



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/W/24/3356922

Manor Farm, High Street, Duddington, Stamford PE9 3QE

- 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 Duddington Estate against the decision of North Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application Ref is NE/23/00857/FUL.
 - The development proposed is the redevelopment of Red House site including the conversion and extension to existing traditional buildings to provide two dwellinghouses and construction of five new build dwellings, along with parking facilities, landscaping and new vehicular accesses.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have used the address provided in the Council's decision notice which accurately describes the location of the appeal site. As the appeal site is in a conservation area and within the setting of listed buildings, I have had special regard to sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act).
3. As part of the appeal, the appellant has submitted an updated Preliminary Ecological Appraisal including a Protected Species Assessment, a Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessment, a Proposed Access Arrangement Plan and an amended Proposed Floor Plan. The latter shows a reduction in bedrooms at plot two. The Council and third parties have had the opportunity to comment on these as part of the appeals process. Moreover, as the alterations to plot two are very small, with no alterations externally I am satisfied that no party has been prejudiced by their submission at this stage.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are:
 - The effects of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area with particular reference to:
 - The effects of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the buildings known as Red House and The Gardeners Cottage, a Non-Designated Heritage Asset;
 - Whether the proposal would preserve the Grade II listed buildings, known as Manor Farmhouse and Numbers 1 and 2 High Street and their setting, and any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess; and

- The extent to which the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Duddington Conservation Area.
- The effects of the proposal on highway safety with particular reference to visibility from the proposed access;
- The effects of the proposal on protected species and biodiversity; and
- Whether the proposal would make adequate provision for waste facilities and collection.

Reasons

Character and appearance

Special interest and significance

5. There is no dispute that the Red House constitutes a Non-Designated Heritage Asset (NDHA). The property was built in the early to mid-nineteenth century. It is a two storey property constructed with a red brick frontage and coursed rubble to its other elevations and is seen from the High Street.
6. Its significance as a NDHA, in so far as it relates to this appeal, is its historical interest associated with its age as a former farmhouse within the rural village. Despite its current condition, its architectural interest is associated with its distinctive red brick frontage, traditional materials, solid to void ratio, three-dimensional shape and narrow plan form.
7. Near to its side elevation, within the setting of Red House is a historical stone farm building, referred to as Slaughter House within the application plans. This is a more modest two storey building which protrudes notably past its rear elevation. It is built of rubble stone and has a distinctive narrow plan form. It is in a dilapidated condition with extensive vegetation growth onto the roof. Nonetheless, its age, plan form and layout contribute to the understanding of the historical narrative of this part of the village and the lifestyles of households within the farm. In this regard, Slaughter House forms an important part of the setting, and thus makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Red House as a NDHA.
8. The Gardeners Cottage is a predominantly stone built property. It has two front door openings and although there is limited evidence before me, the Council indicate that it was historically divided into two cottages. Its significance, as a NDHA in so far as it relates to this appeal, is associated with its distinctive narrow linear plan form, traditional materials, pattern of openings and solid to void ratio. Despite its structural condition, these surviving features illustrate the historic narrative of this part of the village and the lifestyles of the households. This includes its relationship to the Red House and its position within the yard to the rear of Nos 1 and 2 The High Street.
9. The agrarian setting of both the NDHAs, including the open parcels of land, stone walling and other former farm buildings and structures within the appeal site, also contributes positively to the setting of the Red House and Gardeners Cottage NDHAs.
10. Nos 1 and 2 The High Street (Nos 1 and 2) along with the attached outbuilding are grade II listed. The listed building fronts onto the High Street, is two storeys and

built from stone, and is positioned directly fronting onto the footway. Its significance, in so far as it relates to this appeal, relates to its age, plan form, robust materials, high solid to void ratio and pattern of openings including with stone lintels with key blocks in the houses.

11. The grade II listed Manor Farmhouse dates to the eighteenth century and is a large two storey property with an additional floor in the attic. Its front elevation has a pleasing balanced appearance with two windows either side of a central door. From the evidence before me, the special interest and significance of the listed building, insofar as it relates to this appeal, is largely derived from its historic and architectural interests as an eighteenth-century farmhouse which forms an integral element of the historic core in this part of Duddington. The dwelling's age, traditional materials, and construction techniques, combined with its elegant frontage make important contributions to the special interest and significance of the listed building.
12. The setting to the rear of both listed buildings is dominated by the mix of outbuildings and farm buildings, cottages, and small paddocks which provide an understanding of the historical roots of the village and its farming community. In this regard, these elements within the appeal site, despite the dilapidated condition of buildings, contribute positively to the setting of both listed buildings and thus their significance as designated heritage assets.
13. Duddington Conservation Area (CA) extends around the appeal site along the High Street and open parcels of land to the rear. It incorporates the historic core of the village extending along Mill Lane and Todds Hill. Its character and appearance are largely derived from the surviving elements of its historic layout and street pattern, open spaces, mature trees and views out to the surrounding farmland, combined with the architectural richness of its historic buildings. These include a wide range of stone-built cottages, farmhouses and farm buildings, and stone walling.
14. Although there are exceptions, such as at the appeal site, houses along the streets in the CA were generally built with single plot depths with limited tandem arrangements. Despite this, there is an organic character to the layout of buildings in the CA with houses, outbuildings and converted barns at different orientations, depths, layouts, heights, and with a prevalence of walling throughout. These elements, including the NDHAs and features within the appeal site, contribute positively to the understanding of the village's farming community roots, the character and appearance of the CA and thereby to its significance as a designated heritage asset. Whilst the structural condition and unkempt appearance of buildings and overgrown nature of parts of the site moderate its contribution, the appeal site nonetheless still contributes positively in this regard.

Appeal proposal and effects

15. The proposal seeks to convert both the Gardeners Cottage and the Red House. The alterations to the front façade of the Gardeners Cottage would include the removal of one of the door openings eroding the legibility of its historical use as two dwellings. An additional extension would be built, linked with a single storey glazed feature. The extension would take the form and appearance of a separate dwelling, albeit it would be amalgamated into one single dwelling. I'm told that this is because of the constraints of the size of the existing building. However, there is

no firm evidence that the size and scale of the proposal is necessary, and I am mindful that the property was historically in residential use.

16. The scale, depth and layout of the proposed extension would appear as a larger modern dwelling. This would jar injuriously with the narrow plan form, modest scale and traditional appearance of the Gardeners Cottage. Even with the lightweight link giving the impression of two distinct elements, the larger new extension would appear jarringly out of place in such close proximity to this NDHA.
17. The Slaughter House would be demolished and replaced with a similar built form and layout but physically linked with the Red House and amalgamated into a single dwelling. The physical link would be through a glazed single storey link and this lightweight feature would maintain the appearance of a separate building replicating the historical juxtaposition of the Red House and Slaughter House. As such, whilst I accept that it would be a large extension to Red House, I do not find harm from this arrangement.
18. The Red House would continue to be the dominant feature in views from the High Street and its distinctive red brick frontage, traditional materials, solid to void ratio and three-dimensional shape and narrow plan form would remain legible.
19. The combination of the formal layout of the access drive serving plots three to seven, the orientation, consistent pattern of large three and four bedroom properties, their design and the arrangement of the houses within their respective plots fronting the access drive, with front gardens and individual driveways would give the appearance of a suburban layout. This would overtly contrast with the predominant organic character and layout of buildings within the CA, even if the overall density of housing reflects some of the low-density housing found in the CA.
20. The proposal would also, in combination with the frontage housing along High Street, result in three rows of housing arranged in tandem within this backland location. In combination with its suburban layout, this would be a striking contrast to the more limited forms of backland housing found within the CA. Its location on the rising ground level and prominence from private and public views would also exacerbate this harm.
21. For the reasons above, the scheme would also in turn harm the contribution that the appeal site makes to the agrarian setting, and thus the significance of both the grade II listed Manor Farmhouse and Nos 1 and 2, and the NDHAs known as the Red House and Gardeners Cottage.
22. There are positive heritage impacts from the repair of Red House and Gardeners Cottage and by securing a long-term future use of these buildings. Such matters are supported by national and local planning policies and guidance. Moreover, the proposal would result in some tidying up of the site with the removal of other decaying structures. However, the proposal would recast the appeal site in an overtly manicured suburban residential guise that would greatly diminish the contribution the appeal site makes to the CA and the setting of the two listed buildings and the NDHAs.
23. To conclude on this matter, the proposed development would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the Gardeners Cottage. Moreover, there would be harm to the setting of the Gardeners Cottage and Red House NDHAs.

The proposal would not preserve the Grade II listed buildings, known as Manor Farmhouse and Numbers 1 and 2 High Street and their setting. Moreover, the proposal would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Duddington CA. As a result, the expectations of the Act have not been met, and the proposal would harm the significance of the designated heritage assets.

24. Overall, the proposed development would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The harm would be at odds with the requirements of policies 2, 3, 8, 12 and 30 of the Council's Joint Core Strategy (JCS), policies EN2, EN3, EN11 and EN12 of the Council's Local Plan Part 2 (LP2), and Policy HBE4 of the Duddington with Fineshade Neighbourhood Plan, when taken together and in so far as they relate to this matter. These say, amongst other things, that development should create a distinctive local character by responding to the local topography and the overall form, character and landscape setting of the settlement. I will return to this matter in respect of the National Planning Policy Frameworks (the Framework) balancing exercises in the heritage and planning balance.

Highway safety

25. As part of the evidence in the appeal the appellant has provided a Proposed Access Arrangement Plan illustrating visibility splays of 2.4 x 35.11m to the north and 2.4 x 40.31m to the south. These splays follow speed surveys along the road where the recorded 85th percentile speeds were 28.9mph for northbound traffic and 26.2mph for southbound traffic. The Council has not indicated why such splays would not be acceptable and based on the evidence before me, and my observations on site, I have no reason to question the appropriateness or delivery of these visibility splays in this location. Accordingly, I am satisfied that the level of activity would not result in an unacceptable degree of hazard to all highway users.
26. I therefore find that the proposal would not have an unacceptable effect on highway safety with particular reference to visibility from the proposed access. As such, I find no conflict with the requirements of Policy 8 of the JCS or the provisions of the Framework, when taken together and in so far as they relate to this matter. These say, amongst other things, that development should make safe and pleasant streets and spaces by ensuring a satisfactory means of access and provision for parking, servicing and manoeuvring in accordance with adopted standards.

Waste facilities and collection

27. The distance from the new homes to the highway would exceed the recommended distances in the Council's The Domestic Waste Supplementary Planning Document (2012) (SPD). However, the appellant has outlined how a private waste collection service could be utilised to provide a local collection service accessing the private drive. This would subsequently remove the need for future occupiers to drag the bins excessive distances to High Street.
28. The Council has not indicated why such an arrangement would not be acceptable and I see no reason why this matter could not be resolved in this way and secured by way of a condition were I minded to allow the appeal. The Council has referred to several appeal decisions. However, it has not provided any information on the appeals and subsequently I can not be sure that the circumstances are the same in respect of the layout, distances to the highway or potential solutions.

29. I therefore conclude on this matter that, although there would be conflict with the SPD, the proposal would make adequate provision for waste facilities and collection. As such, I find no conflict with Policy 8(e) of the JCS, in so far as it relates to this main issue. This says, amongst other things, that development should ensure quality of life and safer and healthier communities by protecting amenity by not resulting in an unacceptable impact on the amenities of future occupiers, neighbouring properties or the wider area, by reason of noise, vibration, smell, light or other pollution, loss of light or overlooking.

Protected species and biodiversity

30. The Council's third reason for refusal included concerns about the absence of an amended Ecology Report and its ability to assess the impact on protected species and habitats. From the evidence before me this related to concerns around the potential for the buildings on site to support roosting bats.
31. Dusk emergence bat surveys have subsequently been undertaken after the Council's decision and three common pipistrelle bats were recorded roosting in the building referred to as Slaughter House, along with low levels of foraging within the site by several bat species. Mitigation has been proposed to minimise disturbance during construction and offset the loss of roosts, and these matters could be controlled by way of a condition. As could, other measures such as external lighting and the biodiversity enhancement measures outlined by the appellant that aim to achieve a biodiversity net gain of 13.32%.
32. On this basis, and in the absence of any evidence to the contrary, I am satisfied that the proposal would not have a harmful effect on protected species and biodiversity. As such, I find no conflict with the requirements of Policy 4 of the JCS or the provisions of the Framework, when taken together and in so far as they relate to this matter. These say, amongst other things, that a net gain in biodiversity will be sought and features of geological interest will be protected and enhanced through protecting existing biodiversity and geodiversity assets by protecting the natural environment from adverse effects from noise, air and light pollution.

Heritage and Planning Balance

33. The Framework's approach to the harm to the NDHAs, is that it is taken into account with a balanced judgement made. The harm to the CA and the setting of the two listed buildings, individually and cumulatively, would be toward the lower end of the spectrum due to the location of the appeal site to the rear of the High Street, as such, would be less than substantial in the context of paragraphs 214 and 215 of the Framework. In accordance with paragraph 215 I must balance that less than substantial harm against the public benefits of the proposal.
34. This classification of harm does not mean that it is diminished though. The Framework identifies that great weight should be given to designated assets' conservation, the weight increasing the more important the asset. Therefore, the harm to the CA and the setting of the listed buildings still carries great weight.
35. The main heritage benefit would be the repair of Red House and Gardeners Cottage and securing a long-term future use of these buildings and the tidying up of the site with the removal of other decaying structures. Taken together these are benefits carrying a potentially high level of weight. Securing the site with an active

use would also have heritage and social benefits in reducing the risk of vandalism to the vacant buildings. However, it has not been demonstrated that the only way of securing the identified benefits is via the particular design and scale of development before me, limiting the weight I afford them.

36. The scheme would provide social benefits from seven new dwellings within the settlement boundary supporting the local community. This would boost the supply of housing irrespective of the current supply position. There would also be economic benefits too from the spending of future occupiers in the local area, as well as from the development. This would stimulate employment, the commissioning of services, and the retention of building craft skills. There would also be benefits to biodiversity from the enhancements proposed. Taken together, these benefits carry moderate weight given the scale of development and the level of biodiversity enhancements proposed.
37. The absence of harm in relation to other considerations, such as highway safety, and the living conditions of future occupiers, are matters that weigh neither for nor against the proposal and do not constitute public benefits.
38. 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 to the CA and the setting of the two listed buildings. Moreover, the harm to the NDHAs, would in my balanced judgement be unacceptable, notwithstanding the benefits of the proposal.

Conclusion

39. For the reasons given above, the proposal would conflict with the development plan when taken as a whole and I find there to be no material considerations, that would indicate that the appeal decision should be taken other than in accordance with it.
40. Therefore, for the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

Mr R Walker

INSPECTOR