all new boundary treatments and hard surfacing shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. The submission shall include scaled plans and specifications showing details of all hard surfacing areas. The approved boundary treatments and surfacing shall be implemented in full prior to the first occupation of the development and retained as such thereafter.
- 8) No development above ground level shall take place until a scheme of biodiversity enhancement measures have been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. The biodiversity enhancement measures shall include the following:
 - a) detailed designs and/or product descriptions for biodiversity enhancements;
 - and b) locations, orientations and heights for biodiversity enhancements on appropriate drawings.

The approved measures shall be implemented in full prior to the first occupation of the development and retained as such thereafter.
- 9) The building hereby permitted shall not be occupied at any time other than for purposes ancillary to the residential use of the dwelling known as Valley Farm.