



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 22 July 2025

by **H Smith BSc (Hons) MSc MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 August 2025

Appeal A Ref: APP/D1265/W/25/3364091

Old School Cottage, Wraxall Lane, Chilfrome, Dorset DT2 0HA

- 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 Ian Wood against the decision of Dorset Council.
 - The application Ref is P/HOU/2024/05846.
 - The development proposed is conversion from redundant stables into residential annex.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/D1265/Y/25/3364093

Old School Cottage, Wraxall Lane, Chilfrome, Dorset DT2 0HA

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Ian Wood against the decision of Dorset Council.
 - The application Ref is P/LBC/2024/06882.
 - The works proposed are conversion from redundant stables into residential annex.
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Decisions

1. **Appeal A** is dismissed.
2. **Appeal B** is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

3. As the proposal relates to a listed building, I have had special regard to sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act).
4. The two appeals concern the same scheme under different, complementary legislation. I have dealt with both appeals together in my reasoning.
5. A revised National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) was published in December 2024. I have had regard to the revised Framework in reaching my decisions.
6. Old School House is a Grade II listed building. The former stable building, the subject of these appeals, falls within the curtilage of the listed building and was constructed before 1 July 1948. As such, by virtue of section 1(5) of the Act it should be treated as part of the listed building.

Main Issue

7. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve a Grade II listed building, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Reasons

Special interest and significance

8. Old School Cottage is a Grade II listed¹ property dating from the late 17th century and 18th century. It is a two-storey dwelling mainly constructed from rubble stone with part rendered walls with a concrete tile roof and three brick stacks. It has a variety of fenestration, including timber casements and stone mullion windows. The listing description makes reference to the building's use as two attached cottages in the past.
9. I find that the special interest and significance of Old School Cottage is largely derived from its historic and architectural interests. These are drawn from its illustration of 17th/18th century domestic rural architecture, along with its vernacular form using traditional construction techniques and materials. It is also derived from the continued legibility of the building as the principal structure in a small complex of integrated rural buildings.
10. The former stable building, which is the subject of these appeals, is adjoined to the host dwelling on its southeast aspect. It is constructed mainly from red brick and rubble stone with corrugated metal roofing. It is of modest scale and proportions with a robust agrarian form. On its eastern elevation, it has historic joinery including timber framed windows, a timber stable door, and double timber doors, indicating its historical use. The materials, rough textures, and fenestration detail visible on the external elevations contribute significantly to the attractive appearance of the building, its interest and character. I note the appellant's comments that the coach house double doors may not be original. Nevertheless, their aesthetic quality contributes positively to the building's historic merit.
11. Internally, it retains architectural features such as the historic stable partitions. While the building is in a neglected state, its historic form and function remain legible. Its modest scale and simple detailing establish its subordinate relationship to the host dwelling, while still making a positive contribution to the significance of the listed building.
12. Given the above, the special interest and significance of the former stable building comes, in part, from the continued legibility of a historic functional relationship with Old School Cottage. It also derives from the building's surviving historic form and fabric, particularly on the building's east elevation, which collectively denotes its original use and construction.

Proposal and effects

13. The proposal seeks to convert the former stable building into a 3-bedroom residential annex within the grounds of Old School Cottage.
14. The existing timber windows and stable door are deteriorating in several areas. The proposal seeks to replace them with new units designed to replicate the appearance of traditional wooden joinery, offering an improvement in thermal performance compared to the current condition. The stable door would be replaced with a new oak version, in keeping with the traditional form.

¹ List Entry Number: 1214223

15. However, while the new windows and door would mimic the style of the historic joinery, their sharp edges, uniform appearance, and smooth finish would fail to capture the rough textures, irregularities, and craftsmanship that define the historic elements. The distinctive character of the existing joinery is closely tied to the natural variation in the rustic materials and unique details that reflect the building's historic function. Placing the new, regular frames alongside the weathered, textured brickwork would highlight the contrast between the modern fabrication and the organic quality of the historic fabric. Consequently, the proposed alterations would undermine the building's architectural character and cause harm to its historic significance.
16. The proposal would also replace the building's double timber doors with a new single oak stable door, glazed windows, and a bricked-up section of walling. The proposed oak stable door would not replicate the existing features of the timber doors, such as their double width and close panel header, and the traditional metal hinge features. The extent of the proposed glazing to be set within the existing opening would also undermine the historic integrity of the former stables, with the building taking on an overly domestic character.
17. The appellant's submitted evidence advises that the existing stable windows and doors are rotten and beyond repair. Nonetheless, without a full detailed condition survey indicating the extent of the defects and timber decay, including status of the current glass, it is difficult to reach a fully informed decision as to why repairs and refurbishment are not possible. The removal of the existing windows and doors and the likely impact on the historic fabric of the building has also not been assessed. The absence of adequate supporting evidence or justification is contrary to the requirements of paragraph 213 of the Framework.
18. I am also concerned that the amount of internal intervention which would be required to the building has not been substantially detailed. The routing of new heating, plumbing and electrics within the building, or exactly how much of the historic fabric would be retained is by no means certain. In particular, the proposed sandblasting of the historic stable partitions requires further investigation and justification. Although the appellant has submitted some information for the internal works, it is limited in scope and does not provide a detailed schedule of works and method statement. In the absence of any detailed schedule of works and method statement, the appellant has failed to demonstrate that the harm caused to the significance of the listed building would be minimised.
19. The proposal to replace the corrugated metal roofing with concrete slates would match the roofing on the host dwelling. The proposed conservation rooflights are limited in number and size and would provide benefits to future occupants with regard to light and outlook. As such, I do not find harm in this regard, but the harm I have identified above remains.
20. After careful consideration, I conclude that the proposal, together with the uncertainty with regard to the historic fabric that would be lost, would fail to preserve the significance of the building. Consequently, I find that the proposal would not preserve the Grade II listed building, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. In doing so, it would harm the significance of this designated heritage asset.

Public Benefits and Balance

21. With reference to paragraphs 214 and 215 of the Framework, in finding harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the magnitude of that harm should be assessed. Given the extent and fairly localised nature of the proposal, I find that the harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset assessed above would be 'less than substantial' but nevertheless of considerable importance and weight. Paragraph 215 of the Framework requires this harm to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing the asset's optimum viable use.
22. In this case, economic benefits would be generated through the manufacture and construction phase and the general investment into the property. Additionally, social and heritage benefits would be generated through the improvements to the stable building and its conversion to a residential annex. I also acknowledge that the proposal would entail the reuse of the building, thus avoiding the potential for harm that could arise from continued disuse and deterioration. These would represent benefits to the public at large that carry weight in favour of the appeals.
23. Nevertheless, I am not persuaded that similar public benefits could not be achieved by a proposal which would be less harmful to the significance of the designated heritage asset. Additionally, no compelling evidence is before me which confirms that the property would not be usable or viable or that its future would be at risk if the appeals were to fail and the development and works as proposed were not implemented. In these respects, the identified harm to the significance of the listed building has not been clearly and convincingly justified as required by paragraph 213 of the Framework.
24. On balance, in giving considerable importance and weight to the harm to the significance of the listed building, I find that this would not be outweighed by the minor public benefits arising from the proposal.
25. I conclude that the proposal would not preserve the Grade II listed building, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. It would therefore fail to satisfy the requirements of the Act and the provisions within the Framework which seek to conserve and enhance the historic environment. It would also conflict with Policy ENV4 and ENV12 of the West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan 2015. These policies, amongst other things, seek to ensure proposals conserve and where appropriate enhance the significance of heritage assets, including their settings, and achieve high quality design.

Other Matters

26. I acknowledge that the listing description does not make specific reference to the former stable building. Nonetheless, listings are primarily for identification purposes and do not provide an exhaustive or complete description of the listed building's special interests.
27. The appellant indicates that the replacement of the existing timber doors with solid oak doors would be justified by the need for fire safety and privacy of occupants. However, I have not been presented with substantial evidence to suggest that the proposed doors would perform significantly better than the existing.

28. I note that the appellant was disappointed with the Council's approach during the application process. Nevertheless, that is not a matter for my consideration.

Conclusions

29. **Appeal A:** The proposed development would conflict with the development plan when taken as a whole. There are no material considerations which indicate that the decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, I conclude that Appeal A should be dismissed.
30. **Appeal B:** For the reasons given, I conclude that Appeal B should be dismissed.

H Smith

INSPECTOR