



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 June 2025

by **P Brennan BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 07 July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3940/W/25/3360421

Grove Cottage, Wardour, Tisbury, Wiltshire SP3 6RJ

- 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 Georgina Wessels against the decision of Wiltshire Council.
 - The application Ref is PL/2024/07477.
 - The development proposed is described as: Replacement dwelling and outbuilding.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - The effect of the proposed development on non-designated heritage assets, and
 - The effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area, giving special regard to its effect on the National Landscape.

Reasons

Heritage Matters

3. Grove Cottage is located opposite the Grade II* listed Wardour Park and Gardens. The cottage appears to have been owned by Lord Arundel, owner of Wardour Castle, as one of his tenanted cottages. The original cottage is one and a half storey, constructed of local greensand stone with some rough coursing and thatched roof. The chimneys have been rendered and the cottage has small timber pane windows. It has had a large extension to its rear, circa 20th century, but the main historic cottage, circa 18th century remains the dominant building. A number of outbuildings are located away from the dwelling but within the site curtilage.
4. Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) defines a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA) as “buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes 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.”
5. The Council has not formally identified the appeal building as a NDHA either through its Local Plan or a local list. Although there is encouragement within the PPG for such a feature to be designated by local policy or a ‘local list,’ this is not a necessary requirement to be attributed the status of a NDHA. The PPG also

identifies that NDHA's may be identified by local planning authorities as part of the decision-making process on planning applications.

6. Within the evidence before me, is a response from Historic England to a request by the Council for the statutory listing of Grove Cottage. Whilst this response ultimately refuses the request, it provides a detailed analysis of the building and concludes that it is of clear local interest. This of course does not mean the building has no heritage value, simply that it does not meet the criteria for listing. From my site visit and the evidence before me, it appears that Grove Cottage dates from the 18th century. As indicated, and despite the appellant's assertions, whilst the dwelling has undergone substantial change, including unsympathetic additions, the 'original' core of the dwelling remains evident, and the later additions are clearly legible. It retains a good proportion of historic fabric including much of its 18th century roof structure and fireplace.
7. The cottage's significance derives from the property's age, typical local character, appearance, construction from local materials and its thatched roof form. Despite the changes that have taken place, I consider that the building retains sufficient heritage significance, most notably its thatched roof, chimney, and fireplace, to warrant status as a NDHA. The appellant suggests that the building could be subject to further unsympathetic changes in the future. Be that as it may, I have considered the historic fabric evident today.
8. Core Policy 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy 2015 (WCS) identifies that, amongst other things, "distinctive elements of Wiltshire's historic environment, including non-designated heritage assets, which contribute to a sense of local character and identity will be conserved, and where possible enhanced." Paragraph 216 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) requires that the effect of a development proposal on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset is taken into account.
9. The proposed development would involve the demolition of the existing dwelling and outbuildings and their replacement with a new two storey dwelling and single storey outbuilding. As the appeal proposal would see the total removal of the dwelling, I consider that the effect of the proposal would be to cause harm to the NDHA's significance which would be substantial. As such, the proposed development would not conserve a NDHA, which contributes to the area's local character and identity. Accordingly, I find conflict with Core Policies 57 and 58 of the WCS, which, amongst other things, seek to conserve, and where possible, enhance both designated and non-designated heritage assets and historic landscapes.

Character and Appearance

10. Wardour sits within the parish of Tisbury. The parish consists of several small settlements and isolated dwellings. During my site visit, I noted that local isolated dwellings had a pleasant rural character and stood within spacious grounds. The appeal site comprises a dwelling which is remote from other development and is of a scale and vernacular that is consistent with, and typical of, cottages locally. The site access, off Nightingale Lane, leads to a low-key driveway that accesses the garage to the rear. The existing dwelling and its plot, being of rural character, makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area.

11. The site is in the countryside within the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs National Landscape (previously referred to as the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). An existing bridleway runs along the appeal site's eastern boundary.
12. The proposed replacement dwelling would be situated in approximately the same position as the existing cottage, opposite a proposed outbuilding and includes the provision of a new access point and driveway, requiring the removal of roadside hedging.
13. Based on the appellant's annotated floorspace plans, the replacement dwelling would result in a relatively minor increase of floorspace of around 33m². However, the proposed replacement dwelling would appear significantly larger, both in height and mass. The existing dwelling's single storey additions are not readily visible in the landscape or from public vantage points. Whereas, as a consolidated mass, the proposed dwelling would be considerably bulkier and taller than the existing property.
14. The proposed outbuilding would replace several existing outbuildings into a large single outbuilding. Although this would be single storey, its ground floor footprint would be similar to that of the proposed replacement dwelling. When viewed from Nightingale Lane and the adjacent bridleway, its scale and appearance would be that of a scale akin to a separate dwelling.
15. A character assessment is not within the evidence before me. Consequently, no analysis is provided to demonstrate the character of the site and the existing dwelling, and no assessment has been undertaken regarding the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area. Furthermore, no reasoning has been provided as to why the specific design of dwelling has been proposed and how this would complement the existing character. Based on my site visit and the evidence before me, I am not satisfied that the replacement dwelling is a suitable design response for this countryside setting in terms of its overall scale. The proposal would therefore be out of character and discordant with the noted local rural architecture.
16. Furthermore, the replacement dwelling, outbuilding, new access, and formal driveway would form an unacceptable consolidation of floorspace, scale, and mass of built development, leading to a form of urbanisation within a countryside location with an agrarian past. As such, the proposed development would be incongruous and detrimental to the character and appearance of the area.
17. With regards to the appeal site's location in the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs National Landscape, I have given great weight to the duty imposed by Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 to have regard to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of National Landscapes.
18. Following my site visit and based on the evidence before me, I have found that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. Consequently, I consider that the proposed development would not conserve and enhance the National Landscape.
19. Accordingly, I find conflict with Core Policies 51 and 57 of the WCS in relation to the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area and landscape character. These policies, amongst other things, seek

development that does not have a harmful impact on landscape character; protects, conserves and, where possible, enhances landscape character and local distinctiveness, and relates positively to its landscape setting in terms of layout, built form, height, mass, scale, and streetscape. I also find conflict with saved Salisbury District Local Plan 2011 Policy H30, which seeks that replacement dwellings in the countryside have a high standard of design appropriate to their rural surroundings.

20. The proposal would also be contrary to the Framework which, amongst other things, seeks development that achieves high quality design that is sympathetic to and contributes positively to local character with regard to its surroundings and context and protects and enhances valued landscapes.

Other Matters

21. The appeal site lies within the setting of the Grade II* Wardour Park and Gardens. Wardour Park and Gardens surrounds an 18th century country house and includes the remains of a late medieval castle set within a medieval deer park. The park is enclosed by woodland to the south, north and east. The significance of the park derives from its historic and architectural interest. Notwithstanding the appeal site's proximity to Wardour Park and Gardens, the intervisibility between them is limited. Due to the vast woodland within the park and located opposite the appeal site, the appeal proposal would not harm the setting of the heritage asset, thus preserving its significance.
22. The Council has identified that Wardour Park and Gardens contains the Grade I listed Wardour Castle and the Grade I listed Old Wardour Castle which are not within the setting of the appeal site, matters that I see no reason to disagree with.
23. The site lies within a core sustenance zone for Barbastelle bats, associated with the Chilmark Quarries Bats Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and within the catchment of the River Avon SAC. The Council has undertaken a test of likely significant effects and a Habitat Regulation Assessment. These concluded that the proposal would not result in any adverse effect on local bat populations and is unlikely to have significant impacts on the River Avon SAC Catchment or on the conservation objectives of the SAC's. The Council subsequently screened the proposal out of the need for an Appropriate Assessment. Irrespective of the Council's findings here, as I am dismissing the appeal for other reasons, it is unnecessary for me to undertake an Appropriate Assessment as it would not affect the outcome of this appeal.
24. The application was submitted after the statutory requirement for a 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG) for minor developments was imposed. The appellant has declared that the development proposed is exempt from its BNG requirements by delivering a self-build dwelling. A BNG matrix has not been submitted within the evidence. However, the weight for me to apply to the benefits of the scheme, including the delivery of a self-build dwelling is a matter that I shall consider within the planning balance.
25. The appellant has drawn my attention to pre-application advice that was provided by the Council. Such advice is provided on a without prejudice basis to any decision that is subsequently made. Whilst the response provided by the Council appears to support elements of the proposal subject to caveat, be that as it may, the advice provided has made no difference to my overall conclusion. The

appellant has also commented on the inconsistency of the Council regarding similar buildings which have not been treated as NDHA's. Whilst these examples, which are not before me, may have some similarities to the appeal proposal, none are directly comparable with this appeal, which I have determined on its individual planning merits having regard to the site's specific characteristics.

26. The appellant has drawn my attention to several appeal decisions that relate to NDHAs from across the country. These decisions consider whether individual buildings would qualify as an NDHA and the weight to ascribe to any harm. These have been informative with respect to consistency of approach but have not materially assisted my assessment of this proposal which is reliant on the individual merits of the appeal property's architectural and historical significance. I also note that most of these decisions do not relate to the full demolition of the building and are therefore not directly comparable.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

27. The Framework requires, that in weighing the effect of development on an NDHA, a balanced judgement will be required, having regard to the scale of any harm and significance of the asset.
28. The appeal proposal would see the full demolition of the NDHA and its replacement with a new dwelling and outbuilding. The harm to the NDHA and the effect on its significance would be substantial. The proposed development would also harm the character and appearance of the area and would not conserve or enhance the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs National Landscape.
29. Set against the harm identified, there would be social and economic benefits associated with the proposal. The self-build element of the proposal would provide support in favour of the proposal. The proposal would deliver an energy efficient dwelling that would provide for the requirements of modern day living that could support home working and thus reduce the need to travel. Furthermore, economic benefits both during construction, and from ongoing support for local services and facilities would also ensue.
30. The proposal has not raised matters of dispute with respect to drainage and flood risk; ecology and landscape; highway safety and traffic generation. As such, no harm would arise from the proposed development in relation to these matters. However, an absence of harm in these respects can only be considered as neutral factors in the planning balance.
31. In applying a balanced judgement, I understand the functional need to provide a modern dwelling that is energy efficient and would meet the requirements of day to day living. However, overall, whilst the benefits of the proposal attract moderate weight, they would not outweigh the substantial harm that would occur to the NDHA and the identified harm to the character and appearance of the area.

32. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the proposal would conflict with the development plan and there are no material considerations that indicate that the development should be determined otherwise than in accordance with it. Therefore, the appeal is dismissed.

P Brennan

INSPECTOR