



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 July 2025

by **B Astley-Serougi BA(Hons) LLM MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 04 August 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/C3105/W/25/3364750

1 Station Road, Launton, Oxfordshire OX26 5DS

- 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 Balaruban Balasubramaniam against the decision of Cherwell District Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/03085/F.
 - The development proposed is installation of entrance door.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The application form states that the development began in May 2024. I saw during my site visit the entrance door. The material used for the current entrance door is metal whereas the appellant in their application form states that the proposed material is to be timber. I have assessed the development as shown on the plans.
3. In determining this appeal, I have had due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) contained in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, which sets out the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who do and do not share a protected characteristic.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are
 - the effect of the development on the character and appearance of 1 Station Road and the surrounding area.
 - whether the proposed development would preserve the setting of the nearby Grade II Listed Building known as 'The Bull Inn'¹.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

5. The appeal property, 1 Station Road (No 1) is a corner property located on the junction of Blackthorn Road and Station Road. It is a two-storey property and the ground floor is currently a shop. No 1 contributes to the immediate historic street scape given it is sited in a prominent corner location and in my judgement, has somewhat traditionally designed fenestration.

¹ List Entry Number: 1200434

6. The design of the appeal scheme introduces two large window panels either side of the entrance door. The design of the door in conjunction with the panels results in large proportion of glass that is at odds with the overall fenestration of No 1 and the fenestration of the immediate streetscape.
7. Page 15 of the Cherwell District Council Design Guide: Shop fronts and advertisements: Historic buildings and conservation areas 2013 (online version) outlines that materials used in shop fronts need to be compatible with and guided by the age of the building. Therefore, the use of timber would indeed assimilate with the age of the building and its historical context.
8. Nevertheless, even if the materials of the appeal scheme were to be timber, the two large panels either side of the door result in an incongruous addition to the street scape. Therefore, the appeal scheme results in unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of No 1 and the surrounding area. It therefore conflicts with Policy ESD15 of the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 2011-2031 and Saved Policy C28 of the Cherwell Local Plan 1996 insofar as they seek to ensure developments use sympathetic external materials and complement the character of the surrounding area through high design standards.

Setting of The Bull Inn

9. The Grade II Listed The Bull Inn is a designated heritage asset and is located adjacent to No 1. It dates from the 17th Century and early 18th Century and its significance derives in part from its historic and architectural merit including its coursed limestone rubble with wooden lintels, colour washed rubble, brick and timber framing with brick nogging. It has a thatched roof with brick gable stacks. Notably its fenestration includes a 4-window front with tall casements at first floor amongst other things.
10. Annexe 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) defines the setting of a heritage asset as the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. No 1 is directly opposite the front elevation of The Bull Inn and therefore, to my mind, is a prominent building which contributes to the overall setting of The Bull Inn.
11. The introduction of the entrance door with the associated large window panels results in a contemporary design that appears incongruous within the street scape and results in unacceptable harm to the setting and thus significance of The Bull Inn.

Public Benefits

12. The statutory duty in Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) is a matter of considerable importance and weight. Paragraph 212 of the Framework advises that when considering the impact of development on the significance of designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to their conservation.
13. Therefore, the harm I have identified above regarding the incongruous addition of the appeal schemes entrance door and the setting of The Bull Inn, results in a lower level of less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset. Accordingly, paragraph 215 of the Framework highlights that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the developments.

14. The appeal scheme provides an inclusive and wider access which will enable customers including disabled individuals to access the convenience store easily. In accordance with paragraphs 212 and 215 of the Framework, considered together, I conclude that the public benefits I have identified above do not outweigh the great weight to be given to the less than substantial harm I have identified.
15. Consequently, the proposal would fail to satisfy the requirements of the Act, paragraphs 212 and 215 of the Framework and conflicts with Policy ESD15 of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1 and Saved Policy C28 of the Cherwell Local Plan 1996 insofar as they seek to ensure developments deliver high quality design that complement historic assets including designated heritage assets.

Other Matters

16. The Council has not indicated concerns regarding highway safety and I find no reason to disagree with its conclusion on this matter. Whilst previously there may have been an entrance at the location of the installed entrance door, this does not justify an entrance door which I have identified as harmful to both the character and appearance of No 1 and the surrounding area as well as the setting of The Bull Inn.

Planning Balance

17. I have found that the appeal scheme results in harm to the character and appearance of No 1 and the surrounding area and fails to preserve the setting of The Bull Inn. I attach substantial weight to these findings against the appeal.
18. The appellant highlights that the appeal scheme is to ensure acceptable access for disabled individuals who wish to use the shop. Disability is a relevant protected characteristic to which the PSED applies. Whilst I acknowledge, that the appeal scheme would provide an opportunity to further the aims of the PSED, the harm I have identified above would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of No 1 and the surrounding area. Consequently, in my judgement, it is necessary and proportionate to dismiss the appeal.
19. There are no material considerations of such weight or significance to justify a decision otherwise than in accordance with the development plan.

Conclusion

20. The proposal conflicts with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

B Astley-Serougi

INSPECTOR