



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 16 September 2025

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

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 6 October 2025.

Appeal A Ref: APP/V3120/W/25/3366067

46-48 The Thatched Cottage, Lower Radley, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 3AY

- 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 Richard Dudding against the decision of Vale of White Horse District Council.
 - The application Ref is P25/V0151/HH.
 - The development proposed is internal alterations to the existing house, external alterations to the existing dormer, and replacement of existing modern windows.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/V3120/Y/25/3366073

46-48 The Thatched Cottage, Lower Radley, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 3AY

- 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 Richard Dudding against the decision of Vale of White Horse District Council.
 - The application Ref is P25/V0152/LB.
 - The works proposed are internal alterations to the existing house, external alterations to the existing dormer, and replacement of existing modern windows.
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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.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

Special interest and significance

6. The appeal dwelling is a two-storey, detached, late medieval Grade II listed¹ building, remodelled and extended in the 17th century. It is cruck-framed with two exposed wall posts in the left gable. The historic core comprises five bays orientated north to south, with 20th century extensions to the west and east. The historic core is of timber-framed construction, set on a limestone rubble plinth, with predominantly wattle and daub infill and a rendered finish beneath a thatched roof. The dwelling also features a modest clay tiled roof with small dormer windows, and a weatherboarded finish on its right-hand bay. It is set back from the road and occupies a generous plot, with several outbuildings of various types scattered throughout.

7. The listed building's interior includes a historic fireplace and a newel staircase, which leads up to the first floor. Evidence indicates that the upper floor was inserted during the 17th century, above the original open hall. There is also reference to the building having been used as two separate dwellings at some point in its history.

8. Based on my site visit and the evidence before me, I find that the listed building's special interest, insofar as it relates to these appeals, derives from its historic and architectural interest as an illustration of 16th and 17th century domestic architecture. The thatched roof, timber-framing, surviving historic fabric, use of traditional materials and construction techniques, the legibility of its historic plan form, and its attractive architectural style all contribute meaningfully to its heritage value.

Proposal and effects

9. The proposal would involve the removal of part of the 17th century upper-floor structure. Although inserted after the building's original construction, this flooring forms an integral part of its historic plan. The division created by the 17th floor reflects the social changes of the period, when the desire for privacy in domestic chambers began to replace the tradition of open hall living. As such, it provides tangible evidence of the building's evolution and embodies the social history embedded within its design.

10. This flooring therefore makes a positive contribution to the building's significance and heritage value. Its partial removal would result in the permanent loss of historic fabric, irreversibly diminishing the building's authenticity and integrity. Furthermore, it would obscure the narrative of the building's development, leaving the onlooker with a confused or incomplete understanding of its history.

11. While I acknowledge that the cruck frame predates the 17th century flooring, heritage significance is not determined solely by age. The floor itself has intrinsic value as a historic feature, evidencing a key phase in the building's evolution and reflecting broader social changes in domestic life.

12. Both the cruck framing and the floor contribute to the building's layered history, and their relationship is itself significant. Together, they illustrate how the structure was adapted and repurposed over time. Removing the flooring to expose or 'better reveal' the cruck framing would irreversibly sacrifice one important element for the sake of the other, thereby reducing the building's evidential value and distorting the legibility of its development.

¹ List Entry Number: 1048285

13. Although a section of the floor would be retained to create a gallery space, and floor joist holes left in the wall might indicate that the floor once existed, these measures would not convey the same evidential value as the surviving historic floor itself.

14. I acknowledge that the listed building has undergone alterations in the past, including the concealment of the 17th century flooring behind modern plasterboard. However, no compelling justification has been provided as to why these previous works would support the current proposal.

15. My attention has been drawn to an example at Calverley Old Hall, where an 18th century floor was removed to reinstate the original volume of a 15th century hammer-beamed Great Hall. However, there are notable differences between that case and the proposal before me. Calverley Old Hall was floored over later in its history and had existed as an open hall for a longer period than the appeal building. The evidence also indicates that it was listed on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register due to its poor condition and semi-derelict state. In that case, the harm was justified by the public benefit of conserving the heritage asset for public use. In contrast, the appeal building is in good condition and currently in use as a dwelling. In this instance, I find that the flooring forms part of the building's layered features which convey the richness of its narrative, and its loss would diminish that narrative rather than enhance it.

16. The proposal includes replacing an existing dormer window with a first-floor roof extension incorporating a flat-roofed link to the existing thatched dormer. The Council has described this as an enlarged dormer extension.

17. The roof slope on which the proposed extension would be situated is modest in scale. The proposed extension would be both wider and taller than the existing dormer window, with its pitched roof form positioned closer to the building's ridge, making it appear less subordinate and more visually prominent. It would occupy a significantly large portion of the modest roof slope, disrupting the architectural hierarchy in which dormers are traditionally secondary features. The inclusion of a flat-roofed link would further contribute to its bulky overall appearance. Its increased width and height, combined with the flat-roofed link, would result in a dominant feature that is disproportionate to the scale of the roof slope.

18. Despite being attached to a more recent extension of the building and being located to the rear, it would introduce a discordant element that would detract from the historic character of the listed building's rear elevation, thereby causing harm to the designated heritage asset. This harm is not merely aesthetic but would affect the architectural integrity and historic significance of the listed building.

19. While views of the proposed dormer would be partially obscured from the public highway by the host dwelling and existing vegetation, it would be clearly visible from within the appeal site. The significance of a heritage asset is not dependent on public visibility. Even where views are limited, inappropriate alterations can erode the architectural integrity and historic value of the heritage asset. In this case, the proposed dormer would appear as an overly large and incongruous addition to a modest property, undermining its historic character. Listed buildings are protected for their intrinsic architectural and historic interest, irrespective of whether public views can be gained.

20. The appellant asserts that no historic fabric would be lost as a result of the proposed extension and that the materials and fenestration rhythm would be

sympathetic to the existing 20th century extension. While these aspects are noted, they do not mitigate the fundamental concerns regarding the scale, form, and visual impact of the proposal.

21. The Council's Joint Design Guide (2022) sets out principles that planning applications are expected to meet. While the appellant contends that "there is not one-size-fits-all solution to design," the aim of the guidance is to ensure that roof extensions are set within the roof slope and that scale and massing respect the host dwelling and remain subordinate. The proposed extension, by virtue of its scale and form, would fail to meet these principles and would result in an unbalanced and visually intrusive addition.

22. The appellant has referred to other examples of roof forms on rural and low-density dwellings, suggesting that the proposal does not represent a typical dormer. However, each case must be assessed on its own merits, and the existence of other roof forms elsewhere does not establish a precedent, particularly where those examples may differ in context, scale, or heritage sensitivity. The presence of these other examples does not justify the proposal before me and does not alter my conclusions.

23. Drawing the above together, 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

24. 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. I consider this harm to fall within the mid-level of the 'less than substantial' range. 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.

25. In this case, economic benefits would be delivered through the construction phase and the general investment into the property. There would also be environmental benefits including thermal efficiency improvements, such as under floor heating, solar heating, and improved light and ventilation. I also acknowledge that the proposal would better reveal elements of the cruck framing and would remove modern plasterboard. Nevertheless, I am not persuaded that similar benefits could not be achieved by a proposal which would be less harmful to the significance of this designated heritage asset.

26. Additionally, it has not been demonstrated that the property would not be usable or viable as a dwelling 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.

27. 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 small public benefits arising from the proposal.

28. I conclude that the proposal would not preserve the 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 CP37 of the Vale of White Horse District Council Local Plan 2031 (Part 1) (adopted 2016), and Policies DP36 and DP38 of the Vale of White Horse District Council Local Plan 2031 (Part 2) (adopted 2019). Collectively, these policies amongst other things, seek to ensure development is of high quality design that responds positively to the site and its surroundings, and preserves or enhances the special interest or significance of the heritage asset.

29. The Council's decision notice makes reference to Policy CP36 of the Vale of White Horse District Council Local Plan 2031 (Part 1) (adopted 2016). However, Policy CP36 relates to electronic communications. I therefore do not find it relevant to these appeals.

Other Matters

30. I note the representations submitted in support of the proposal. However, none of the evidence before me leads me to a different view.

Conclusions

31. **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, for the reasons given, I conclude that Appeal A should be dismissed.

32. **Appeal B:** For the reasons given, I conclude that Appeal B should be dismissed.

H Smith

INSPECTOR