



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 March 2025 by N Manley BA (Hons) MSc

Decision by S Edwards BA MATCP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/F1610/D/24/3354313

Pump House Cottage, Road from 3/332 to White Way, Compton Abdale, Gloucestershire GL54 4DS

- 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 Mrs Lane against the decision of Cotswold District Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/00755/FUL.
 - The development proposed is described as the “Erection of a two storey side extension.”
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Preliminary Matters

3. The appeal site is situated in the Compton Abdale Conservation Area (CA). I shall therefore have special regard to section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed buildings and Conservation areas) Act 1990.
4. A new version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published in December 2024. Whilst I have had regard to the revised national policy as a material consideration, planning decisions must still be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this instance, the issues most relevant to the appeal remain unaffected by the revisions to the Framework. I am therefore satisfied that there is no requirement to seek further submissions on the revised Framework, and that no party would be disadvantaged by such a course of action.

Main Issues

5. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on (1) Pump House Cottage, a Non-Designated Heritage Asset (NDHA) and the character and appearance of the CA; and (2) protected species.

Reasons for the Recommendation

Heritage Assets – CA and NDHA

6. The CA has a discreet and secluded character due to its valley setting and its distance away from busy highways and thoroughfares. Near the appeal property,

views are dominated by St. Oswald's Church, which stands prominently on a steep hill overlooking Compton Abdale. The sound of the brook running through the CA further enhances its tranquil atmosphere. Traditional dwellings are arranged informally, varying in architectural style and scale, yet predominantly constructed from local materials such as Cotswold stone and slate. They are generally well-spaced, separated by Cotswold Stone walls, fields, and natural vegetation. In the context of this appeal, the CA's special interest derives from its traditional Cotswold vernacular, its peaceful character and the harmonious relationship between its unspoiled historic built environment and the surrounding open countryside.

7. Pump House Cottage is a semi-detached dwelling constructed from traditional Cotswold materials characteristic of the area. It shares a similar front elevation with its adjoining neighbour, though their fenestration patterns differ in both position and material. Both properties have undergone rear extensions of varying styles and forms. Historic Ordnance Survey maps confirm that both Pump House Cottage and its neighbour originally featured a rear projection, a defining element of their historic layout. The appeal property now includes a two-storey rear extension with a side-facing gable that seeks to reflect the design and form of the original property.
8. The original projection remains, forming a recess that separates the two side gables. Despite this addition, the building's historic form, including its distinctive rear projection, remains clearly legible. Furthermore, Pump House Cottage's location, situated opposite the church and beside a large open field, allows for uninterrupted views of its front and side elevations from the highway, reinforcing its historic presence when approached from the east. Overall, its prominent position, traditional materials, and historic character establish the property's significance as an NDHA, which contributes positively to the overall character and appearance of the CA.
9. The proposal involves infilling the existing recess with a two-storey addition that would match the style and fenestration of the existing rear gable. Despite a slight setback from the existing elevations, the proposed extension would, due to its excessive height, scale and massing, as well as its gabled design, harmfully compete with the host property. In public views, the insufficient setback would, together with previous additions, create a large, monolithic built form, which would detract from the pleasant traditional form and character of this NDHA.
10. As a result, the extension would obscure part of the property's historic form and, from certain viewpoints, would be perceived as a dominant elevation, visually overwhelming the character of the original building. Furthermore, when viewed alongside previous alterations, the impact of the development would cumulatively result in additions that would fail to remain subservient to the historic size and form of Pump House Cottage. Consequently, the overall dominance of these changes would undermine the building's historic character and erode its original form, to the detriment of its significance as a NDHA and the contribution it makes to the CA.
11. The appellant contends that the existing elevations within the recessed area to the rear are not highly visible from the road or church and that their design and finishing materials and brickwork has created a mismatched appearance. They also suggest that a single-storey proposal would similarly obscure some of these elevations. However, from my site observations, these mismatches were not noticeably detrimental to the character and appearance of the dwelling and do not undermine the historic form of Pump House Cottage. Furthermore, the presence of

existing mismatches or existence of alternative options giving rise to other issues does not provide justification for a development which would have a detrimental effect on heritage assets.

12. The appeal scheme would erode the significance of the host property as a NDHA and cause less than substantial harm to the significance of the CA as a whole, to which I nevertheless afford considerable weight. In such circumstances, paragraph 215 of the Framework requires such harm to be weighed against any public benefits, including securing the site's optimum viable use.
13. I have considered the benefits cited by the appellant, including providing the occupiers with additional living space, sufficient space to work from home and enabling the family to remain in the village, amid concerns that the dwelling could otherwise become a holiday home. I have also taken into account and sympathise with other personal circumstances referenced by the appellant. However, these are largely private benefits rather than public ones. Overall, there are no presented public benefits that would outweigh the identified harm.
14. Given the above, the appeal scheme would cause unacceptable harm to the significance of the NDHA and the CA, the character and appearance of which, it follows, would not be preserved or enhanced. It would therefore contravene Policies EN2, EN10, EN11 and EN12 of the Cotswold District Local Plan 2011–2031 (Adopted 2018) (CDLP) and Section 16 of the Framework. These notably require development to respect and positively contribute to the character and distinctive appearance of the locality, enhance the character of a NDHA, sustain and enhance the significance of designated heritage assets and their settings, and preserve and enhance the special character and appearance of conservation areas through appropriate siting, scale, form, proportion, design, materials and the retention of positive features.

Protected Species

15. The Council has raised concerns that the proposal could adversely affect protected species. To support the development, the appellant commissioned a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) carried out by Arbtech. The PRA identifies the site as being surrounded by habitats that likely provide optimal foraging and commuting opportunities for bats. It also highlights several features on the appeal property, such as raised tiles and lead flashing, that could allow access into the building, but overall concludes that the appeal property has a low habitat value for roosting bats.
16. While no evidence of bats was found in the assessed roof void, other roof voids could not be accessed due to health and safety constraints. This includes the area which would be affected by the proposed development. One loft hatch could not be opened, with visible mould on its outer edges. The PRA notes that this indicates a damp loft space, which may create unsuitable roosting conditions for bats.
17. Circular 06/2005 states that it is "essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise, all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision." The Circular adds that surveys should be carried out before planning permission is granted.

18. Although the appellant asserts that the report confirms no bats are present, it also acknowledges the site's suitability for bats and the potential for access into roof voids. Given that not all areas were surveyed, and in the absence of emergence or re-entry surveys having been carried out at an appropriate time, the possibility of bats using the appeal property for roosting cannot be ruled out.
19. Based on the available information, and adopting a precautionary approach, there is a reasonable likelihood that protected species may be present on site and could be adversely affected by the proposed development. In the absence of substantive evidence to the contrary, I cannot conclude that the proposal would safeguard protected species (bats) and thus, biodiversity. The development would therefore conflict with Policy EN8 of the CDLP and Section 15 of the Framework, which, amongst other things, require development proposals to conserve biodiversity and avoid detrimental impacts on protected species.

Other Matters

20. The appeal site lies within the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL). No harm to the CNL has been identified by the Council, and there are no reasons for me to reach an alternative view. Having regard to the presented evidence and my site visit, the development would be seen as part of the existing settlement of Compton Abdale, surrounded by residential dwellings. Accordingly, I am satisfied that the proposal would leave the natural beauty of the CNL unharmed.
21. Concerns have been raised by the Council's conservation officer in respect of the lack of details for the replacement of several windows and the installation of new bi-fold doors. However, as I have recommended the appeal is dismissed for other reasons, I have not considered this further.
22. I agree with the appellant that the development would not affect the fabric of St Oswald's Church or The Old Parsonage, nor would it impact views towards these buildings. The Council has not raised any concerns regarding these heritage assets either and I am satisfied, based on my own observations, that the proposal would not harm the significance of these listed buildings. Similarly, the appellant has highlighted that the development would not harm the amenities of neighbouring occupiers, cause an unacceptable reduction in light, or affect the safety of the highway network. However, the absence of harm in these respects is a neutral factor and does not weigh in favour of the proposal.
23. I acknowledge the support in the village for the development and their belief the development would improve the appearance of the appeal property. However, neither this nor the other matters raised outweigh or alter my conclusions on the main issues.

Conclusion and Recommendation

24. For these reasons, I consider that the appeal proposal would harm the significance of designated heritage assets and could adversely affect protected species. I have had regard to the personal circumstances of the appellant, but these are outweighed by the harm I have identified.
25. There are no material considerations which indicate that the appeal should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan. In light of these

conclusions and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

N Manley

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

26. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's recommendation and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

S Edwards

INSPECTOR