



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 November 2025

by J Hobbs MRTPI MCD BSc (hons)

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20th November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/W2845/W/25/3369790

Land adjacent to Meadow Cottage, School Lane, Adstone, West Northamptonshire NN12 8DU

- 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 Alex Adams against the decision of West Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application Ref is 2024/5061/FULL.
 - The development proposed is residential access and associated boundary treatment to serve the new dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for residential access and associated boundary treatment to serve the new dwelling at Land adjacent to Meadow Cottage, School Lane, Adstone, West Northamptonshire NN12 8DU in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 2024/5061/FULL, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of development in the banner was agreed between the parties during the determination of the planning application. However, I have removed reference to "... approved under reference S/2020/0103/FUL." As this does not refer to an act of development.
3. Planning permission¹ was granted for a new dwelling with amenity and associated parking at the appeal site. There is no substantive evidence before me that the planning permission has not been lawfully implemented. When determining the planning application subject to this appeal, the Council considered the aforementioned planning permission to be extant. Therefore, so shall I when determining the appeal proposal.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of Adstone Conservation Area (ACA).

Reasons

5. The appeal site forms part of the garden of 14 School Lane (No 14). The garden is enclosed by tall hedges. As such, the appeal site makes a positive contribution to the verdant character of Adstone. The appeal site is also located within ACA. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

¹ Planning permission Ref. S/2020/0103/FUL

requires me to pay special attention to preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of ACA.

6. The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan² (CAAMP) identifies that Adstone has grown as an agricultural settlement with farmsteads located on the periphery and cottages concentrated on the centre of the village. It goes on to indicate that the cottages sit within generous shared plots, with those in the village centre set back from the immediate highway. The CAAMP states along School Lane the built form mostly runs parallel to the highway, but is located further back in the plot and strong boundary lines are created by high hedges. Accordingly, No 14 is characteristic of development along School Lane and the wider ACA.
7. A small section of the hedge would be removed to facilitate the proposed access. Nonetheless, the proposal would retain the existing splayed hedge around the access to No 14 and would introduce a new splayed hedge around the proposed access. Once the new hedge has matured, the proposal would create a strong boundary hedge along the site's frontage. The boundary would be clearly delineated and assimilate with other boundary treatments in the road, in accordance with Section 7 of the CAAMP. Moreover, Figure 27 of the CAAMP identifies important hedges within ACA. Most of the hedge along School Lane is identified as important, other than the section where this access is proposed. Accordingly, the removal of a small section of hedge, which is not identified as being important, would not be harmful.
8. The proposal also seeks to reduce the depth of the hedge along the site's frontage and its boundary with School House. There is no restriction on the ongoing maintenance of the hedge which may include cutting it back. Furthermore, the hedge includes ruderal species which could be removed as part of the proposed works and could be replaced by dense hedge species. The replacement planting could be secured by a condition attached to a planning permission. Consequently, the reduction in the depth of the hedge would not harm its appearance and could lead to improvements.
9. Cottages within shared plots are identified as a key characteristic of development along School Lane within the CAAMP. However, it goes on to acknowledge that a few of the semi-detached properties have been converted to a single dwelling. Whilst some properties on School Lane still share accesses, during my site visit I observed that several have their own access. This includes all properties on the western side of School Lane, near the appeal site. The creation of a single access for the proposed dwelling would therefore assimilate with the prevailing pattern of development.
10. Due to the low density of development, accesses along School Lane are infrequent and not evenly spaced. As such, a new access in combination with the existing accesses would not undermine the strong boundary. Moreover, the proposed access would not disrupt a formal pattern of evenly spaced accesses.
11. The proposed amount of off-street parking would be sufficient for a dwelling of this size. However, there may be some occasions where vehicles would be parked on the road but given the provision of off-street parking these would be limited. Whilst roadside parking is identified as having a negative impact on the historic street

² Adstone Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, November 2015

scene within the CAAMP, for the reasons given the proposal would not result in a significant increase in roadside parking. Therefore, no harm would persist.

12. I acknowledge that the shared access and tall boundary hedge was one of the reasons why the Council granted planning permission for the proposed dwelling at the appeal site. Nevertheless, the appeal proposal would not cause harm for the reasons given above.
13. I conclude that the proposal would preserve the character and appearance of ACA. The proposal would comply with policies, SS2, HE1 and HE6 of the South Northamptonshire Part 2 Local Plan 2011-2029 and policies BN5 and S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1), December 2014. These policies indicate that within a conservation area proposals will normally be permitted where they respect the character and appearance of the area, and designated heritage assets will be conserved, amongst other matters. The proposal would also comply with Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) where it indicates that planning decisions should ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character and history.

Other Matters

14. As above, the proposal would not lead to a significant increase in roadside parking. Consequently, the proposal would not have a harmful effect on highway safety. Also, the construction of a new access and parking area would not harm the living conditions of occupiers of neighbouring properties due to the proposed separation distances and intervening boundary treatment.
15. Several interested parties have made representations in relation to the construction of a dwelling at the appeal site. For the reasons given above, I have assessed this proposal on the basis that the planning permission for the dwelling is extant. Therefore, I have not explicitly addressed comments relating to the construction of a new dwelling within this decision.

Conditions

16. The Council indicated the conditions that it considered would be appropriate if I were to allow the appeal. I have considered the suggested conditions in light of the guidance within the Framework and the Planning Practice Guidance and made amendments to their wording where necessary.
17. Conditions specifying a time limit to implement the planning permission and approved plans are necessary in the interest of certainty. A condition requiring the construction and approval by the Council of a sample panel of the proposed wall is necessary to preserve the character and appearance of ACA. Likewise, a condition requiring a landscaping scheme to be approved and the ongoing maintenance of the approved scheme is necessary for the same reason.

Conclusion

18. For the reasons given above, the appeal should be allowed and planning permission should be granted.

J Hobbs

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 drawing nos 5625 B/Map and 5625-20
- 3) The proposed boundary wall shall be constructed in natural stone which shall be laid, dressed, coursed and pointed using a lime based mortar with brushed or rubbed joints in accordance with a sample panel (minimum 1m²) which shall be constructed on site to be inspected and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before the stonework is commenced. The panel shall be retained on site for the duration of the construction of the boundary wall.
- 4) Prior to the construction of the boundary wall or the installation/laying of hardstanding, a landscaping scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include:
 - (a) details of the proposed tree and shrub planting including their species, number, sizes and positions, together with grass seeded/turfed areas and written specifications,
 - (b) details of the existing trees and hedges to be retained as well as those to be felled, including existing and proposed soil levels at the base of each tree/hedge and the minimum distance between the base of the tree and the nearest edge of any excavation, and
 - (c) details of the hard landscaping including hard surface areas and pavements.All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved landscaping scheme shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the completion of the development and shall be maintained for a period of 5 years. Any trees and/or shrubs which within a period of five years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species. The hard landscaping shall be constructed prior to the occupation of the dwelling and retained thereafter.