
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 June 2025

by A Price BSc MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 1st July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/P1560/D/24/3352846

Grange Lodge, Wivenhoe Road, Alresford, Essex CO7 8BG

- 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 David Gowans against the decision of Tendring District Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/01024/FULHH.
 - The development proposed is described on the application form as 'proposed extension and repositioning of garage approved under 23/00934/FUL'
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on non-designated heritage assets.

Reasons

3. Grange Lodge is a two-storey detached building positioned south west of Wivenhoe Road at the entrance to the driveway of Alresford Grange, an Edwardian mansion house.
4. The Council has identified Grange Lodge and Alresford Grange as non-designated heritage assets (NDHA). Although not included on an adopted local list, I accept that the buildings do have some historical and architectural interest. I also note their inclusion as NDHAs in the adopted Alresford Neighbourhood Plan.
5. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) indicates that non-designated heritage assets are buildings, monuments, sites, places or areas identified by plan making bodies as having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets. Although the designation as a NDHA provides no statutory protection, paragraph 216 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) indicates that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application.
6. Having regard to the submitted evidence, I consider the significance of Grange Lodge, as a NDHA, to be largely derived from its local historic interest and architectural form. Despite having been substantially altered, it remains a good local illustration of a 20th century modest and purpose-built lodge building, to which its surviving historic fabric, simple architectural composition and association as an historic gatehouse to Alresford Grange all contribute.

7. I consider the significance of Alresford Grange, as a NDHA, to be largely derived from its historic and architectural interests, of which the use of traditional materials and construction techniques and its presence within expansive, verdant grounds all contribute. The grounds of Alresford Grange and the surrounding rural area, which includes the appeal site, form the setting of Alresford Grange. This setting makes a positive contribution to the significance of the NDHA.
8. Paragraph 216 of the Framework sets out that 'In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset'.
9. The proposed garage, essentially a repositioning of a previous approval, would sit comfortably within the site as a modest ancillary structure. This would not harm the significance of the NDHAs or the setting of Alresford Grange. It is the scale and design of the proposed extensions to Grange Lodge which would significantly alter the original building, marring its historic plan form and modest scale.
10. The proposed extensions would effectively mirror the existing lodge building. This is an atypical approach which would harmfully affect its legibility and erode its integrity. Moreover, the substantially increased scale of the building, and the design approach taken, is such that its ancillary functional connection with Alresford Grange would be compromised, harming the setting of that NDHA.
11. I accept that previously implemented, but what seem to be unfinished, extensions and alterations have substantially altered the external appearance of the gatehouse building. It is not for me to consider the acceptability or otherwise of those additions under this appeal. However, those alterations incorporate an asymmetrical design and relatively modest overall scale which ensures they remain a subservient feature of the original building. This, in turn, allows the modest lodge building to remain clearly perceptible. I do not consider that those previous changes have eroded the significance of the NDHA such that they justify the proposed development.
12. I also accept that the additions would be screened to a degree by existing boundary treatments, including a large gate at the entrance to the site, and mature trees. However, planting and boundary features cannot be relied on in perpetuity to give the same level of screening as at present. In any case, views of the proposed development would remain possible over and through gaps in boundary treatments, including from the entrance to the Alresford Grange.
13. Overall, in undertaking a balanced judgment, I conclude that the proposed development, namely the proposed extensions, would harm the significance of the non-designated heritage asset, Grange Lodge, and the setting of non-designated heritage asset, Alresford Grange. Accordingly, it would conflict with the objectives of paragraphs 210, 216 and 219 of the Framework, which in summary seek to conserve and enhance the historic environment. There are no local plan policies before me which would conflict with this objective.

Other Matters

14. The appellant sets out that other large properties exist within the surrounding area, and that the site has no statutory heritage designations. I have no reason to disagree with those findings. However, these are not reasons to automatically

allow any development at the appeal site, particularly where harm to a NDHA has been identified. These considerations have not altered my conclusion on the main issue.

Balance and Conclusion

15. I have found that the proposed development would result in harm to the significance of Grange Lodge and the setting of Alresford Grange as NDHAs.
16. Mindful of the advice set out in the PPG, I acknowledge that there are elements of the proposed development which would be of public benefit. Heritage benefits to Grange Lodge would accrue from the removal of some argued harmful alterations. There would also be some social and economic benefits brought about by improvements to the existing housing stock, investment into the property and the construction phase. The scale of the benefits would be limited by the extent of the proposed development.
17. Nevertheless, the primary outcome of the proposed development, namely the creation of additional accommodation, would be of private benefit to the appellant. There is no substantive evidence before me to demonstrate that similar heritage and public benefits could not be realised by an alternative scheme, or that the habitation of the building as a dwelling would be at risk if the appeal scheme failed.
18. Overall, I afford substantial weight to the harm I have identified and the conflict with the development plan when taken as a whole. Whilst I afford limited weight to the benefits referred to above, material considerations do not indicate that the decision should be taken otherwise than in accordance with the development plan.
19. For the reasons given above, the appeal should be dismissed.

A Price

INSPECTOR