



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 October 2025

by J Somers BSocSci (Planning) MA (HEC) MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/F2415/D/25/3371400

Kingsley House, Back Lane, East Langton LE16 7TB

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr and Mrs R Cross against the decision of Harborough District Council.
 - The application reference is 25/00353/FUL.
 - The development proposed is described on the Application Form as 'Triple Garage with Hobby Room over.'
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effects of the proposal upon:
 - The existing building and the character and appearance of the locality; and
 - The significance of the building and its associated setting, which is considered by the Council to be a Non-Designated Heritage Asset (NDHA).

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. The appeal site is part of a former farm called Grange Farm which is to the end of a long drive which accesses a number of dwellings, some new constructions and extensions and alterations to historic farm buildings to make them more domesticated. The development of dwellings is quite isolated with agricultural fields surrounding and long distance views. It would appear that in designing the development that there has been some attempt of maintaining a quasi-agricultural character, in that there is a hierarchy between the barns which tend to be single storey and the dwellings which seek to mimic a type of farmhouse which is two storeys. However there are a number of 'farmhouses' and larger type buildings attempting to be barns which do detract from the overall legibility and authenticity of this development.
4. One of the larger barn buildings which the appeal site forms is divided into 3 dwellings. A small number of elements of the overall building appear to be from the turn of the twentieth century, however much of the building appears to be a pastiche style which was constructed much later. The legibility of the existing form and historic fabric is difficult to interpret as the larger barn building has been designed with various wings that extend off from the barn giving a more complicated arrangement than one would expect from an agricultural barn which

tends to be more linear, and simplistic in form. Despite this lack of legibility or authenticity, the barn however is designed to replicate some of the characteristics of a historic agricultural building, such as the hierarchy in form, the simplicity and functional design and the quality in materials. These are some of the elements that make up the local qualities that contribute to the character and appearance of the buildings and the locality.

5. The Appeal Site consists of a single storey building much of which is a pastiche of a barn that is an inverted L-shape that is formed around a small courtyard. The building is constructed in brick with clay tile roof. Despite being a more modern construction, elements such as hierarchy have been incorporated such as dropping the ridge of the building as the wing gets further away from the main component of the barn, which gives the idea of extensions over time. Since the construction of the inverted L-Shape, a detached two bay carport has been constructed to the north which is timber framed, clay tile roof and open at ground floor.
6. In undertaking development, the Harborough Local Plan (LP) Policy GD8 sets a number of design principles to be considered such as taking into account the surrounding context, local character and distinctiveness, embracing local vernacular including appropriate building materials, amongst others.
7. The proposed extension would demolish the existing open carport and develop a more solid and enclosed three storey garage with room over in it's place. Given that there is a deliberate attempt to design the main dwelling in a hierarchical way that steps down and becomes smaller, the proposed garage would be taller and wider than parts of the main dwelling/barn component which would give a competing nature to the main component of the building. Whilst I appreciate that the proposed garage building is detached, the close proximity, massing and solid appearance would also be read as another extension to the existing barn to be almost an inverted C shape, further overcomplicating the functional and hierarchical agricultural appearance. This particular component of the main building is single storey, the proposal which has an increased height and occupation at first floor level increases the status of the building above the buildings surrounding rather than being subservient to it. The addition of three rooflights to each roof plane further domesticates what should be a more agricultural appearance.
8. I acknowledge the Appellant's Statement of Case (SoC) which shows a plan that gives 3D perspectives and photographs of an application to extend the adjacent dwelling at Herons Reach¹ which is part of the same main building. I can also appreciate how this causes confusion as to the appropriateness of extensions, given that this neighbouring building has had an approval for a large building with external staircase with an excessive height and overall massing. Together with the glazed smaller building with roof lantern illustrates a poor appreciation of agricultural buildings which has become overly domesticated as a result. This neighbouring application appears also to have been considered over a decade ago in a different policy position than is being assessed currently. Taking this into account, the extension at Herons Reach only demonstrates the detriment to character and appearance caused by poorly executed extensions, rather than providing justification for the current proposal.

¹ Harborough Planning Ref: 13/01327/FUL

9. I also note discussion around views to the group of buildings, particularly from Public Rights of Way (PROW) nearby. The PROW commences at East Langton and continues through the countryside towards other PROWs further south. Whilst I agree with the Appellant that much of the appreciation of the group of buildings would be of Heron's Reach, the buildings are appreciated as a whole, with the proposed building adding additional bulk and massing to how the group of buildings are appreciated within the countryside. Whilst this is not an overriding reason for refusing the application, character and appearance is not only experienced from the public realm or from public points of view.
10. In conclusion of this matter, the proposed triple garage building would conflict with the architectural integrity and authenticity of the existing building, further complicating the layout and integrity of the group of buildings which have been purposely designed with an agricultural influence. The proposed building would result in the loss of positive characteristics and would be clearly disproportionate and the additional visual bulk and massing when compared to the form of the existing building. Consequently, the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the existing building, and the local distinctiveness of the locality and be contrary to LP Policy GD8.

Non-Designated Heritage Asset Considerations

11. Paragraph 216 of the National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) allows Local Planning Authorities to make assessments of buildings which are of local and regional significance. Councils can designate buildings that they consider to be of local/regional interest whereby any harm is then balanced together in the decision making process which are termed Non-Designated Heritage Assets (NDHA). The Reason for Refusal states that the appeal building is a NDHA, with the Planning Officer's report considering that the building is locally significant because of its traditional character and an example of a rural vernacular building. I have not been presented in the appeal with any historic research, assessment of the significance or no heritage statement has been submitted in accordance with Paragraph 207 of the Framework. The Appellant also does not question the status of the building as a NDHA.
12. Despite this, as described previously, whilst there appear to be small elements of historic fabric, the barn development is in my view an inauthentic representation of a traditional steading, the amount of extensions and overly domesticated elements that the buildings have had, together with the additional dwellings surrounding does not in my opinion reinforce the legibility or authenticity of this former steading, but detracts from it. Having assessed the buildings which make up the scheme in accordance with the guidance on local heritage listing² I am not convinced that the buildings are so locally or regionally significant that it meets the criteria in the guidance that it warrants such designation as a NDHA.
13. Whilst it is important to maintain the character and appearance of rural buildings, based on the information submitted as part of this appeal, I do not consider the building to be a NDHA, and as such will not consider this matter any further. As such LP Policy HC1 which seeks to protect heritage assets is not relevant to this appeal.

² Historic England, 2021 'Local Heritage Listing: Identifying and Conserving Local Heritage.' Historic England Advice Note 7.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above, and based upon the evidence as part of this appeal, whilst I do not consider the building to be a NDHA, when the policies of the development plan are taken as a whole, this is not enough to outweigh the detriment caused as a result of character and appearance. As such, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

J Somers
INSPECTOR