



**Department of the Environment**  
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P J Fountaine Esq  
27 Castle Street  
BERKHAMSTED  
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Your reference

Our reference

T/APP/5252/A/76/9282/09

Date

11 MAY 77

Sir

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1971, SECTION 36 AND SCHEDULE 9  
APPEAL BY MR R A MACDONALD  
APPLICATION NO:- 4/0653/76

1. I refer to this appeal, which I have been appointed to determine, against the decision of the Dacorum District Council to refuse planning permission for conversion of existing barn and outbuildings to dwelling at Bottom Farm, Berkhamsted. I have considered the written representations made by you and by the council and also those made by interested persons. I inspected the site on 2 February 1977.
2. From my inspection of the site and its surroundings and from the representations made, I consider that the determining issue is the effect of the proposal on the rural character and amenities of the area.
3. The proposal would create a new dwelling out of 2 agricultural buildings now used mainly for breeding dogs. Apart from the former farmhouse on the site and 2 other houses nearby the proposed development would be completely isolated in attractive and secluded countryside, the unspoilt character of which would in my opinion suffer if further residential development were to be permitted. The proposal would also be contrary to approved development policy because it would constitute isolated sporadic development in a rural area which is of no notation in the development plan. A further objection is that the site is within an area proposed in the Structure Plan for inclusion in the metropolitan green belt in which the severe green belt policy restrictions on inappropriate development are applicable, and having considered the matter I find no reason to question that it has been appropriately included pending a decision on the green belt proposals as a whole.
4. But these objections must be weighed against other considerations. In the first place the development would not be a new building but would make beneficial use of existing buildings no longer required for agriculture. There would be virtually no extension of the existing development or need for additional mains services, and the attractive old barns and associated outbuildings would be properly maintained in a way which might not otherwise be possible and with the probability of enhancement of their appearance. Secondly, your client bought the property about 1963 in near derelict condition and has considerably improved it. His children have grown up and are marrying but the family wish to continue living


together and therefore require more accommodation. In my opinion it would not be easy to subdivide the ownership of the property because of its layout and it would be reasonable in the circumstances to extend the residential use into the outbuildings as proposed rather than to enlarge the existing dwelling.

5. I consider that on balance there are sufficient advantages in this proposal to outweigh the relatively small effect it would have on the character of the area. As to amenities, I do not consider that the additional traffic generated by the proposal would sufficiently disturb or otherwise incommode the likely users of the narrow lane which leads to the site, and becomes a bridlepath beyond it, for the development to be unacceptable, and having taken account of all the other matters raised in written representations, I conclude that the proposal should be permitted.

6. For the above reasons, and in exercise of the powers transferred to me, I hereby allow this appeal and grant planning permission for conversion of existing barn and outbuildings to dwelling at Bottom Farm, Berkhamsted in accordance with the terms of the application (No 4/0653/76) dated 14 June 1976 and the plans submitted therewith, subject to the condition that the development hereby permitted shall be begun not later than 5 years from the date of this letter.

7. This letter does not convey any approval or consent which may be required under any enactment, byelaw, order or regulation other than section 23 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971.

I am Sir  
Your obedient Servant

  
A H W SANDES MA CEng MICE  
Inspector



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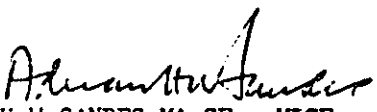
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