



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 August 2025

by Mr R Walker BA HONS DIPTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9 September 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/M2840/D/25/3359136

17 High Street, Easton on the Hill PE9 3LN

- 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 M Harpham against the decision of North Northamptonshire Council.
- The application Ref is NE/24/01111/FUL.
- The development proposed was originally described as the proposed replacement roof covering to a barn rear of Greystones, 17 High Street.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. As the appeal site is within a conservation area and within the setting of a listed building, I have had regard to the statutory duties under both sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) in relation to these matters.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are whether the proposals would preserve a Grade II listed building or its setting, known as the Dovecote, approximately 40 metres north of number 17 (not included), and any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses and whether it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Easton on the Hill Conservation Area.

Reasons

Special interest and significance

4. The grade II listed Dovecote is located to the rear of Number 17 High Street (No 17), but the host dwelling has specifically been excluded from the listing. The Dovecote dates to the early eighteenth century and is built from coursed limestone with a Collyweston slate roof. The special interest/significance of the listed building, in so far as it relates to this appeal, is derived from the Dovecote's simple vernacular and plan form, traditional construction techniques and materials, including the use of Collyweston slate. These make important contributions to its aesthetic and historical values.
5. The Dovecote is located within the spacious and verdant grounds of No 17 and its scale, form and historic function are all ancillary to the hierarchy of buildings within the grounds. Within this context its materials, including the use of Collyweston slate, reflect features found at No 17 and the village.

6. There have been several later alterations at No 17, and to the buildings within its grounds, including a lean-to structure to the listed building and the conversion of the barn to accommodation associated with the property. Even so, the traditional form and linear alignment of the converted barn, complimentary materials and detailing does not divert attention away from the listed building's historic form and architectural features.
7. The significance of the listed building can be experienced and appreciated from High Street in views down the access drive and more appreciably within the grounds of No 17. In this regard, the verdant grounds of No 17, the hierarchy of buildings and the materials all help inform the understanding of the Dovecote. As such, the converted barn that extends to the rear of No 17, and the use of Collyweston slate on its roof, contribute positively to the setting of the listed building and thus its significance and special interest.
8. The appeal site is located within the Easton on the Hill Conservation Area (CA). The CA covers tightly knit buildings along the historic routes and properties within more spacious grounds set within a rural landscape. The CA is characterised by buildings using high quality traditional materials and fine craftsmanship. Although there are other roofing materials found within the CA, including concrete tiles and pantiles, the use of local Collyweston slate on roofs is a dominant feature that makes a positive contribution to its character and appearance.
9. The special interest/significance of the listed building contributes positively to the character and appearance of the CA as a whole and thereby to its significance as a designated heritage asset. As does, the character and appearance of No 17 and the converted barn, where the presence of local Collyweston slate on the roof contributes to a small degree to the predominant roofing material that characterises the CA.

Appeal proposal and effects

10. The proposal would replace the existing traditional Collyweston slate roof with a man made Bradstone concrete tile. The Council highlights that man-made tiles have little variation in their colouring, differences in how they react to weathering and have different gauges when laying to diminishing courses. Finally, Collyweston slate tiles are noticeably laid on a bed of mortar as opposed to being hung over battens. The appellant has not provided substantive evidence to dispute these distinctions.
11. From my observations of the Bradstone tiles near the site, I saw that even though they are a high-quality concrete tile that could be laid in diminishing courses, they had a more consistent size, shape and appearance in comparison to Collyweston slate giving a more polished uniform finish to the roof. Considering the differences in how natural slate and concrete tiles weather, the noticeable differences would be maintained over time. As such, the replacement tiles would be clearly identifiable as non-traditional modern fixtures and the aesthetic value attributable to the existing slate would be lost.
12. The presence of a variety of roofing materials nearby and the location of the barn within the rear garden would reduce the extent of harm from the introduction of the Bradstone tiles. However, it would be evident in private views within the grounds of No 17 and to a lesser extent from High Street. Consequently, whilst the magnitude

of the harm may be concluded to be minor adverse it would nevertheless fail to preserve the CA and the setting of the listed building.

13. Some of the Collyweston stone slates would be good enough to be refurbished and reused on other historic buildings. However, the lack of detail regarding these elements and their reuse, limits the weight I afford this repurposing strategy as a potential heritage benefit.
14. Drawing the above together, the proposal would fail to preserve the setting and thus the special interest of the Grade II listed building, and would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the CA. As a result, the expectations of the Act have not been met and the proposal would harm the significance of these designated heritage assets.

Public Benefits

15. Paragraph 212 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) advises that great weight be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). Paragraph 213 goes on to advise that significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting and that this should have clear and convincing justification.
16. With reference to paragraphs 214 and 215 of the Framework, in finding harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset, the magnitude of that harm should be assessed. Although, for the purposes of undertaking the heritage balance, the Framework does not require the decision maker to place the harm on a spectrum, I acknowledge that within each category of harm, the extent of the harm may vary.
17. In this instance, as I have found the harm to be minor adverse, the harm to the setting of the listed building and the CA would be 'less than substantial' and at the lower end of the spectrum but, nevertheless, of great weight. Under such circumstances, paragraph 215 advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposed development.
18. There would be some minor benefits from the commissioning of services, and the retention of building craft skills. As set out above, I give limited weight to the potential heritage benefits from repurposing the existing Collyweston stone slates.
19. The appellant indicates that the condition of the roof necessitates its replacement and that the cost of Collyweston slate is three times the cost of a replacement Bradstone roof. However, I am mindful that some of the slate is indicated as being reusable and I have no firm details regarding the costs or viability of replacing the roof. Based on the evidence before me, any cost savings would be a private benefit to the appellant rather than a public benefit. In this regard, there is no substantive evidence to demonstrate that the continued viable use of the appeal property is dependent on the proposal or that the building's ongoing use would cease in its absence. As such, the proposed development would not comply with paragraph 215 of the Framework.
20. Drawing the above together, overall, the weight that I ascribe to the public benefits that would result from the proposal, would not be sufficient to outweigh the great weight that I attach to the harm I have identified. Accordingly, the proposal would

be contrary to the requirements of the Act, the Framework and Policies 2 and 8 of the Council's Joint Core Strategy and Policy EN12 of its Local Plan, when taken together and in so far as they relate to this main issue. These say, amongst other things, that in considering proposals that affect a designated heritage asset or its setting great weight will be given to the asset's conservation.

Conclusion

21. 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.
22. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

Mr R Walker

INSPECTOR