# Couple faces demolition of £1 million home over unauthorised conversion in Cambridgeshire



A couple in Great Abington, Cambridgeshire, finds themselves on the brink of losing their newly built home—a luxurious £1 million property—due to a severe breach of planning regulations. Jeremy and Elaine Zielinski, who initially received permission to construct a two-storey commercial facility for stallion semen collection, transformed the interior into a desirable three-bedroom residence with exquisite views of the surrounding countryside. This significant deviation from their original application led to a council enforcement directive mandating the demolition of the property.

Despite the exterior meeting planning requirements, the couple’s disregard for the intended use of the building was clear, prompting council officials to intervene. A planning inspector concluded that the couple had consciously constructed a dwelling rather than a commercial space, framing it as a "flagrant breach" of planning policy. Such actions, as noted by local authorities, pose risks to established planning protocols that safeguard rural areas and community integrity.

In expressing their plight, Mrs Zielinski, aged 79, voiced her fears of becoming homeless, stating, "We want to carry on living here. It's a warm and comfortable home. I love it. It doesn’t make sense to tear it down. I don’t want to go and live in a caravan." Her husband, 73, echoed her sentiments, highlighting the emotional toll of the situation: “I have not had a decent night’s sleep in years.” These expressions underscore the distress that such decisions can inflict on families, particularly those with deep community ties and roots.

The Zielinskis’ appeal against the council's decision was rejected, and they now lament what they view as a disproportionate punishment for what they claim was a lack of awareness regarding planning rules. Their situation has drawn mixed reactions from neighbours, some expressing sympathy while others emphasise the importance of adherence to planning laws.

Additionally, there are broader implications surrounding planning regulations in the area. Recently, South Cambridgeshire District Council acknowledged its own errors in granting planning permission for other projects, promising to rectify these through High Court proceedings. These missteps indicate ongoing challenges within the local planning authority, raising questions about the consistency and transparency of decision-making processes.

Councillor Dr Tumi Hawkins, representing the council, highlighted the necessity of strict planning enforcement, stating his support for the inspector's decision as a crucial step towards maintaining rural development standards. This case serves as a stark reminder of the delicate balance between individual aspirations and communal obligations under regional governance.

As the Zielinskis face an uncertain future, the ramifications of their actions may extend beyond their immediate housing crisis, potentially affecting the local community landscape and influencing future planning policies in the region. This incident illustrates the intricate interplay of personal decisions within the framework of public law and the significant consequences that can arise when those boundaries are crossed.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1 - 1
2. Paragraph 2 - 1
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5. Paragraph 5 - 1, 3
6. Paragraph 6 - 1, 4, 2
7. Paragraph 7 - 1

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2058019/couple-told-tear-down-dream-1million-home-after-flagrant-breach-rules> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-cambridgeshire-54975229> - South Cambridgeshire District Council admitted to errors in planning decisions, including one involving new homes in Great Abington. The council plans to overturn these decisions through High Court proceedings, acknowledging mistakes in the approval process and apologizing for the oversight.
3. <https://www.localgovernmentlawyer.co.uk/planning/401-planning-news/45427-district-council-forced-to-go-to-high-court-to-deal-with-planning-permission-errors> - South Cambridgeshire District Council is initiating High Court proceedings to address planning permission errors. The council identified mistakes in applications for an extension in Steeple Morden and new homes in Great Abington, leading to the decision to overturn these approvals.
4. <https://www.cambridge-news.co.uk/news/local-news/south-cambs-council-defends-planning-20933970> - South Cambridgeshire District Council faces legal action over alleged misleading planning performance figures. The Fews Lane Consortium challenged the council's data, claiming inaccuracies in reporting planning application determinations, prompting an internal audit and public dispute.
5. <https://www.housepricecrash.co.uk/forum/index.php?%2Ftopic%2F251607-no-planning-permission-story%2F=> - A forum discussion highlights cases of individuals building homes without planning permission, including a £500,000 property hidden behind hedges. The discussion touches on the risks and potential consequences of such actions, referencing media reports on similar cases.
6. <https://www.brightslaw.com/site/library/legalnews/couple_ordered_to_demolish_house_built_without_permission.html> - A legal update discusses a case where a couple was ordered to demolish a house built without planning permission. The article outlines the legal proceedings and the implications of constructing a property without the necessary approvals.
7. <https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/planning-applications/planning-compliance/> - The Greater Cambridge Planning Service provides information on planning compliance, detailing what constitutes a breach of planning control, how to report such breaches, and the enforcement actions that may be taken. It emphasizes the importance of adhering to planning regulations.