



The Planning Inspectorate

An Executive Agency in the Department of the Environment and the Welsh Office

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Mrs M A Foy
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Your Ref:

Our Ref:
T/APP/A1910/A/95/254181/P8

Date:

-2 JAN 1996						
PLANNING DEPARTMENT						
DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL						
Ref.						ack.
EXP	FORM	IN	USE	NO	FILE	TA
Received - 3 JAN 1996						
SECTION 78 AND SCHEDULE 6						

Dear Madam

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990
APPLICATION NUMBER 4/0015/95

1. I have been appointed by the Secretary of State for the Environment to determine the above mentioned appeal. This appeal is against the decision of the Dacorum Borough Council to refuse planning permission in respect of an application for the conversion of redundant agricultural building to residential use at barn adjoining Pear Tree Cottage, Lower Icknield Way, Wilstone, Herts. I have considered the written representations made by you, by the Council and the Tring Rural Parish Council. I have also considered those from interested persons including those made directly to the Council and forwarded to me. I inspected the site on 28 November 1995.

2. From the written representations and my inspection of the appeal site and its surroundings, I find that the main issue in this appeal is the effect of the development on the appearance and character of its rural landscape setting.

3. The development plan in this case is the Dacorum Borough Local Plan which was adopted in April 1995. The plan allows for appropriate reuse of redundant buildings in the countryside subject to general policies requiring details of matters such as appearance, access and parking to be satisfactory. Environmental guidelines, which development should normally meet, are set out in the Local Plan. The appeal site is within a Landscape Conservation Area where Policies 89 and 91 state that new development proposals will be expected to make a positive contribution to the landscape and proposals which are considered to be insensitive or visually obtrusive will normally be refused. More specifically, Policy 100 permits the conversion of redundant buildings in the countryside if the building is of a substantial nature and worthy of retention and there would be no substantive change to its character and appearance. Buildings considered worthy of retention are defined as those which are not detrimental to the landscape and amenity of the surrounding area. Appropriate new uses must cause no adverse effect on the character and appearance of the building being retained.

4. Pear Tree Cottage is situated on the southern side of the B489 which runs along the foot of the Chiltern Hills. It lies just outside Wilstone village in a rural setting and adjacent to the embanked Wilstone reservoir. This appeal concerns a small timber barn which is attached to the side of the cottage. The appeal site includes open areas both to the front and rear of the building which are partly used for the raising of poultry and contain a number of pens and sheds. The submitted drawings show vehicular access being obtained via an existing gateway from the B489 into the rear of the site.

5. When assessing this application against Local Plan Policy 100, I took into account the views of the Tring Rural Parish Council and the Tring Park Estate that the building was not worthy of preservation. However, I found that this small building was of agricultural appearance and subsidiary to Pear Tree Cottage itself. In my opinion it is not detrimental to the landscape, amenity or character of the surrounding area and, on the basis of these criteria, consider that it is worthy of retention in the terms used by this policy.

6. I saw on site that the building was small with limited headroom on the upper floor. The submitted scheme involves its conversion into a 3 bedroomed house with the insertion of 3 dormer windows on the rear elevation. There would also be 2 french windows on this side as well as smaller windows and a door. On the roadside elevation there would be a single window, rooflight and door with a further window on the end gable. Windows would be diamond glazed and the roof recovered in slate with timber cladding to the walls.

7. Bearing in mind the very small and simple nature of the existing building, I consider that this conversion scheme would involve a very substantive change to its character and appearance. In particular, the dormers would increase its bulk and the many diamond pane windows of horizontal proportions would make it look like a suburban house. This building occupies quite a prominent and isolated position in the landscape, being visible from the lane descending the hill from Little Tring and also from public footpaths which cross the site leading to the reservoir. I consider that the proposed design would be insensitive to the character and appearance of the area and would therefore not comply with the requirements of Local Plan Policies 89 or 100 nor of Policy 91 which seeks to maintain and enhance the character of Landscape Conservation Areas.

8. The possibility of using a more simple design without dormer windows and involving fewer, smaller clear glazed openings has been the subject of correspondence between yourself and the local planning authority. Suggestions for improving the design were sent to you in the form of a sketch accompanying the authority's letter of 25 April 1995. You subsequently returned your own drawing under cover of a letter dated 28 April 1995. I have taken that drawing as being part of your submitted plans but cannot treat the authority's sketch as part of your application.

9. Having carefully considered the revised scheme in your drawing dated 28 April 1995, I find that it retains dormer windows, albeit of smaller size, which I consider would still create a substantive change to the building's character and appearance and would not comply with the Local Plan's environmental guidelines. Furthermore, the lack of scale and detail of the drawing does not allow me to be certain of the proportions and appearance of some of the windows shown. Although you suggest that clearer scale plans would be submitted if planning permission were granted in principle, I regret that I am not able to consider plans which are not part of the application with which I am dealing now. For these reasons, I

consider that this amended conversion scheme would be harmful to the rural character and appearance of this locality, contrary to the development plan.

10. You have submitted a number of photographs of other barn conversions which show the use of dormer windows and varied fenestration. However, I accept that many of these are not within Dacorum District and that they may be in less prominent landscape locations than the present appeal site. I am also aware that Pear Tree Cottage has itself been enlarged as part of its renovation but, as this is an existing dwelling, considerations are somewhat different from your case which involves the creation of a new dwelling in the countryside. These points therefore give me no reason to suppose that the District Council does not normally apply the requirements of the Local Plan to other conversion schemes.

11. Further points have been raised by the District Council concerning the visual aspects of access and parking. While your application does not show the full details of these matters, I consider that suitable arrangements could be agreed at a subsequent stage if the conversion scheme had been acceptable now. However, I am firmly of the opinion that the visual impact of the present proposal would be harmful to the landscape setting of this locality and that this justifies the refusal of planning permission. Having taken into account all the representations, there are no matters of greater weight than those which have led to my decision.

12. For the above reasons, and in exercise of the powers transferred to me, I hereby dismiss this appeal.

Yours faithfully



MRS J JONES MA DipTP MRTPI
Inspector

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL



Application Ref No. 4/0015/95

Mavis Ann Foy
26 Goldfield Road
Tring
Herts

DEVELOPMENT ADDRESS AND DESCRIPTION
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Barn adj Peartree Cottage, Lower Icknield Way, Wilstone

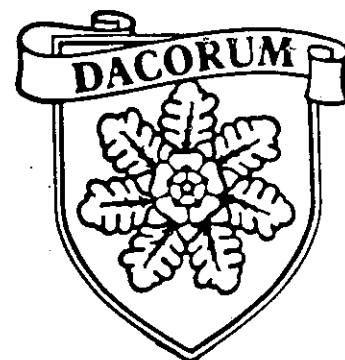
CONVERSION OF REDUNDANT AGRICULTURAL BUILDING TO RESIDENTIAL USE

Your application for *full planning permission* dated 30.12.1994 and received on 10.01.1995 has been **REFUSED**, for the reasons set out on the attached sheet(s).

Director of Planning

Date of Decision: 01.06.1995

(ENC Reasons and Notes)



REASONS FOR REFUSAL
OF APPLICATION: 4/0015/95

Date of Decision: 01.06.1995

1. The proposal conflicts with Policy 100 of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan which requires that if buildings are to be converted there should be no substantive change to their character and appearance. The proposal would dramatically alter the simple agricultural appearance of the existing building to the detriment of the appearance of the building and the area.
2. The site lies within a Landscape Conservation Area wherein insensitive development proposals which would harm the character, appearance and high visual quality of the area will be refused. The proposed development, including the curtilage and access track, is unacceptable in terms of Policy 91 of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan as it would harm the appearance and high visual quality of the area.