

LAMBOURN 18/00062/FUL Pins Ref 3211821	Keeps Cottage Woodlands St Mary Hungerford Andrew Werrell	Erection of outbuilding and change of use from ancillary domestic to office use	Delegated Refusal	Dismissed 4.1.19
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### Procedural Matter

The application was originally submitted as “*change of use from ancillary domestic to office use*”. However, the Council noted that the building involved was materially different to that previously permitted and, with the agreement of the appellant, revised the description to the one set out above. The Inspector therefore used this amended description.

### Main Issue

The Inspector considered the main issue in this case to be the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

### Reasons

Permission was granted for a garden store (under permission 09/00248/HOUS) in the same location as the building the subject of this appeal. However, it is clear that this building was constructed differently to that shown on the permitted plans. It is taller, contains a first floor, is clad in dark stained timber, includes a rooflight and has door and window openings in different locations and framed with white PVCu. The appeal proposal seeks permission for the building on site and also to change its use to office use.

The Inspector viewed the site from a number of different positions, including from the single track road that serves it, from the B4000 and from the B4001. He noted that there are clear views of the building the subject of this appeal from several places along the B4001 north of the M4 and from the B4000 to the north of the appeal site. These latter views were through the roadside hedge and would not be possible in the summer months, when the hedge would be in full leaf.

From all of these viewpoints, the white PVCu windows and doors in the appeal building were very noticeable and stood out starkly against the dark stained timber walls. In the Inspector’s opinion, these appear unduly prominent and incongruous in this rural setting and would harm the special character of the AONB, which is characterised by long distance views across areas of chalk uplands laid to grass. The appellant makes the point that permission would not be required to paint timber window frames white. That may be, but the frames in this building are not made of timber, and it is the combination of their colour and the material from which they are constructed that makes them stand out to the extent that they do.

The appeal building is very close to substantial evergreen trees and from all viewpoints is seen in conjunction with these. In his view, in this context, the building does not appear unacceptably high and nor is the rooflight, which does not have white PVCu frames, unduly prominent. However, this does not alter his opinion that the frames of the other windows and doors in the building make it unacceptably harmful as it stands.

During the Inspector’s site visit, he noted many of the other examples of rural buildings in the vicinity of the appeal site mentioned by the appellant. However, none of these featured the same combination of materials and prominence as the appeal site and, in any event, the Inspector must deal with each case on its merits.

The Council does not object to the proposed change of use of the building, and he saw no reason to disagree with it in this respect.

### Conclusion

The Inspector concluded that the proposal would have an unacceptably adverse effect on the character and appearance of the area, within the North Wessex Downs AONB, contrary to Policies ADPP5, CS14 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026).

For the reasons given above, he concluded that the appeal should be dismissed