



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 15 April 2025

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

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 1st May 2025

Appeal A Ref: APP/P4415/W/25/3359067

5 North Farm, The Dovecote, Ramper Road, Letwell, Rotherham S81 8DR

- 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 James Hall against the decision of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is RB2024/1261.
 - The development proposed is rear extension and minor internal alterations.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/P4415/Y/25/3359068

5 North Farm, The Dovecote, Ramper Road, Letwell, Rotherham S81 8DR

- 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 Mr James Hall against the decision of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is RB2024/1262.
 - The works proposed are rear extension and minor internal alterations.
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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.

Main Issues

6. The main issues are whether the proposal would i) preserve the Grade II listed building, or its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, and ii) preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Letwell Conservation Area.

Reasons

Special interest and significance

7. The appeal site relates to a former agricultural barn with dovecote and stable range, now dwelling, located in Letwell village. It is a Grade II listed building constructed from coursed, squared limestone with a clay pantile roof. The main form is an L-shaped arrangement comprising a two-storey former barn incorporating a three-storey dovecote, and an elongated one-storey wing.
8. Pertinent to the appeals, the building's rear elevation, to which the proposed extension would be attached, is single-storey and of rectilinear form. It is characterised by a limited number of openings and large expanses of uninterrupted solid stone walling and a clay pantile roof. Openings on this rear elevation include a garage door and a single door giving access to the dwelling's kitchen.
9. Notwithstanding the building's conversion to a dwelling and the various associated physical alterations, the historical form and agricultural function of the building is still discernible. The relatively simple form, use of traditional materials, rectangular footprint, and restrained architectural detailing indicate the historic status of this traditional rural building.
10. The listed building's immediate setting consists of a complex of former agricultural buildings, a courtyard area to the front, and spacious garden to the rear. The enclosed garden space is softly landscaped and allows the rear elevation of the building to be experienced and appreciated. The building's wider setting is mainly rural, with other residential buildings being situated to the south and south-east.
11. Having regard to the above, I find that the special interest and significance of the listed building are derived from its historic and architectural interests. These include its illustration of late 18th century and early 19th century farm buildings, traditional method of construction, its robust agrarian form, and surviving historic fabric. Special interest and significance also stem in part from its association and group value with the neighbouring Grade II listed former agricultural buildings and farmhouse, which have maintained their traditional agricultural character. Further significance is derived from the spacious grounds and the wider rural landscape setting.
12. The appeal site is located within the Letwell Conservation Area (CA). This part of the CA is characterised by dwellings mainly constructed of coursed, squared limestone. The buildings vary in appearance and scale, which is reflective of their different historic former uses and agricultural connections. Nevertheless, collectively they provide a consistent character, including construction from similar materials.
13. The special interest and significance of the CA mainly stems from the variety of architectural richness of its buildings that denote its evolution and the distinct form and layout of the village. The appeal building is located within the historic farmstead which has a prominent position in the village. It largely retains its overall external historic character and form, making 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

14. The proposal would introduce a modern single-storey extension to the rear of the appeal building. By virtue of its considerable depth, scale and bulk, the proposal would appear as a prominent addition to the historic fabric. Whilst it would be located to the rear of the building, it would dominate the proportions and simple plan form of the historic building, which has a linear arrangement. This imbalance in proportions would disrupt the visual harmony and character of the listed building.
15. Although the proposal's roof would feature tiles similar to those of the listed building, its pitched form would join the existing structure at a perpendicular angle, creating a t-shaped configuration. This arrangement would disrupt the building's linear simplicity, introducing a visual complexity that detracts from a key aspect of its architectural character.
16. Additionally, the proposed glazed conservatory would appear contrived and at odds with the listed building's rear elevation. Even though the glazed conservatory might reveal some elements of the historic structure, the reflective nature of the glazing would unacceptably harm the special interest of the building.
17. Therefore, the proposal's scale and massing, along with its extensive glazing, would create an overtly domesticated and conspicuous development, visually competing with the listed building and eroding its architectural integrity.
18. I acknowledge that the property already has glazing elements, such as the main barn basket-arched waggon entrance which has been infilled with glazing. However, the scale of these existing glazed elements is not as extensive as the proposal before me.
19. The appellant suggests that the proposal would reflect the building's agricultural heritage and points towards other examples of historic farmstead layouts. Even if I were to accept these differing agricultural forms as asserted, there is very little evidence to show that the scale and form of the proposal resembles that of a former agrarian structure. Therefore, I am not persuaded that this would represent a sound justification for the appeals proposal.
20. It is noted that the proposal would be built by specialist craftspeople using high quality materials, including oak. Nevertheless, I remain unconvinced that these attributes would overcome the more fundamental concerns I have identified regarding its scale and form.
21. The appellant contends that the proposal would be largely reversible. However, I find that the information regarding how the proposal would be attached to the host dwelling is lacking in detail. There is insufficient information regarding the new opening in the building's rear elevation to serve the proposed extension. Consequently, I cannot be certain that the proposal would not result in the loss of or damage to the listed building's historic fabric.
22. While I acknowledge that the proposal would be a contemporary design, for the reasons given, it would compromise the significance of the listed building.
23. Drawing the above together, I find that the proposal would not i) preserve the Grade II listed building, or its setting, or any features of special architectural or

historic interest which it possesses, and ii) preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Letwell Conservation Area.

Public benefits and balance

24. 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.
25. In this case economic benefits would be delivered through the manufacturing and construction phase and the general investment into the property. Social benefits would be generated by an improvement to the building's natural lighting and room layout. However, these outcomes would be moderated by the extent of the scheme, but still weigh in favour of the appeals. Nevertheless, the proposed extension to allow for additional living accommodation space for family use, would primarily be a private benefit to the occupants of the property.
26. 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.
27. 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.
28. I conclude that the proposal would not i) preserve the Grade II listed building, or its setting, or any features of special or historic interest which it possesses, and ii) preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the 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 CS23 of the Rotherham Local Plan Core Strategy 2013 – 2028 (adopted 2014), and Policies SP40 and SP41 of the Rotherham Local Plan Sites and Policies (adopted 2018). Collectively, these policies amongst other things, seek to ensure developments conserve and enhance heritage assets, including their settings.

Other Matters

29. I note the personal circumstances advanced by the appellant with regard to the need of the family member as set out in the appellant's statement of case. While I sympathise with the appellant's desire to create additional living space for their relative, I have borne in mind that the development and works would remain long after those circumstances have ceased to be material. In addition, there is no substantive evidence to suggest this cannot be achieved by other less harmful approaches. Therefore, whilst I acknowledge the personal circumstances of the

appellant, as well as the needs of their family member, I conclude that these are not matters which would justify the inappropriate development and works as proposed.

Conclusions

30. **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.
31. **Appeal B:** For the reasons given, I conclude that Appeal B should be dismissed.

H Smith

INSPECTOR