



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 13 August 2025

by Dr Rachael A Bust BSc (Hons) MA MSc LLM PhD MIOl MCMI FGS MEnvSci MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11th November 2025

Appeal A Ref: APP/W2845/W/25/3358652

Old Mill House, Stockwell Lane, Hellidon, West Northamptonshire, NN11 6LG

- 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 Galliford against the decision of West Northamptonshire Council.
- The application Ref is 2024/0036/FULL.
- The development proposed is to demolish the existing single rear extension and erect a larger single storey extension in its place.

Appeal B Ref: APP/W2845/Y/25/3358658

Old Mill House, Stockwell Lane, Hellidon, West Northamptonshire, NN11 6LG

- 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 M Galliford against the decision of West Northamptonshire Council.
- The application Ref is 2024/0037/LBC.
- The works proposed are the same as Appeal A.

Decisions

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

Preliminary Matters

3. As the proposal lies in the Hellidon Conservation Area and relates to a Grade II listed building, I have had special regard to sections 16(2), 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act). The two appeals concern the same scheme under different, complementary legislation. I have dealt with both appeals together in my reasoning to avoid duplication.

Main Issue

4. The main issue in both appeals is the effect on heritage assets and whether the proposed development and works would preserve a Grade II listed building, The Old Mill House, and any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses; and whether the scheme would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Hellidon Conservation Area.

Reasons

Old Mill House

5. The Old Mill House is a Grade II listed building¹ dating from the early 18th century and is thought to have once been the residence of the village miller. It is located within the historic core of the settlement near to the church which acts as a focus for the settlement. It is a two-storey L-shaped dwelling formed by the integration of 2 dwellings and is built in coursed square ironstone rubble in a traditional local manner. A long straw thatched roof with ligger detailing at the ridge line and extending to incorporate eyebrows over the first-floor windows. The dwelling has a modest number of well-proportioned 20th century 2-light casement windows with wooden lintels and decorative leaded glazing. Other 20th century additions include an entrance porch to the front and a modest and unobtrusive single storey flat roof rear extension.
6. The dwelling is sited towards the front of the plot fronting onto Stockwell Lane which then enables a good-sized rear garden. A distinctive feature of the appeal site is that there is a considerable change of level within the plot, so the land to the side and rear is much higher. This enables the dwelling to nestle comfortably within the rural tranquillity of Hellidon. Stone walls define external boundaries and also used as a retaining structure which provides an attractive garden feature.

Hellidon Conservation Area

7. The site is located within the Hellidon Conservation Area (CA) within the historic core of the village which illustrates a medieval settlement pattern based upon two separate manors contained within a rolling landscape. The site is within one of the earliest parts of the settlement that grew up around the church, where the historic street pattern and spaces have been retained. The open spaces and the generous plot sizes of many properties is a defining spatial characteristic of the CA. The vernacular form in the CA is drawn from the cottage style dwellings, with the larger properties being L-shaped or illustrating multiple cross wings. There are a number of designated and non-designated buildings which represent the rural village vernacular. The architectural cohesion of the CA is evident from the use of stone for the dwellings, outbuildings and boundary treatments. These features contribute positively to its special interest, and to how the CA is experienced and understood.

Significance

8. Based on the above, the significance of Old Mill House lies in part from its architectural and historic interest. The architectural interest is drawn from its cottage style L-shaped form with the balanced and proportionate number and style of window openings and use of traditional materials for the building and the boundary and internal garden walls. It has historic interest as one of the older houses within the village and thought to have once been the residence of the village miller. The spacious nature of the plot in the historic core of the village and the use of traditional materials enable the appeal site and building to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the CA.

¹ List Entry Number: 1345560

The proposal and its effect

9. The proposal seeks a replacement single storey rear extension. The existing single storey extension is a small and modest addition to the appeal dwelling. It provides a limited amount of additional floorspace and creates box bay windows to two ground floor rooms with an open fronted rear porch in between. The use of the coursed stonework, timber framed lead lattice windows and rolled lead flat roof are compatible with the appeal dwelling. Consequently, its size, proportions and choice of materials mean that the existing extension does not visually compete with or detract from the appeal dwelling.
10. The design for the proposed replacement extension was revised during the course of the planning application. Despite the revisions, the extension would still represent a substantial single storey addition to the dwelling and extend the dwelling's footprint further into the rear garden. I note that the proposal would retain the same height as the current extension with revised roof materials which would be more compatible with the host dwelling, even with the somewhat alien raised central rooflight feature. However, the scale of the extension's projection into the garden would not, in my view, enable it to retain subservience to the dwelling. The scale of the extension would therefore compete with, and distract from the balanced form, architectural quality and character of the host building. Consequently, I consider it would unduly dominate the rear elevation.
11. Given the site's topography, the proposal would necessitate the removal of the existing stone retaining wall and the execution of substantial groundworks. The replacement retaining wall would be set deeper within the side and rear garden areas. Its proposed oval configuration would introduce a distinctly modern design feature that would draw visual attention and, in effect, frame and accentuate the increased footprint of the proposed extension.
12. While the reuse of existing stone is to be welcomed, it would not sufficiently mitigate the visual impact associated with the wall's more contemporary shape. I acknowledge that gardens can change over time. Indeed, the appellant's statement includes a photograph from the late 1970s which shows a larger gravelled area around the existing extension than is present today. However, this photograph demonstrates that the spacious nature of the gravelled area in the rear garden allows the appreciation of the listed building which is not distracted by the small and modest rear addition.
13. The layout plans indicate that the proposed extension would use the existing openings in the present extension. This would minimise the impact on the existing fabric of the appeal building, which in theory at least, means that the proposal could be reversed in the future. At present, the ground floor layout comprises well-balanced and proportionate rooms. The proposed extension would be accessed from two existing rooms, and, notwithstanding the introduction of internal doors, the effect would be to enlarge these adjoining spaces. In my view, this would undermine the existing spatial proportions and balance of the ground floor, resulting in harm to the internal character and coherence of the appeal dwelling.
14. The revised proposals would incorporate extensive areas of glazing which would be visually dominant. The overall extent of the openings would be harmful to the character of the host dwelling with its more modest, well-proportioned 2-light casement windows. The large glazed areas would further emphasise the scale of

the proposed extension, reinforcing its visual prominence within the site. I acknowledge that the revised proposal represents an improvement over the original submission, and that specific design details of the windows and doors could be addressed through planning conditions. However, my concern lies with the scale of the openings, and this aspect could not be sufficiently mitigated through conditions and, in my view, remains unacceptable.

15. During my site visit, vegetation along the appeal site boundary on the narrow section of Stockwell Lane up to Little Back Lane limited views to occasional glimpses. However, in autumn and winter, when deciduous trees shed their foliage, visibility would increase. This effect would be amplified by the rising topography towards Little Back Lane, which affords a more elevated perspective of the site. As such the views from the public domain would be seasonal and dynamic, ranging from glimpses to moderately intermittent. On balance, I find that there would be harm to the character and appearance of the CA.
16. For the above reasons therefore, I find that the appeal proposal would harm the significance and would not preserve the special architectural or historic interest of the Grade II listed building, The Old Mill House; and it would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA. Accordingly, it would conflict with Policies S10(i) and BN5 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) (JCS), adopted 2014. These strategic policies seek, amongst other things, that development will protect, conserve and enhance the heritage assets and their settings to contribute to West Northamptonshire's sense of place. There would also be conflict with Policies SP1 and ENV7 of the Settlements and Countryside Local Plan (Part 2) for Daventry District 2011-2029, (LP) adopted 2020 which seek to deliver the strategic policies in relation to heritage.
17. Nevertheless, Policy ENV7, in line with paragraph 215 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), requires that the harm is weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. I shall return to the public benefits as part of the heritage balance later in this decision.

Other Matters

18. My attention has been drawn to other extensions within Hellidon, specifically those at Hellidon House, Orchard Croft, and The Coach House. The delegated officer's report refers to revised drawings in relation to Hellidon House. However, the submitted elevation plan does not include a drawing reference, and I am therefore unable to confirm whether it forms part of the approved scheme. A similar issue arises with the proposed elevations plan submitted for The Coach House, which also lacks a drawing number, making it unclear whether it represents the approved development. Orchard Croft appears to be a more contemporary dwelling, enclosed on all sides by other residential plots. As such, no views were obtainable from public land.
19. In any event, I do not have the full details regarding the heritage considerations that supported each of these schemes. As such it limits my ability to fully understand the reasons for their acceptability and assess their relevance in relation to the scheme currently before me. Based on the extracts of information provided regarding these schemes, together with what I could observe from public land during my visit to Hellidon, I do not find these schemes to be directly

comparable to the appeal scheme. Therefore, they do not justify the proposal currently before me.

20. There are no planning conditions which could fully address, control and mitigate the harm I have found. The absence of objections or findings of no harm in relation to other planning considerations do not automatically lead to the acceptability of a proposal.

The Heritage Balance and Conclusion

21. The Framework in paragraph 212 is clear that great weight should be given to the heritage asset's conservation. This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance. It goes on to advise that the significance can be harmed or lost through the alteration or destruction of those assets. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification.
22. In this case I have found that the harm to the significance of the listed building arising from the proposed scale, window and door treatment and reprofiling of the external retaining stone wall, would be less than substantial in terms of the Framework, and in the order of low harm. In relation to the character and appearance of the CA, its significance would be localised to the seasonal views from the narrow part of Stockwell Lane and Little Back Lane. As a result, the harm would also be less than substantial and in the order of low harm.
23. Where a proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, Policy ENV7 and the Framework in paragraph 215 requires that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
24. The appellant explains that the proposal would address a practical issue of water ingress from the roof together with poor insulation arising from the nature of the construction. I acknowledge that some remedial works are required, however, there may be more feasible and less obtrusive options which could be explored. Reference is also made to the need to strengthen and rebuild the stone wall. However, these two issues would not justify the appeal proposal and therefore they each carry limited weight.
25. It is suggested that the proposal would make efficient use of land within a generous plot. Be that as it may, it would be of limited weight in the heritage balance. The appellant contends that the replacement extension would be a higher quality structure which would represent an enhancement. As new structures would, in any event, have to be constructed to modern building standards, there is an expectation, at least, that they should be of higher quality than the standards in place at the time of the construction of the current extension. Accordingly, this is of limited weight.
26. The appellant indicates that proposal would enable improved energy efficiency. Although I recognise the Framework in paragraph 167 advises that significant weight should be given to proposals which improve energy efficiency, this does not disapply those parts of the Framework relating to heritage and in particular the need to give the resulting heritage harm great weight in the public benefit balance. As such I consider that this is of modest weight. The use of sustainable materials

would be a public benefit; however, limited evidence has been presented to substantiate this intention and therefore it can only carry limited weight.

27. The appellant contends that the proposal would ensure the continued functional use of the Old Mill House by facilitating a much-needed renovation. Maintaining the building's functionality is important to the ongoing preservation of the heritage asset and as such would be a public benefit. However, I have no cogent evidence before me to indicate that occupation and use of the two rooms which the very modest existing extension provides the box bay windows for is currently compromised to such a degree that it affects the functional use of the whole dwelling. As such, in the absence of relevant evidence, this suggestion can only be afforded limited weight.
28. I recognise the desire to meet the needs of the present occupiers by allowing them to adapt their home to modern living standards, creating more usable internal space and address the accessibility concerns arising from the presence of a small step. However, these are private benefits and therefore beyond the scope of the test in the Framework.
29. The continued viable use of the appeal property as a residential dwelling is not dependent on the proposal because the building has an ongoing residential use that would not cease in its absence.
30. Consequently, I find that the above do not amount to a clear public benefit which would outweigh the harm that would be caused to either heritage asset. I conclude that, on balance, the proposal would fail to preserve the special architectural or historic interest of the Grade II listed building, The Old Mill House; and it would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA. This would fail to satisfy the requirements of the Act; the Framework and the development plan policies S10(i) and BN5 of the JCS and SP1 and ENV7 of the LP.
31. I have had regard to the Framework and these same Local Plan policies for Appeal B in so far as they are material in determining a proposal for Listed Building Consent and taking all considerations into account, I find both appeals to be unacceptable.
32. For the reasons given above both appeals should be dismissed.

Dr Rachael A Bust

INSPECTOR