



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 28 October 2025

by Graham Chamberlain BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 November 2025

Appeal A - Ref: APP/Y3940/W/25/3366545

Reybridge Farm Stables, 32 Reybridge, Lacock, Wiltshire SN15 2PF

- 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 David Doel against the decision of Wiltshire Council.
 - The application Ref is PL/2024/04056.
 - The development proposed is described as 'Conversion of existing stables into a single storey three-bedroom dwelling house, with extensions to the eastern and western ends'.
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Appeal B - Ref: APP/Y3940/Y/25/3366544

Reybridge Farm Stables, 32 Reybridge, Lacock, Wiltshire SN15 2PF

- 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 David Doel against the decision of Wiltshire Council.
 - The application Ref is PL/2024/04525.
 - The works proposed are described as 'Conversion of existing stables into a single storey three-bedroom dwelling house, with extensions to the Eastern and Western ends'.
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Decisions

1. The appeals are dismissed.

Preliminary Matters and Main Issues

2. I have considered the two appeals concurrently, but on their own merits, because there are common matters between them. The appellant submitted an updated structural report with their Statement of Case and the Council has asked that I disregard it. In so doing, they have referred to the Procedural Guide: Planning Appeals, which states that the appeal process should not be used to evolve a scheme. However, the updated structural report has not amended, or evolved, the scheme. Instead, it is evidence submitted to support the appellant's case that the building is structurally sound and capable of conversion without major rebuilding. Although a technical document, it is not overly long, and the Council has not sought additional time to seek professional advice to review it. For these reasons, the report has been accepted and considered.
3. The main issues in these appeals are:
 - The effect of the proposal on the significance of the listed building (Appeals A and B); and
 - Whether the appeal site is an appropriate location for the proposed development, with reference to the spatial strategy in the development plan (Appeal A).

Reasons

The effect on the significance of the listed building

4. Keybridge House is a Grade II listed building which probably dates from the 18th Century. It is a fine example of a mid-Georgian stone property which expresses local vernacular traditions and high quality craftsmanship. The building's rural location and origins as a farmhouse are very important components in understanding the siting and design of the building. It is a repository of period building traditions and methods and tells us about how people lived in the past. It therefore has a high level of evidential¹, aesthetic² and historic value. The building draws significance from these values.
5. Keybridge House is part of an evolved historic farmstead that includes the appeal building. The Council and appellant agree that the appeal building is curtilage listed. It is not directly mentioned in the list description, but this is not unusual as the description simply identifies the listed building rather than every feature of significance. The appeal building is a single storey agricultural building with a simple form. In all likelihood it was originally designed with an open front elevation, but over time these openings have been unsympathetically infilled with concrete blockwork. That said, the narrow linear form is still evident as is the original stone finish. Indeed, the store building at the western end of the range, and closest to the farmhouse, still has stonework forming part of the front elevation and what may be original openings. The use of double roman tiles to the roof with ventilation slits along the ridge further reinforce the functional agricultural aesthetic. Overall, the building adds to the significance of the principal listed building as an integral component of the historic farmstead.
6. Converting the appeal building to a dwelling would inherently harm its character. This is because the agricultural character would be lost to a domestic use. That said, the design would have many sympathetic elements. For example, in the front elevation the external timber boarding would be set behind the original timber posts thereby allowing the original openings to be articulated and understood. The timber boarding, which would replace the unsightly blockwork, would be left to silver. It would therefore harmonise with the hue of the stone. The windows would also be simple and generally regimented to respond to the pattern of stable doors. The materials, and some of the detailing, would therefore respect the existing rural agricultural aesthetic. The external landscaping, such as a five-bar gate and planting and stonework to the boundaries, would also echo an agricultural yard.
7. Nevertheless, some aspects of the proposal would be less sensitive. In particular, the use of roof lights, prominent solar panels, patio doors with side lights and bi fold doors would all be overtly domestic additions on the principal elevation of the building. Moreover, the building would be prominently extended with the resulting impact on its form. The appellant suggests these extensions would not be significant in size, but he has erroneously included the existing modern detached stable building in the calculation of the existing Gross Internal Area.
8. The larger of the two extensions would have a simple gable ended form born out of the existing building, although it would be slightly wider. That said, it would have a lower ridge height than the existing and thus a sense of subservience. It would

¹ Also referred to as research and archaeological value

² Also referred to as architectural or artistic value

provide enclosure to the courtyard and a buffer from the agricultural operations to the east. The extension also facilitates a more open plan internal layout, which in turn permits a greater spread of internal light without excessive fenestration. It is desirable to retain a solidity to the structure, which is an important feature of agricultural buildings. Thus, the larger extension can be justified as necessary.

9. Alternatively, the smaller extension would exhibit a contrived discordant form with a shallow pitched roof finished in metal extending off the existing mono pitch roof. It would also conceal the historic stonework and the existing openings, which may be original. It would be an incongruous element prominent in views from the entrance to the principal listed building. The necessity of this extension has not been made out, as it is simply proposed to facilitate an ensuite bathroom. The provision of the ensuite would also result in an unnecessary roof light.
10. Overall, the proposal would harm the significance of the appeal building. In coming to this view, I note that the Conservation Officer did not object, but I have come to my own conclusions for the reasons given.
11. The harm would be less than substantial within the meaning of the National Planning Policy Framework (the 'Framework') and within the middle of this range. In such circumstances, the Framework states that the less than substantial harm should be balanced against the public benefits of the scheme. In calibrating this balance, the Framework states that listed buildings are an irreplaceable resource that should be conserved for existing and future generations and that great weight should be given to their conservation. This is synonymous with the considerable importance and weight that must be given to the statutory duty to pay special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting³.
12. As outlined above, the appeal building is of sufficient significance to justify its retention. Retaining and repairing the building would therefore be a public benefit, especially as the Planning Practice Guide⁴ (PPG) explains that in general terms, the risk of a heritage asset decaying on account of neglect is best addressed by ensuring it remains in active use. Undisputed evidence provided by the appellant demonstrates that commercial uses would not be viable. The same would apply to a holiday home. As such, an unrestricted residential occupation would be the optimal viable use of the building. In these circumstances, the inherent harm caused by a residential conversion can be justified. The proposal would also see the existing unsightly timber stable building removed, which can be considered a public benefit as it would improve the setting of the historic farmstead. However, I have explained that there are some unnecessary adverse impacts. These would result in residual harm even when accounting for the benefits.
13. The Council are currently unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, and the shortfall is acute, being around 2.42 years. In these circumstances, the provision of just a single house would be a moderate benefit. In addition, there would be some economic benefits from the construction of the proposal and the spend of future occupants. Future occupants could also add to the vitality of the area, albeit modestly, and reusing the building would have environmental benefits such as the re use of materials and embedded energy and modest biodiversity enhancements. However, these benefits could be achieved with a more sensitive conversion that avoids the residual harm. Accordingly, the public benefits of the

³ See Sections 16 and 66(1) of The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

⁴ Paragraph: 002 Reference ID: 18a-002-20190723

proposal would not outweigh the less than substantial harm. Thus, it would not have clear and convincing justification.

14. In conclusion, the proposal would not preserve the significance and special interest of the listed building. As a result, it would not adhere to the expectations set out in The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the National Planning Policy Framework. The proposal would also fail to adhere to Policies 57 and 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (CS) in so far as relevant, which seek to secure high quality design respectful of local distinctiveness and the conservation of designated heritage assets.

The appropriateness of the proposal with reference to the spatial strategy

15. In accordance with the principles of sustainable development, the Council seeks to direct most new development to existing settlements and restrict it outside them. To this end Policy CP1 of the CS establishes a settlement hierarchy and Policy CP2 outlines what will be approved within and outside these settlements. Indeed, Policy CP2 states that development outside the defined limits of settlements will not be permitted unless it would adhere to another policy within the plan. Policy CP11 of the CS lists the settlements within the Corsham Community Area.
16. The appeal site is not located within any of the defined settlement limits and is therefore within the countryside. Policy H4 of the North Wiltshire Local Plan and Policy CP48 of the CS outline the types of development that will be permitted in the countryside. This includes the conversion and reuse of rural buildings.
17. The Council and appellant agree that the appeal building is a 'rural building' as defined in the Glossary of the CS, its conversion would not detract from the character and appearance of the landscape, that there is adequate infrastructure and reasonable access to local services when accounting for the rural context. I have no reason to disagree. As such, the main areas in dispute in respect of Policy CP48 are whether the appeal building is structurally sound, capable of conversion without major rebuilding and only necessary extensions or modifications are proposed which would preserve the character of the original building.
18. The original structural report submitted with the application outlines several defects with the existing building which would require remediation, such as localised timber repairs, replacing roof tiles, mortar repairs, damp treatment and strengthening of the roof. However, there is no suggestion that the building is in imminent risk of collapse, dangerous, or of rudimentary construction. Overall, the works outlined could be categorised as maintenance. Accordingly, I do not equate the need for these works with the building being structurally unsound. Indeed, a structurally unsound building would need major strengthening or rebuilding, which is not the case. The conclusion of the report is that the building is in good condition with only minor maintenance type works required to ensure its structural integrity.
19. The updated structural report reinforces the above conclusion. It also explains that the conversion would not require a major rebuild. Strengthening would be required, but the historic fabric would largely remain in-tact. The updated report confirms that *"the building is capable of conversion to residential use without major rebuild. Retention of the structure will be possible structurally, with only minor (maintenance) structural repairs. The existing building appears from our observations to be structurally sound and capable of complete retention"*. I afford the expert views in the structural reports significant weight.

20. However, for the reasons already given, I have found that one of the extensions would be unnecessary and would not preserve the character of the original building. This element of the scheme would be at odds with Policy CP48(i). As the desire to preserve the character of the original building is an important aim of the policy, I find a conflict with Policy CP48 taken as a whole.
21. In conclusion, the proposal would be at odds with Policy CP48 of the CS. It therefore follows that it would also be at odds with Policy CP2 of the CS. The appeal scheme would therefore be residential development in the countryside in conflict with the spatial strategy in the development plan. Accordingly, the appeal site is not an appropriate location for the appeal scheme.

Other Matters

22. The appeal scheme was submitted following pre application advice from the Council and was amended. However, this advice is given without prejudice, and, in any event, I am not bound by it. I have come to the findings I have for the reasons given. The appellant's submissions indicate that the proposed dwelling would be occupied by the appellant and his wife, who operate a farm, equestrian and physio business in Reybridge. However, the proposal has not been advanced as a rural worker's dwelling. Indeed, no substantive case for such has been made. The PPG⁵ advises against the imposition of a personal permission in respect of a permanent building as planning permission runs with the land.
23. Being away from any settlement, the appeal site is isolated. Paragraph 84 of the Framework explains that isolated homes in the countryside should be avoided unless it would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or reuse a rural building. In principle, a residential conversion of the appeal building would achieve both. However, there are aspects of the scheme that would be unnecessarily unsympathetic and thus at odds with the development plan. Paragraph 84 of the Framework is a broad statement of policy. As a material consideration, it does not, in this instance, outweigh the clear terms of the development plan in respect of rural conversions. The appellant has referred to several appeal decisions and other applications within his submissions. I have carefully considered the points made. However, the appeal before me turns on the specific merits of the case and therefore my findings are unchanged.
24. For the reasons outlined earlier, the public benefits of the proposal would not outweigh the less than substantial harm that would occur to the listed building. Accordingly, the application of policies in the Framework that protect designated heritage assets provide a strong reason for refusing the proposal. Consequently, the tilted balance in Paragraph 11d(ii) of the Framework is not engaged. The proposal would be contrary to the development plan taken as a whole and there are no other considerations which outweigh this finding.

Conclusions

25. For the reasons given, the appeals have been dismissed.

Graham Chamberlain
INSPECTOR

⁵ Paragraph: 015 Reference ID: 21a-015-20140306