



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 June 2025

by **A Tucker BA (Hons) IHBC**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16th June 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/C1625/D/24/3349099

The Old Plume, Abbey Street, Kingswood, Gloucestershire GL12 8RN

- 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 John Hawkins against the decision of Stroud District Council.
 - The application Ref is S.24/0088/HHOLD.
 - The development proposed is conversion of the existing ground floor and attic to form a residential annexe.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. On 12 December 2024 the Government published its revised National Planning Policy Framework (Framework). Its content relative to the main issue of the appeal is largely unchanged. It has not therefore been necessary to give the parties opportunity to comment on the revisions.

Main Issues

3. The effect of the proposal upon the significance of the grade 1 listed building, known as Abbey Gatehouse and adjoining wall to east¹, which is also a scheduled ancient monument²; and whether it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Kingswood Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (LBCA) require the decision maker to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Additionally, Section 72 of the LBCA requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.
5. The Old Plume dates from at least the early 19th century, although its floor plan suggests earlier origins. The appeal relates to an ancillary wing that was previously a substantial two storey building but reduced in the 1980s to a single storey lean-to with attic. Although much altered it has a vernacular form and fenestration that is of value, and, with its attached neighbour, it gives the courtyard a traditional character and appearance.

¹ List Entry Number: 1238022

² List Entry Number: 1004872

6. The ancillary wing is attached to the Abbey Gatehouse at the rear. This highly significant building dates from the early 16th century and once served the Cistercian Kingswood Abbey, but is the only remaining building. It has a fine and decorative front façade that includes an elaborate carved lily that forms the mullion of the window that sits over the main arch and other religious carvings.
7. Its rear elevation is plainer, although the archways can still be appreciated from the rear, including their dressed stone surrounds. Apart from this the architectural quality of the building is less obvious and it is mostly obscured by the appeal building.
8. The Gatehouse has a high level of significance, which is derived in part from its fine architectural appearance, its high-quality historic fabric and its overall form that points to its original function. It stands in a central area of the village, and is surrounded by a dense network of vernacular buildings that are mostly domestic. They utilise similar materials but in a more restrained and functional way, and this contrast elevates the status of the building above its neighbours. These characteristics contribute to its historic setting.
9. The courtyard at the rear is more modest and understated. However, this is the space beyond the Gatehouse, and the ability to walk through the arch and into what would have been an enclosed precinct is of value. The appeal building and its attached neighbour are later buildings, but they give a sense of traditional enclosure to this space and are thus of some value to the setting of the Gatehouse.
10. The Kingswood Conservation Area (KCA) covers the historic core of the village. It is primarily comprised of a mix of vernacular buildings that are mostly domestic and densely developed. The area of the appeal site is dominated by the Gatehouse, and this is clearly a key contributor to the character and appearance of the KCA. Although to a much more modest extent, the traditional form and appearance of the appeal building and its neighbour are also positive components.
11. Evidence shows that the appeal building was altered significantly in the 1980s when it was reduced in scale. Thus, the current arrangement is not historic. However, the modest lean-to form of the building does not look out of place alongside the vernacular appearance of the adjacent dwellings, and it does not detract from the view of the rear of the Gatehouse.
12. The proposal would see the introduction of four flat roof dormer windows that would be sized to match the openings beneath. Aligning the dormers to the openings beneath would introduce a level of formality to the building that would be at odds with the vernacular character of The Old Plume.
13. Additionally, the flat roofed form of the dormers would not match the pitched dormers on the adjacent building. They would not be secondary to the openings below and the broad form of three of the dormers would fail to respond positively to the traditional proportions of openings on nearby buildings that have a vertical emphasis. Their poor appearance would be made worse by the lack of any subdivision to the glazing, whereas most windows in the nearby area are divided with glazing bars in a traditional fashion.
14. Thus, the proposal would harm the appearance of the building as a result of the position, design and form of the dormers. It would also modestly harm the setting

of the Gatehouse, by making the existing building more prominent and introducing dormer windows that would have a non-traditional appearance. There would also be a degree of harm to the character and appearance of the KCA, although given the discreet location of the proposal and the scale of the KCA, the level of harm would be small.

15. In terms of the Framework, the harm would be less than substantial but would nevertheless be of considerable importance and weight. Paragraph 215 of the Framework establishes that any harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
16. The proposal would provide additional accommodation for the occupants of the existing dwelling. This is a private benefit.
17. It would also include the removal of the existing garage doors. This would be a public benefit, as these are harmful components of the current building, and their removal would improve the appearance of the building.
18. I am however not satisfied that the removal of the garage doors is sufficient to outweigh the harmful impact of the proposed dormers, and Paragraph 212 of the Framework states that great weight should be given to the conservation of a heritage asset. The public benefits of the proposal would not be sufficient to outweigh the level of harm identified.
19. In summary, the proposal fails to meet the requirements of the LBCA, as it would harm the special interest of the listed building and fail to preserve the character and appearance of the KCA. It would also harm its setting as a scheduled ancient monument. It would fail to accord with Policy ES10 of the Stroud District Local Plan 2015, which seeks to ensure that proposals conserve and where appropriate enhance heritage assets.

Other Matters

20. The Council is of the view that the proposal should be assessed as a separate dwelling given its size and independence. This is however not what was applied for, and I have not therefore assessed the proposal on this basis. Therefore, Policy HC1 of the SDLP, which is mentioned in the Council's first refusal reason, is not relevant as it relates to the provision of housing.

Conclusion

21. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

A Tucker

INSPECTOR