



# Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 August 2010

by Hilary Lock BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State  
for Communities and Local Government

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Decision date:  
13 September 2010

**Appeal Ref: APP/V2635/A/10/2124630**

**Adjacent Saltgate Farm, Islington Road, Tilney All Saints, Norfolk, PE34 4RY**

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by J Goodley & Sons Ltd against the decision of King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council.
- The application Ref 09/01175/F, dated 29 June 2009, was refused by notice dated 15 October 2009.
- The development proposed is the conversion of stable to dwelling with detached garage.

## Decision

1. I dismiss the appeal.

## Main Issues

2. I consider the main issues to be (1) the principle of the proposed development, having particular regard to planning policies for sustainable development in rural areas; and (2) the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the existing building and the surrounding area.

## Reasons

### *Sustainable Development*

3. The appeal property sits within a cluster of buildings originally associated with Saltgate Farm. The former farmhouse is now three dwellings, and outbuildings in separate ownership have been converted to offices and a dwelling. The appeal building is a single-storey brick-built structure which is currently used for storage and parking, and is centrally located within the building group. This complex is remote from any settlement and stands as an isolated group in the wider landscape. There are sporadically sited dwellings along this road, outside the central cores of the two neighbouring villages.
4. The national principles aimed at achieving sustainable development are set out in Planning Policy Statements 1 and 7 (PPS1 and PPS7). The latter supports the re-use of appropriately located and suitably constructed existing buildings in the countryside where this would meet sustainable development objectives. It indicates that re-use for economic development purposes will usually be preferable, but residential conversions may be more appropriate in some locations, and for some types of building. This is also raised in Policy EC12 of Planning Policy Statement 4, but the primary objective of this document is to secure uses which support economic development. Reinforcing PPS1, PPS7

indicates that the focus for most additional housing in rural areas should be on existing towns and identified service centres.

5. The appeal site is not located close to any settlement offering a range of services and facilities, and future residents are likely to be reliant upon use of the private car to meet most of their daily needs. Whilst I note the location of the nearest bus stop, the lack of public footpaths to reach it would not encourage its use. As a matter of principle, I consider that the building is not in a sustainable location for residential use.
6. I note that planning permissions for residential conversion of neighbouring buildings have been granted in the past, and I also acknowledge the appellants' views on the merits of those buildings. I have also considered the other local barn conversions cited by the appellants, and note their distance from settlements. However, I have limited information regarding the specifics of these cases and the circumstances of their determination, but dealing with this development on its own merits and in the context of current planning policy, I conclude that the proposed conversion of the building for residential use would not constitute sustainable development, contrary to the aims of PPS1 and PPS7.
7. Policy SS1 of the East of England Plan is no longer in force since the revocation of Regional Spatial Strategies.

#### *Character and Appearance*

8. There is limited information provided to indicate that the appeal building is of any particular historic merit, but it forms an integral part of this group of buildings. As such, it has some value in visual terms, and is visible in the street scene and wider setting. As identified above, PPS7 supports the re-use of rural buildings in certain circumstances, such as where they contribute to local character. In my view, the value of the appeal building is primarily in the contribution it makes to the group as a whole, appearing as a subservient and ancillary building associated with the original farmhouse.
9. However, significant works would be required to convert the building to habitable use, including a first-floor extension to create bedroom accommodation. PPS7 indicates that new development in the countryside should be strictly controlled, and the proposed extension would be excessive in the context of a rural building conversion. I acknowledge efforts to minimise the height of the resultant building, but I consider that the addition would unacceptably dominate this simple single-storey structure. The resultant building would have greater visual impact on the street scene and the setting to which this building contributes. I do not consider that this harm would be outweighed by the proposed demolition of a modern outbuilding, the benefits of which would be partly offset by the proposed garage/workshop.
10. I conclude that the proposed development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the existing building and the surrounding area, contrary to the principles of PPS7.

*Other Matters*

11. I note the appellants' view that the building is unsuited for non-residential uses. However, there is insufficient evidence to indicate that tourist accommodation would be any more vulnerable to flooding than the proposed use, or that shared access for business use would materially harm the living conditions of neighbouring residents. Moreover, as the intended use is dependent on the proposed first-floor bedroom accommodation in order to address flood risk, this reinforces my view that the building is not appropriate for residential conversion within the context of PPS7.

**Conclusion**

12. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

*Hilary Lock*

INSPECTOR

