



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 January 2026

by **A. J. Boughton MA (IPSD) Dip.Arch. Dip.(Conservation) RIBA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 February 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/K0425/W/25/3375513

Rockwell End House Farm Rockwell End Lane Henley on Thames RG9 6NF

- 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 A Reid against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/06137/FUL.
 - The development proposed is Change of use of existing agricultural livestock barn to a mixed use of agriculture and private use only equestrian (retrospective).
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for Change of use of existing agricultural livestock barn to a mixed use of agriculture and private use only equestrian (retrospective) at Rockwell End House Farm Rockwell End Lane Henley on Thames Buckinghamshire RG9 6NF in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 25/06137/FUL, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Location and Site Plan (received on 6th June 2025).
 - 2) The building which is the subject of the change of use hereby permitted shall only be used for agriculture and/or the private recreational keeping of horses and must not be used for commercial equestrian purposes including for, or in connection with, any form of riding or livery establishment or any competitive equestrian event or demonstration including shows or gymkhanas.
 - 3) Within six months of the date of this permission a scheme for internal and external lighting of the building which is the subject of the change of use hereby permitted, shall be completed, such scheme having been previously submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include the location and orientation of all external light fittings, whether existing or not, together with measures to time-limit the hours of operation of such lighting. No other floodlighting or other forms of external artificial lighting shall be installed on or adjacent to the building without the written permission of the Local Planning Authority.

Application for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mr and Mrs A Reid against Buckinghamshire Council and this is the subject of a separate Decision.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development on the established rural character of the area.

Reasons

4. The development to which this appeal relates is for the mixed use of a Building originally permitted for the accommodation of livestock and their management. I observed that the Building sits within a substantial group of buildings within a large active farm as set out in the submissions and is plainly ancillary to that primary agricultural use, notwithstanding the presence of some horses elsewhere on the landholding¹.
5. The appellant points to the capacity of the Building in terms which relate it to the size of their sheep herd. It is clear that such a building may be *necessary* for certain agricultural purposes in the context of a wider agricultural use, even if those activities, such as lambing or shearing, take place for only a small part of the year notwithstanding that such a building may be otherwise little used. In this case the additional use proposed would make use of the Building at times when it is not required for agricultural purposes although that might flexibly include other agricultural activities, given the nature of farming.
6. Neither party has addressed the proportionality of the two uses but given that the horses involved are in the ownership of the appellant, that they occupy stables on the land and are not used for any commercial purpose I do not consider, notwithstanding the number of horses involved, that the effect of the introduction of horses to an existing building at times when it would not be required for agricultural purposes would have a material effect upon the primary use of the wider landholding.
7. The Council² refer to conflict with policies DM44 and DM45 of the Wycombe District Local Plan (2019). Whilst these are plainly important in terms of protection of the countryside, its openness and to the character of the Chilterns National Landscape, I have not identified any planning harm would arise from how the Building would be used in this case. There would be no additional traffic nor could the occupation of the Building from time to time by horses which are lawfully on the wider site and already apparent to residents and users, affect the established rural character of the land surrounding the Building. Other than the matter of lighting, which can be addressed by condition, I find the effect of the mixed use would be limited to an increase in activity within the building but to an extent that would not cause any material harm to the established rural character of the area or local setting of the building.
8. I note the objectors' reference to a number of factors with assertions which are contradicted by the appellant. It is not before me to consider the alleged incompatibility of two uses taking place at different times, nor to look behind the original grant of consent for the Building. The use of bridleways or pathways cannot be a material consideration, nor is it the case that a planning application being made retrospectively is a reason to refuse permission.

¹ Noting implemented permission for stabling near to the Building

² And some objectors

9. Having taken all matters raised into account I therefore conclude that there would be no conflict with the policies of the development plan such that the appeal should succeed subject to conditions. The Council have put forward suggested conditions which I have considered. No timing condition is relevant where the development has already taken place. Having regard to the legitimate concerns as to the impact of lighting my reasoning indicates that a scheme should be approved which incorporates any existing illumination and prevents further lighting changes; a condition to ensure the use is limited in the terms of the use sought is also necessary.

Andrew Boughton

INSPECTOR