



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 August 2026 by L Clark MSc MRTPI

Decision by John Morrison BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 September 2026

Appeal Ref: 6009463

Lowgate Farm, Lowgate, Tydd St. Mary, Spalding PE13 5PF

- 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 Nathan Dack against the decision of South Holland District Council.
 - The application Ref is H21-1138-25.
 - The development proposed is conversion of two brick-built barn buildings to form a single family dwelling (barn A) and associated garage (barn B).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Preliminary Matters

3. Policy S5 of the most recent version of the National Planning Policy Framework allows for the reuse of an existing building outside of a settlement provided that it is of a permanent and substantial construction. This is a similar position to that set out in Policy 23 of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (LP). I am therefore satisfied that the arguments of the main parties will not be prejudiced by me proceeding to consider the appeal scheme without further consultation with them.
4. The description above is taken from the decision notice. It differs from the application form, but is more precise and concise as to the development proposed. I have taken into account the following which is explained on the application form: this self-build development comprises the conversion of two brick-built barn buildings to form a single family dwelling (barn A) and associated garage (barn B). There are multiple agricultural buildings on the site, those for conversion are towards the south-west corner. The wider site once accommodated a farmhouse, but this was demolished many years ago. The buildings now proposed for conversion were originally part of the wider farmstead.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the principle of the proposed development with particular regard to the extent of works required to facilitate the conversion.

Reasons for the Recommendation

6. The appeal site is part of a farmyard situated in the countryside, surrounded by open fields, outside of Tydd St Mary. There is a small group of dwellings opposite. The farmyard comprises several agricultural buildings. Two of which are subject of this appeal. The larger building is an open fronted barn with a brick rear elevation and a partially collapsed side elevation. It is adjoined to another building. A smaller detached one is proposed to be used as a garage. The roof of the larger comprises corrugated metal sheet cladding fixed over timber trusses and steel columns. The smaller is also predominantly brick with a corrugated sheet roof.
7. Policy 23 of the LP is concerned with the reuse of buildings in the countryside for residential purposes and explains that their conversion to residential use will be permitted provided that, amongst other things, they are structurally sound and capable of conversion without the need for significant extension, alteration or rebuilding. The Council does not object to the scheme on the remaining criteria of Policy 23 and I have no reason to disagree. The reasoning behind the exception criteria in Policy 23 follows a general restriction on new development in the open countryside, largely as part of the encouragement of sustainable patterns of such wherein it is first directed, hierarchically, to those areas and settlements that have ready access to the range of services on which it would rely.
8. The larger building is fully enclosed on two of its elevations. It is entirely open to one of its longest elevations on its front and only partially enclosed on the other side elevation. It could therefore not reasonably function as a dwelling without an entirely new front and, more likely than not, a rebuild of one side due to the obvious damage. The roof covering is to be replaced which accounts for another substantial part of the current building and resulting dwelling. Numerous new openings would be created. Whilst elements of the existing building would be incorporated into the dwelling and evident in the scheme visually, works to create a dwelling would be significant and account for the majority rather than minority of the scheme as a whole. They would also involve the primary element of the eventual dwelling. The proposals therefore strike me as more the incorporation of what is currently remaining on site rather than the re use or conversion thereof in the true sense.
9. The buildings would not therefore be capable of a conversion to residential use without operations that would amount to significant re-building. Furthermore, I have not been provided with sufficiently compelling evidence to be satisfied that the existing roof structure would be capable of supporting the additional weight of a new roof. Those supports may also need to be replaced. If this is not the case, then the works in totality would still amount to something closer to a new build than a conversion. The proposal would thus go beyond what is reasonably necessary for a conversion and would involve significant alteration and rebuilding. It would therefore be contrary to the position of Policy 23 of the LP which is concerned with the principle of development in the countryside. Specifically, the conversion and re use of buildings therein.

Other Matters

10. The appeal process is impartial. Any pre-application advice is given without prejudice to the final outcome of either a planning application or subsequent appeal.

11. Some of the examples cited have involved replacement or rebuilding works. I have been provided with a floor plan for each and some accompanying delegated report extracts which do not give me enough evidence to make a meaningful comparison as to the precise extent of the rebuild and the integrity of each building in the context of the pre conversion situation. Nor do I have the full depth and detail of what other matters were taken into account when they were deemed acceptable as conversion schemes. The examples provided do not therefore sway me to recommend allowing the appeal as each situation has to be determined on its own merits, having regard to the particular circumstances of each individual case.
12. Amendments to the Biodiversity Gain (Town and Country Planning) (Amendments and Transitional Provisions) (England) Regulations 2026 came into effect on 6 August 2026. They removed the self and custom build exemption for mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) contributions. No legal agreement has in any event been submitted to secure the proposal as a self-build project and the matter would therefore carry very limited weight against any under or over supply of such plots. That being said, and even if a planning obligation had been submitted and the scheme would be exempt from BNG for that or another reason, it would not weigh in favour of the appeal given it would be a response to a legislative requirement to offset impact and the harm that I have found regarding the main issue.
13. No objections with regard to highway safety, amenity, drainage, ecology or flood risk would be a lack of harm and would not weigh in favour of the appeal scheme. The same can be said for compliance with the other aspects of Policy 23 of the LP and that the scheme would be acceptable for the use of a non-designated heritage asset. Furthermore, I remain to be convinced that the appeal scheme would be the sole way of preserving the building based on the limited range of options or proposals therefore before me.
14. I appreciate there is a reason for the proposals and that they are grounded in a desire for future generations of the appellant's family to live at the appeal site. This is however personal and in the absence of any further supportive evidence as to precisely why this might need to be the case rather than be preferred, I can ascribe it only limited weight.

Conclusion and Recommendation

15. For the reasons given above, the appeal scheme would conflict with the development plan, and material considerations do not indicate a decision other than in accordance therewith. I therefore recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

L Clark

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

16. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

John Morrison

INSPECTOR