



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 June 2025

by **Martin Andrews MA(Planning) BSc(Econ) DipTP & DipTP(Dist) MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 02 July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/N1730/D/25/3365050

Willow Cottage, Reading Road, Mattingley, Hook, Hampshire RG27 8JU

- 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 and Mrs Stuart Bowman-Hood against the decision of Hart District Council.
 - The application Ref. is 25/00125/HOU.
 - The development proposed is demolition of the existing garage and erection of a triple garage, study and gym with a second study within the roofspace.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, and on the character and setting of Willow Cottage, which is a Grade II listed building.

Reasons

3. I saw on my visit that the existing garage, although of limited merit and in a somewhat dilapidated condition, described as '*rather tired*' by the Council's conservation officer, has a low-key presence on the site. And with its traditional wooden garage doors, simple gabled form and a wooden 'lean-to' all seen against a verdant backdrop, the existing building almost has a rural 'character' that does not harm the setting of Willow Cottage.
4. By way of contrast, the appeal scheme, with its dominant roof and large rooflights, and in particular the triple bay garage design, would be perceived as being too utilitarian and urban in appearance. In a town or city this building type is frequently seen as a formulaic design providing flattened accommodation above car parking.
5. However, as the conservation officer implies, in the countryside it arguably requires an agricultural justification and perhaps a farmyard location. I am also unclear from the plans and supporting statements whether the garage bays would remain open or whether they have doors, and if so, details of their opening. These factors are important to an appraisal of the building's impact.
6. Furthermore, the harm caused by the inappropriate appearance of the elevation facing the listed building would be compounded by its excessive size. Drawing Nos. P3 & P3 Rev.A show the proposed garage frontage with a dashed line to illustrate the existing profile of the garage and the flat roofed timber lean-to. I would expect

the planning application to illustrate this comparison and I therefore endorse its inclusion. Nonetheless, it does serve to demonstrate only too clearly the significant and harmfully inappropriate increase in scale that would neither be in keeping with the character of the site nor with the setting of the listed building.

7. The additional facilities to the garage to be provided in the proposed building are a large first floor study above the garage (albeit with significant internal height restrictions) and a gym with shower room and a second study on the ground floor. I have noted the domestic circumstances that support the inclusion of these facilities, but some reduction in their provision would enable a building of a design and scale more appropriate to the site's constraints – these being primarily its limited size; its visibility from the road (notwithstanding the lower level and potential for boundary screening) and the effect on the setting of the listed Willow Cottage.
8. As regards visibility, I have considered the line-of-sight information from a passing vehicle included in the appellants' evidence but remain of the opinion that the triple garage entrance elevation would draw the eye of drivers in northward-bound traffic as it passed Willow Cottage.
9. I have had regard to all other matters raised, but overall consider that the appeal scheme would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area and to the character and setting of the listed Willow Cottage. This would be in harmful conflict with Policy GEN1 of the Hart Local Plan (Replacement) 1996-2006 and Policy NBE9 of the Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2032. There would also be conflict with Section 12: 'Achieving Well-Designed Places' and Section 16: 'Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment' of the National Planning Policy Framework, revised December 2024.
10. Section 16 of the Framework requires in paragraph 215 that where a development proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset (as in my view is the case in this appeal), this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. However, I am unable to identify any such benefits.
11. For the reasons explained above and having had regard to all other matters raised, the appeal fails.

Martin Andrews

INSPECTOR