



---

## Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 4 February 2025

by **H Smith BSc (Hons) MSc MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20<sup>th</sup> February 2025

---

### **Appeal A Ref: APP/W2845/W/24/3351974**

**The Grammar House, 19 Croughton Road, Aynho, West Northamptonshire  
OX17 3BE**

- 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 Ms Gaynor Voute against the decision of West Northamptonshire Council.
  - The application Ref is 2024/0697/FULL.
  - The development proposed is heritage style orangery to the rear of the property and reducing the size of an existing window.
- 

### **Appeal B Ref: APP/W2845/Y/24/3351977**

**The Grammar House, 19 Croughton Road, Aynho, West Northamptonshire  
OX17 3BE**

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
  - The appeal is made by Ms Gaynor Voute against the decision of West Northamptonshire Council.
  - The application Ref is 2024/0736/LBC.
  - The works proposed are heritage style orangery to the rear of the property and reducing the size of an existing window.
- 

## **Decisions**

1. **Appeal A** is dismissed.
2. **Appeal B** is dismissed.

## **Preliminary Matters**

3. As the proposal relates to a listed building which is within a conservation area, I have had special regard to sections 16(2), 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) (the Act).
4. The two appeals concern the same scheme under different, complementary legislation. I have dealt with both appeals together in my reasoning.
5. A revised National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) was published in December 2024 after the Council made its decisions. I have had regard to the revised Framework in reaching my decisions.
6. The Council's decision notices refer to Policy HE6. This policy relates to Conservation Areas. My determination of the appeals therefore includes reference to the Aynho Conservation Area (CA). I also note that the appellant commented on the CA in their Statement of Case. As such, my inclusion of this matter as a main issue would not prejudice any parties.

## Main Issues

7. A main issue in Appeal A and the main issue in Appeal B is:
  - whether the proposal would i) preserve the Grade II listed building, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, and ii) preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Aynho Conservation Area.
8. Additional main issues in Appeal A are:
  - the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of the occupiers, with regard to outlook, provision of light, and ventilation;
  - the effect of the proposal on the Special Landscape Area.

## Reasons

### *Special interest and significance*

9. The appeal site comprises a Grade II listed<sup>1</sup> former Grammar House, now a dwelling, dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. It is a large detached two-storey building positioned within spacious grounds. It is mainly constructed from squared uncoursed limestone with ironstone quoins with a stone tile roof with coped gables and kneelers. The building has a mix of ironstone mullion and transomed windows with leaded light glazing and a continuous hood moulding to both floors. The property has been much altered over time starting as a simple L shaped Grammar school.
10. Pertinent to the appeals, the rear of the building is a staggered arrangement of two gabled ranges with infill between. The 20<sup>th</sup> Century rear extension includes a single storey structure with a balcony feature above. Each of these elements represents different phases of the building's development over time. Nevertheless, the consistent use of coursed limestone rubble for walls and ironstone for the quoins and for the dressed stone that forms doorways, hoodmoulds and mullioned windows is evident. The rear doors are of timber joinery with single glazed leaded lights. Some of the windows are timber framed, but most are metal framed.
11. Whilst the rear elevation has been altered it nonetheless contributes to the appreciation of the architectural design, proportions and quality of materials which is typical of such buildings.
12. Given the above, I find that the special interest and significance of the listed building to be primarily derived from its historical illustrative and aesthetic design value, as a former Grammar House dating to the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. It is also derived from its character and appearance as a high-status dwellinghouse. Its age, historic fabric and architectural form and design, including its fenestration, all make important contributions to its special interest and significance.
13. The appeal site is located within the Aynho Conservation Area (CA). The Aynho Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (adopted 2015) states that Aynho is a rural village with Anglo-Saxon origins. Vernacular cottages and

---

<sup>1</sup> List Entry Number: 1040562 – Old Grammar School House, Grade II listed.

farmhouses built of local limestone dominate the CA. Many are two or three storey with slate or stone slate roofing and a few remaining examples of thatch. Towards the centre of the village there is a more intimate feel with restricted views and cottage dwellings sitting towards the front edge of their plot. From the central square, streets diverge to narrow lanes and alleyways. Limestone boundary walls, traditionally dry stone, are an important feature of the area. The special interest and significance of the CA mainly stems from the varying ages and architectural styles of its buildings that reflect the evolution of the village.

14. The appeal listed building is a high status building in the village that largely retains its overall external historic character and detailing and therefore makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the CA as a whole and thereby to its significance as a designated heritage asset.

#### *Proposal and effects*

15. The proposed extension would be situated to the western extent of the rear elevation of the listed building. Due to its considerable length and its single-storey height, it would occupy a significant portion of this rear elevation. Additionally, it would project deeply, extending nearly as far out as the building's existing rear extension. As a result, its scale would create a prominent and dominant addition to the historic fabric.
16. Furthermore, the flat roof design together with the projecting timber-framed hipped rooflights, would appear contrived and at odds with the character and form of the building's existing roof forms. The deep corniced parapet would give the extension a distinctly horizontal emphasis, while its rectangular box-like shape and expansive footprint would further accentuate its cumbersome appearance, which would not be softened by the large expanse of glazing.
17. The height of the proposal would sit uncomfortably between the moulded string course and the first floor windows, while also conflicting with the alignment of the bottom rail of the balcony balustrade. Additionally, its projecting rooflights would partially obscure the first floor windows. As a result, the proposal would fail to integrate harmoniously with the listed building, causing harm.
18. Even though the proposed glazing might reveal some elements of the historic building, the reflective nature of the glazing would unacceptably harm the special interest of the listed building. Moreover, the large glazing and uniform metal grid pattern would contrast sharply with the finer proportions and intricate design of the existing lead windows.
19. The property is multi-phased and, in this regard, the addition of a further extension would form a continuation of the evolution of the building. I also appreciate that the modern design of the proposed orangery would make an obvious contrast between old and new. However, the large size and distinctive design would result in an extension that would dominate and undermine the historic character of the listed building and would hinder the legibility of the building as a former grammar school.
20. An existing first floor window would have its cill level raised to accommodate the roof of the proposed extension. The evidence indicates that this window is part of the infill that was built in the late Victorian period. Although it is a later addition to the building, its form and design are clearly influenced by the building's historic

fenestration pattern. Reducing its size would appear as an obvious and clumsy alteration, disrupting the building's visual coherence. This is because subtle variations, such as material texture and colour, would reveal the window's original size, further undermining the building's authenticity.

21. I acknowledge that some of the materials used for the proposal, such as ashlar stone walls, would be sympathetic to the materials currently present on the listed building. Nevertheless, these acceptable aspects of the proposal would not justify the harm identified.
22. The appellant states that the proposed extension would be a light touch extension with minimal impact on the historic fabric of the building. However, insufficient information has been submitted as to exactly what is being proposed in this regard, and therefore a meaningful assessment cannot be made. As such, I cannot be certain that the proposal would not result in the loss of or damage to the listed building's historic fabric.
23. The appellant also indicates that, with the exception of the first floor window reduction, the proposed extension would be fully reversible. Nonetheless, it is likely that it would become a fixture of some considerable permanence. It would also cause harm when in situ.
24. Whilst I have regard to the comments concerning the visibility of the proposed extension, the significance of a listed building could be harmed whether or not proposed development and works are visible in the public domain.
25. I understand that a previous scheme for a glazed screen in the building's entrance area has been approved (ref: S/2017/0340/LBC). I have not been presented with the full details of this other scheme, but it appears that it was internal to the building. In contrast, the proposal would be externally located to the rear of the building and would not be appropriate for the reasons given.
26. By harming the listed building, the proposal would also fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the CA, albeit that the impact within the CA would be relatively localised.
27. Drawing the above together, I find that the proposal would not i) preserve the Grade II listed building, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, and ii) preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA. In doing so, it would harm the significance of these designated heritage assets.

#### *Public benefits and balance*

28. With reference to paragraphs 214 and 215 of the Framework, in finding harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the magnitude of that harm should be assessed. Given the extent and fairly localised nature of the proposal, I find that the harm to the significance of the designated heritage assets assessed above would be 'less than substantial' but nevertheless of considerable importance and weight. Paragraph 215 of the Framework requires this harm to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including where appropriate, securing the asset's optimum viable use.
29. In this case, economic benefits would be delivered through the manufacturing and construction phase and the general investment into the property. The extension

would reduce heat loss from the building to some extent and might reduce carbon emissions. However, these outcomes would be moderated by the extent of the scheme, but still weigh in favour of the appeals.

30. The appellant suggests that the proposal would improve the long-term attractiveness of the dwelling to meet modern day living requirements, which would include a closer connection to the garden, to ensure that the building is retained in high quality stewardship. Nevertheless, the proposal to enable additional accommodation for family use, would primarily be a private benefit to the occupants of the property.
31. However, I am not persuaded that the only way of securing such benefits would be via the proposal. Additionally, it has not been demonstrated that the property would not be usable or viable as a dwelling or that its future would be at risk if the appeals were to fail and the development and works as proposed were not implemented. In these respects, the identified harm to the significance of the listed building and the CA has not been clearly and convincingly justified as required by paragraph 213 of the Framework.
32. On balance, in giving considerable importance and weight to the harm to the significance of the designated heritage assets, I find that this would not be outweighed by the minor public benefits arising from the proposal.
33. I conclude that the proposal would not i) preserve the Grade II listed building, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, and ii) preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Aynho Conservation Area. It would therefore fail to satisfy the requirements of the Act and the provisions within the Framework which seek to conserve and enhance the historic environment. It would also conflict with Policy BN5 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) (adopted 2014), and Policies SS2, SDP1, HE1, HE5 and HE6 of the South Northamptonshire Part 2 Local Plan 2011-2029 (adopted 2020). Collectively, these policies amongst other things, seek to ensure developments conserve and enhance heritage assets, including their settings, and incorporates good quality design which respects the character and appearance of the building and the Conservation Area.

#### *Living conditions*

34. The Council is concerned that the proposed extension would result in the internalisation of two ground floor rooms which currently overlook the garden, and the loss of direct sunlight and ventilation would compromise the use of these rooms.
35. The amount of glazing in the proposed extension, alongside the proposed roof lights and strip roof light, would ensure that light is still received in the existing rooms. The larger room that would adjoin the proposal is a sitting room and has a large stone mullion window on the rear elevation serving it. Due to the size of the existing window, reasonable levels of light would be retained into the room from the orangery. Views of the garden would also still be possible through the proposed glazing.
36. In addition to the window in the rear elevation there is also a window in the side elevation of the building serving the sitting room, which would provide further

natural light into this room. The side facing window would ensure reasonable levels of ventilation into this room.

37. The other room that would potentially be impacted by the proposal is a utility room which is a non-habitable space. However, this room has an existing rear window and due to the proposal's extensive glazing and rooflights, the utility room would still experience adequate levels of natural light.
38. As a result, I am satisfied that adequate levels of daylight, ventilation and outlook would be provided by the proposal, and so no material harm would arise to the living conditions of the occupants. The proposal would thus comply with Policy SS2 of the South Northamptonshire Part 2 Local Plan 2011-2029 (adopted 2020), which seeks to ensure development results in a good standard of amenity for its occupiers in terms of light, outlook and natural ventilation.

### *Special Landscape Area*

39. The appeal site is located within the Ayhno, Cherwell Valley and Eydon Special Landscape Area as identified by Policy NE2 of the South Northamptonshire Part 2 Local Plan 2011-2029 (adopted 2020) (Local Plan).
40. However, the site is located within the built confines of the village and the proposal is contained by other built development. The proposal would be located to the rear of the building and would be largely obscured from public views. Consequently, the proposal would be seen in the context of the existing residential buildings and the setting of the village. I am therefore satisfied that it would not harm the wider Special Landscape Area. The proposal would thus comply with Policy NE2 of the Local Plan.

### **Other Matters**

41. I have taken into account the letters of support submitted. Nevertheless, these comments do not lead me to a different conclusion.
42. The appellant claims that orangery type structures are a common feature of many historic houses as a later phase of development. However, in this case, harm has been identified for the reasons explained.

### **Conclusions**

43. I have found that the development would preserve the living conditions of the occupants and would not harm the Special Landscape Area. However, for the reasons given, I conclude that the harm to the designated heritage assets would be unacceptable.
44. **Appeal A:** The proposed development would conflict with the development plan when taken as a whole. There are no material considerations which indicate that the decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, for the reasons given, I conclude that Appeal A should be dismissed.
45. **Appeal B:** For the reasons given, I conclude that Appeal B should be dismissed.

*H Smith*

INSPECTOR