



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 February 2026

by N Bowden BA(Hons) Dip TP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 February 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/F3545/W/25/3373801

Golden Farm, Farley Green, Wickhambrook, Suffolk CB8 8PX

- 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 Claydon against the decision of West Suffolk Council.
 - The application Ref is DC/25/0965.
 - The development proposed is a. one self-build/custom dwelling with detached outbuilding for office and store (following demolition of existing buildings) b. landscaping and associated works c. improvements to existing vehicular access.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have used the description of development used by the Council in its decision notice and as it appeared on the appeal form. This is because the description provided on the application form contained references to matters which are not acts of development.
3. Neither the Council nor the appellant provided details of the fallback scheme. I have therefore used the Council's online planning records to fully establish the fallback position. Despite this not being presented in evidence, as it is available online, I am satisfied that this has not prejudiced any party.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are:
 - 1) whether the site is in a sustainable location for the proposed new dwelling, and
 - 2) if there are objections to the location of the development, whether there are any other material considerations that outweigh such concerns.

Reasons

Sustainability of location

5. The appeal site is located in rural area which is set outside any defined residential settlement boundary shown on the Proposals Map or listed under policy SP13 of the West Suffolk Local Plan (WSLP). Policy SP12 of the WSLP explains that areas outside of a defined housing settlement boundary are to be regarded as countryside and will be protected from unsustainable development.

6. The site is approximately 1.5 to 2Km from the nearest settlements of Wickhambrook and Cowlinge and it is connected to these by predominantly narrow, single-track roads which feature no pedestrian footways or street lighting. Even then, these settlements remain small and are likely to cater to little more than the most essential of day-to day services. Moreover, there is no evidence before me to suggest that there are any forms of public transport infrastructure serving the site or area.
7. The site is therefore in an unsustainable location and the construction of a new dwelling in this location would conflict with policies SP12, SP13, LP41 and SP21 of the WSLP insofar as it would not protect the countryside from unsustainable development.

Other considerations

8. Notwithstanding the objection to the proposal as set out above. The appellant has highlighted that prior approval¹ exists for the re-use of barns that are existing on the site. This was granted under the provisions of Class Q of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).
9. It is put forward by the appellant that this prior approval represents a fallback position and is therefore a material consideration. The fallback position comprises the conversion of six buildings that exist on the site to four dwellings (including demolition of two). This was granted in March 2025 and remains extant. Conditions requiring further approval of the Planning Authority have not been discharged. Even so, there is no significant impediment to these conditions being agreed and no evidence has been presented to suggest that this would represent an unrealistic proposition.
10. The fallback position would result in the retention of four of the existing buildings on the site. These, however, are modestly sized structures. They are single storey, of varying sizes and forms but typically constructed in a mix of materials ranging from brick under pitched roofs to metal Nissen hut style structures in corrugated metal. Conversely, the proposal is for a large two storey detached dwelling, over two floors with projecting single storey wings to either side and including front projecting element. Whilst it would be a single building, it would be significantly larger and much more imposing than the modestly sized buildings that exist on the site at present.
11. However, this proposal is only for a single home whereas the extant prior approval scheme is for four dwellings. This means that there would be a lesser number of new homes being created in this unsustainable location. Therefore, from a sustainability perspective, this current proposal is less harmful than the prior approval scheme.
12. On balance, the fallback position is therefore more harmful than this proposed dwelling. This amounts to a significant material consideration and must weigh strongly in favour of granting permission for the proposed development.
13. Nevertheless, the prior approval scheme remains extant, and it would be physically possible to carry out both developments at the same time, at least in

¹ Council ref: DC/24/1856/P3QPA

part. This is because two of the buildings to be converted to dwellings occupy differing positions on the site to the proposed dwelling, indeed, one is to be retained as an office/store.

14. There is therefore a risk that both schemes could be part implemented and this cannot be satisfactorily resolved through the use of a condition on any planning permission. Two of the barns could be converted to dwellings, and, in addition, this proposed dwelling could be built. This would undermine the reasons why I am otherwise minded to grant permission for this proposal as it could result in three dwellings in an unsustainable location in remote countryside and create in an even greater visual impact in this sensitive rural location.
15. Therefore, a signed and executed planning obligation would be required to prevent both permissions being implemented. No planning obligation to secure this has been provided. In the absence of a completed planning obligation that rescinds the fallback position, the proposal is an unsustainable form of development and conflicts with policies SP12, SP13, LP41 and SP21 of the WSLP.

Conclusion

16. Whilst I have considered the fallback position and have found that this proposal would be less harmful in sustainability terms; there is no mechanism to ensure that both schemes cannot be part implemented at the same time. Accordingly, 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.
17. The appeal is dismissed.

N Bowden

INSPECTOR