



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 August 2025

by **K Townend BSc MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 September 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/J0405/W/25/3367316

Adstock Manor, Main Street, Adstock, Buckinghamshire MK18 2HT

- 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 and Mrs Paul Paling against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/03163/APP.
 - The development proposed is a new dwelling.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted for a new dwelling at Adstock Manor, Main Street, Adstock, Buckinghamshire MK18 2HT in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 24/03163/APP, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of development in the banner and decision is taken from the application form. However, it is clear from the submitted plans that the proposal is for the conversion and extension of an existing building to form a new dwelling. Nevertheless, the description can be read alongside the plans, and I have, therefore, retained it as proposed.
3. As part of the appeal, the appellants have submitted amended plans repositioning the garage slightly further from the rear elevation of the neighbouring building. The amended plans would not result in a fundamental change to the nature of the proposal over what was considered at the planning application stage. The Council has had an opportunity to comment on the amended plans as they were submitted with the appeal and the change would result in a positive effect on the occupants of the neighbouring property. Consequently, no party would be unfairly prejudiced and, I have, therefore, considered the amended plans in determining this appeal.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are the effects of the development on:
 - the special architectural and historic interest of heritage assets; and
 - the living conditions of the occupiers of the neighbouring property, Ryan's Cottage.

Reasons

Heritage assets

5. The appeal comprises an existing red brick outbuilding within the complex of buildings associated with Adstock Manor and Ryan's Cottage. It lies within the Adstock Conservation Area and next to Ryan's Cottage which is a Grade II Listed Building. Adstock is identified in Policy S3 of the Buckinghamshire Council Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP) 2013-2033, as a "smaller village". I have not been made aware that it has a development boundary, however, it is a village rather than open countryside.
6. Policy D4 of the VALP allows for new housing in smaller villages providing it is in accordance with all applicable policies. Policy C1 of the VALP is an applicable policy as it relates to conversion of buildings. Although it sits within the 'countryside' section of the VALP, from the detail in the supporting text the policy is not restricted to buildings within the countryside. It is, therefore, also the relevant policy for consideration of conversion schemes within settlements such as the appeal scheme.
7. Adstock Manor and its outbuildings are not statutorily listed, neither have I been provided with any evidence that they are on any local list. Nevertheless, the house and its outbuildings are of historic interest and retain the appearance of a traditional house and curtilage buildings. The house also has historic interest from its association with Bletchley Park and the village as a whole. I, therefore, find that Adstock Manor and the outbuildings are non-designated heritage assets (NDHAs). That the Council has not published any information to advise that they are NDHAs, would not diminish the heritage value. However, even taking account of the advice in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) regarding the need for applicants to describe the heritage asset, it is not necessary for the appellants to provide additional information to assess this matter as it is clear from the evidence provided by the Council and my own observations.
8. Ryan's Cottage is a listed building. It is a 17th century cottage of rubble stone, patched with brick, and two large buttresses on the roadside elevation. The appeal building forms part of the buildings around the courtyard. However, although the Council comment that the appeal building may be curtilage listed, this does not form part of the reasons for refusal. Even if the appeal building is curtilage listed, I would still be assessing the effect of the development on the heritage assets. If listed building consent is required, this is a separate matter.
9. Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, (the Act) requires the decision maker, in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest.
10. The significance of Ryan's Cottage lies in its architectural interest and age and its relationship with other buildings in the village. The setting of Ryan's Cottage includes the buildings immediately around it, including the appeal building. The contribution the outbuildings make to the setting, and the significance of Ryan's Cottage is moderate. The appeal proposal would affect the setting of Ryan's Cottage due to being works to one of the buildings around the property.

11. Adstock Conservation Area is centred around the buildings at the junction of Church End and East Street but extends down to the A413 and includes Adstock Manor and its grounds. The trees within the grounds are noted as part of the character of the approach from the south. In so far as it is relevant to the appeal, I consider that the significance of the Conservation Area is mainly derived from the historic buildings within the core of the village and their relationship with each other. The Conservation Area has a pleasant appearance which also contributes to its significance, and the appeal site currently contributes positively to this by reason of being a traditional outbuilding and by reason of the trees within the grounds of Adstock Manor.
12. Section 72(1) of the Act states that, with respect to any buildings or other land, in a Conservation Area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character, or appearance of that area.
13. The proposal is to convert the existing building to a dwelling. Alterations and extensions are proposed to enable the conversion including the provision of new doors and windows. Some of these are proposed to utilise existing openings and enlarge them or fully glaze them. Where completely new, or altered, most of the openings respect the size and shape of existing openings and, therefore, respect the characteristics of the building and its surroundings.
14. The large, curved top, window proposed in the gable end would not reflect the two smaller windows that are currently in this elevation. However, I also saw that there is a large enclosure on this part of the building, and the existing openings are not visually prominent. Even though the new opening would be much larger than the existing windows the proposal would reflect the existing enclosure feature and would, in my judgement, not be substantially harmful to the appearance of the building. The size and shape of this window would not have a domestic character and would reflect other large openings in rural buildings. Whether the windows and doors would be overly domestic would also depend on the details of the fenestration which can be controlled by condition. In my judgement, albeit proposing new openings including a large one on the gable end, the external alterations proposed would not cause substantial harm to the character and appearance of the building and would complement the characteristics and vernacular of the area, as required by Policy BE2 of the VALP.
15. There would not be too many new openings and the rooflights, subject to being low profile and non-reflective glazing, would not result in the loss of the essential characteristics of the building. The extent of the alterations would not strictly comply with The Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings Design Guide (the Design Guide), adopted 1990. However, I find that the Design Guide is more restrictive than the adopted policies within the VALP which would allow for more alterations, even to traditional buildings.
16. The proposed extension to create a third bedroom would be provided in a single storey outshoot to the building. This would be situated in a similar position to where there is evidence of a previous kennel structure. Although that was not an enclosed building it had a footing and would have projected out from the building in a similar form and scale to the proposed bedroom. The presence of the footing of the kennels indicates that the building was not just 'U' shaped, as the Council contend, and that outshoots were not uncommon. The extension would also reflect

other outshoots on the other buildings that form this group, including the outshoot into the courtyard of Ryan's Cottage.

17. The mezzanine floor proposed above the bathrooms and plant room would have sufficient floorspace to constitute a bedroom. However, it is reliant on rooflights to provide light and ventilation and is proposed as open to the void over the ground floor for shared light. This space would, therefore, not be suitable to be used as a bedroom and I find that the proposed extension is necessary to meet the functional requirement of the intended re-use as a three bedroom property, in accordance with Policy C1 of the VALP. The bedroom extension would be necessary, appropriate, and sympathetic to the original buildings and would not cause substantial harm to the setting of the heritage assets, including the listed building, the conservation area, and the NDHAs.
18. A detached garage is also proposed which would be a further outshoot from the building. Nevertheless, the garage would be a subservient building with timber cladding and a low roof form. The revised plans submitted with the appeal would enable access for maintenance of the original building. The garage, albeit subservient, would harm the setting of the listed building and the character and appearance of the conservation area. Nevertheless, I find that this harm would be less than substantial.
19. Neither the bedroom extension nor the proposed garage would be a significant extension, they would both be modest in scale, ancillary in nature and subordinate to the main building. Consequently, even though the development would fail to comply with the advice in the Design Guide, which seeks to resist extensions and additions to traditional farm buildings, the proposal would comply with Policy C1 of the VALP. The extension and garage would also be sensitive to the host building and not harm the character of the surroundings, as is advised within paragraph 10.24 of the supporting text of Policy C1.
20. The boundary for the proposed garden would be drawn parallel to the existing building up to the existing boundary of the grounds to Adstock Manor. The grounds are already garden land, albeit that the end, nearest to the main road, includes well-established trees and is not maintained grass lawns. The outer boundary to Adstock Manor is already a timber fence which is clearly visible as a domestic boundary.
21. Although it may be larger than the Council would expect for a conversion scheme the proposed garden would form an appropriate shaped garden area, following the line of the building, rather than creating a discordant shaped garden within a garden. It would relate well to the existing building and the existing landscape. From outside the appeal site, it would not be any different to the existing boundary which provides a defined edge to the built form of the village. The trees at the end of the garden would be protected through being within a conservation area and would, therefore, be retained. The boundary to be provided between the site and Adstock Manor can be controlled by a suitably worded condition. However, the new boundary to the proposed garden, and any domestic paraphernalia within the garden, would not be visible from outside the appeal site. Moreover, the proposed garden would not detract from, or encroach into, the countryside around the village as it does not form part of the countryside, even if the site previously contained more planting than it does now.

22. The proposed alterations and extensions to the building would result in harm to the setting of Ryan's Cottage, harm to the non-designated heritage assets, and harm to the Conservation Area. I find that the harm would be less than substantial and neither the extension nor the garage would reduce the ability to appreciate the significance of the heritage assets, or the significance the setting makes to the assets.
23. The public benefits of the development would be the creation of a new dwelling within a small village and the retention and re-use of an under-used, traditional building, which is a non-designated heritage asset. These benefits are significant, and I give them substantial weight. Even with the significant weight I am required to give to the less than substantial harm to the heritage assets, these public benefits would outweigh the harm.
24. For the above reasons, I find that the public benefits of the appeal proposal would outweigh the less than substantial harm to the special architectural and historic interest of the heritage assets and the development would, therefore, comply with Policies C1, BE1, BE2, BE3 and NE4 of the VALP. Collectively these policies seek to ensure that the conversion of existing buildings do not involve significant extensions, that any extensions are modest, ancillary, subordinate and necessary, retain, preserve or enhance heritage assets and their settings, not provide excessive gardens, ensure that the development relates well to the existing building and the landscape, respects and complements the physical characteristics, local distinctiveness and vernacular of the site and its surroundings, and minimises the impact on the visual amenity of the landscape.

Living conditions

25. The outbuilding to Ryan's Cottage, next to the appeal site, has previously been converted to residential accommodation. I saw at my visit that there are four windows facing into the proposed garden area for the appeal. These windows would overlook the proposed garden and would also be overlooked. However, this is the situation at present. The proposed garden area already forms part of the garden to Adstock Manor and the windows to Ryan's Cottage were permitted to face over this section of land.
26. The appeal proposal would likely result in this part of the garden being used more than it currently is. Nevertheless, the area proposed to be allocated as garden for the appeal would provide sufficient space for the future occupants to have a private area. Furthermore, it would be possible for the appeal scheme to provide some screening to reduce the effect of overlooking. However, this would be a private matter between the occupiers of the properties.
27. The three rooflights proposed on the elevation facing towards Ryan's Cottage would serve the ground floor corridor and bathroom. These are not habitable rooms and the rooflights would not be at a level at which views could be obtained over the neighbouring properties. The risk of overlooking from the building to Ryan's Cottage is limited and would not unacceptably affect the living conditions of the neighbouring property.
28. The amended plans submitted with the appeal relocate the proposed garage further from the high level window in the rear elevation of Ryan's Cottage. Moreover, the roof slope would allow some daylight to be provided to this window,

and I have no compelling evidence that this is a principal window to a habitable room.

29. For the above reasons, I find that the appeal proposal would not unreasonably harm the living conditions of the occupiers of Ryan's Cottage or the future occupants of the appeal scheme to a significantly greater extent than already exist. It would, therefore, comply with the requirements of Policy BE3 of the VALP which seeks to ensure that development would not unreasonably harm any aspect of the amenity of existing residents or future residents.

Other Matters

30. Both main parties have agreed that the Council is not able to demonstrate a five year housing land supply. Given my findings on the main issues this is not a determinative factor. Nevertheless, it would add weight to the provision of new housing, along with the social and economic benefits during and post construction. When assessed against the footnote to paragraph 11d) of the Framework the effect on the heritage assets, in this case, do not provide a strong reason to refuse the application.

Conditions

31. The Council has submitted a list of conditions, and the appellants have had an opportunity to comment on these. I have considered these in light of the Framework and Planning Practice Guidance, and I have undertaken some minor editing and rationalisation in the interests of precision and clarity.
32. In addition to the standard condition which limits the lifespan of the planning permission I have specified the approved plans for the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.
33. In the interests of protecting the character and appearance of the building, which I find is a non-designated heritage asset within the setting of a listed building and within a conservation area, it is reasonable and necessary to impose conditions to require the external materials to be submitted for approval. The details provided on the submitted elevations are not sufficient and do not provide sufficient certainty that the materials would be suitable. For the same reasons, and to also ensure that the design of the fenestration is not overly domestic, it is appropriate to require the appellants to submit further details of the windows. As with the materials the detail indicated on the plans is not sufficient. Notwithstanding that other rooflights may have been allowed on Ryan's Cottage, the appeal building is within the Conservation Area and as such it is reasonable to require the rooflights to be conservation style.
34. To ensure that the access, parking and turning spaces are provided prior to occupation of the dwelling it is essential that this work is secured by conditions. However, I have not required the garage to be constructed as the appellants would not need to provide this building to have sufficient parking and turning space. The provision of an electric charging point is required to meet Policy T8 of the VALP, so as to reduce the pollution effects associated with traffic, but I do not find it is necessary to require the details of the charging point to be submitted for approval. A condition is also necessary to limit the water consumption of the property, so as to reduce the demand on water, as required by policy I5 of the VALP.

35. The Council suggested a condition to remove permitted development rights for enlargements, improvements or other alterations, additions to the roof, porches, outbuildings, and hard surfaces, in the interests of the visual amenity of the area and to safeguard the special interest and significance of the NDHAs. Planning Practice Guidance advises that conditions should not be used to restrict such rights unless there is clear justification to do so. Such rights have not been removed in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order, 2015, for land in conservation areas or for NDHAs, albeit there are limited rights in conservation areas. Even though the condition has been agreed by the appellants, there is no compelling evidence that alterations and extensions permitted under the rights would harm the visual amenity of the area or the NDHAs. I, therefore, find that there is no compelling reason to remove the permitted development rights from the scheme.
36. Given my findings on the main issues, I have not imposed a condition to require the dwelling to be self-build. Furthermore, the condition is not enforceable or precise. It is also not necessary for the dwelling to be self-build to provide exemption from biodiversity net gain as the evidence before me indicates that it is exempt for other reasons.
37. I have no compelling evidence that any domestic landscaping would be harmful to the NDHAs, or the character and appearance of the area, given that the site is already landscaped gardens. I, therefore, have not imposed conditions to require a landscaping scheme to be submitted or for the landscaping to be planted in accordance with such a scheme. Nevertheless, given the heritage sensitivity of the site the details of new boundary treatments are required, and these would need to be sympathetic to the existing boundaries and buildings.
38. To ensure that the development provides the ecological mitigation measures proposed within the scheme it is necessary to secure these through a condition. Moreover, to ensure that any hard surfacing provided would not result in increased risk of flooding either within the site or elsewhere it is appropriate to ensure that hard surfaced areas are either porous finishes or provided with surface water drainage.

Conclusion

39. For the reasons given above, including considering the effect on the heritage assets, the appeal should be allowed, subject to conditions.

K Townend

INSPECTOR

SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following plans and drawings: location plan, proposed ground floor plan drawing 2306_GA_01_F, proposed elevations drawings 2306_GA_02_F and 2306_GA_03_F, garage elevations drawing 2306_GA_04_F, and proposed site plan and mezzanine plan drawing 2306_GA_05_F.
- 3) No development on the conversion of the building shall take place until samples of all external facing materials, including rainwater goods, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved samples.
- 4) Notwithstanding the approved plans, no windows shall be installed until details of the design, including profiles, cills, heads, reveals, materials, finish, and colour, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
- 5) The rooflights hereby permitted shall be flush fitting, conservation style, and shall not be glazed or re-glazed other than with non-reflective glass.
- 6) Prior to first occupation of the dwelling hereby permitted, the parking, manoeuvring, and turning areas shall be constructed in accordance with the approved details. Thereafter those spaces shall be retained for the use as approved only.
- 7) Prior to first occupation of the dwelling hereby permitted, the means of access onto Main Street shall have been upgraded and constructed to the appropriate Buckinghamshire Council access standards. The access shall thereafter be retained as such in perpetuity.
- 8) Prior to first occupation of the dwelling hereby permitted an electric vehicle charging point shall have been provided and shall be retained for the lifetime of the development, or until such time as other technologies replace electric vehicles.
- 9) The dwelling hereby permitted shall be built and fitted out so as not to exceed the optional water consumption standard of 110 litres per person per day, as set out in Approved Document G of the Building Regulations 2010 (as amended).
- 10) Prior to erection of any boundary treatments the details of the design, materials, and colour finish shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
- 11) Any hard surfaced areas within the development shall be finished either in porous materials or fitted with surface water drainage and shall be retained for the lifetime of the development.
- 12) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the details provided in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Bat Survey, dated August 2024.

*** END OF SCHEDULE ***