



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 18 November 2025

by **V Simpson BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 January 2026

Appeal A Ref: APP/W2845/W/25/3373256

The Manor House, The Cross, Northampton, West Northamptonshire NN4 6AS

- 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 and Mrs Freeman against the decision of West Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application Ref is 2024/5492/FULL.
 - The development proposed is Manor House kitchen extension. Rebuild and extend existing Manor House conservatory. Convert garage to annexe. Renovate and convert potting shed to Gym. Construct new timber framed double garage. Erect garden store, summer house and chicken coop.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/W2845/Y/25/3373255

The Manor House, The Cross, Northampton, West Northamptonshire NN4 6AS

- 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 and Mrs Freeman against the decision of West Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application Ref is 2024/5493/LBC.
 - The works proposed are Manor House kitchen extension. Rebuild and extend existing Manor House conservatory. Convert garage to annexe. Renovate and convert potting shed to Gym. Construct new timber framed double garage. Erect garden store, summer house and chicken coop.
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Decisions

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

Preliminary Matters

3. The appeal site contains the Grade II* listed building known as The Manor House¹ (the listed building), as well as 2 closely associated outbuildings that are mainly constructed of stone. One of which is identified as a garage and the other as a potting shed on the submitted plans. The site is also within the Great Houghton Conservation Area (the CA). Consequently, in reaching my decisions, I have exercised my statutory duties under sections 66(1) - for appeal A, 16(2) - for Appeal B, and 72(1) – for both appeals, of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990 – as amended (the Act).
4. The appeals relate to the same site and the same scheme. Unless stated otherwise, and despite the differences in the planning permission and listed building consent regimes, I have dealt with both appeals together. This is to avoid unnecessary repetition.

¹ Official List Entry Number: 1039729

5. Although not forming part of the descriptions of the works and development, the proposed plans also show the replacement and alteration of some of the boundary treatments and the lowering of a cill and enlargement of a window on the east elevation of the house. Consequently, these elements are considered as part of the proposed scheme.
6. Amended plans were submitted to the Council before its determination of the applications. The Council subsequently determined the applications based on these amended plans together with those that were not superseded.
7. Further amended plans have been submitted with the appeals, as well as a new heritage appraisal and impact statement v2.1 – by Oxford Heritage partnership and a series of CGI visualisations.
8. The amended plans propose; changes to the form and materials of the roof and eaves of the proposed kitchen extension and link; a change to the materials to be used in the roof of the potting shed; changes to the elevations of the design of the conservatory; the reduction of the height of the proposed garage roof and the re-siting of this building further from the site boundary, and, the addition/retention of planting adjacent to the garage. Together, these incremental amendments result in a substantial difference to the scheme. Moreover, the Government's Procedural Guide – Planning Appeals – England, advises that if an appeal is made, the appeal process should not be used to evolve a scheme. Therefore, these appeals are determined based on the plans that were before the Council at the time it made its decisions on the applications.
9. The Council and interested parties have had the opportunity to comment on the heritage appraisal and impact assessment and the CGI visualisations at the appeal stage. As such, they would not be prejudiced by my decision to accept this additional evidence, insofar as it relates to the appeal site and the scheme subject of these appeals.
10. Excepting those parts of the proposed scheme that relate to the proposed Manor House kitchen extension and the timber-framed double garage, and subject to appropriate conditions, the Council raise no concern regarding the effect of the other elements of the proposed scheme on the Manor House and the CA. Having regard to the evidence before me and from my observations on site, I agree that these other elements of the scheme would preserve The Manor House, its setting, and any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses; and they would preserve the character and appearance of the CA. As such, the significance of these designated heritage assets would not be harmed by these other proposed elements.

Main Issue

11. The main issue is whether the proposed works and development would i) preserve the Grade II* listed building - The Manor House, or any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses, and ii) preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Great Houghton Conservation Area.

Reasons

Special interest / Significance

12. The evidence indicates that there have been several main phases of development on the site, and that in the late-16th century it is likely to have contained a fairly simple Yeoman or equivalent family house and farmstead. Parts of this early house, including the thick stone walls at each end of the dining room, a fireplace, and sections of the roof structure, appear to have been retained when the house was later enlarged and remodelled in the mid-late 17th century. Around that same time, another bay was added to the end of the house, the interior was altered, and it is likely that the exterior walls were reskinned with limestone rubble with ironstone banding. These changes, together with additional/altered fenestration - including stone mullioned casement windows, would have undoubtedly raised the local status of the house, and are likely to have reflected the increased wealth of the occupiers of the property at that time.
13. The evidence also indicates that by the mid-19th century, an additional bay had been added to the other end of the house, as well as smaller and more centrally located front and rear gables. Later 1930's 'modernisation' of the house and outbuildings appears to have included the removal of some internal dividing walls and the addition and alteration of windows. The works undertaken at that time led to the property being featured in the July 1939 Ideal Home publication, as an example of how to modernise and 'improve' a historic building. Together, the historic fabric and features which survive from the building's phased evolution – which include the resultant plan form of the house and its thatched roof, contribute in a tangible and positive way to its historic and architectural interest. They also support its status as a designated heritage asset of the highest significance.
14. Later works have been undertaken that include the demolition of the 1930's cloakroom; the construction of a conservatory; the re-modelling and extension of the northeastern extension; and substantial alterations to and/or re-building of parts of the outbuildings. These have resulted in the loss of historic fabric. Furthermore, the conservatory and the works to the northeastern extension undertaken circa 1980's, do not make a meaningful contribution to the building's significance.
15. As part of a former farmstead, the barn (now garage), which was present by the mid-19th century, would have had a close functional relationship with the house. This is also the case for the potting shed, which the evidence indicates is all that remains of a former run of livestock/stabling buildings. As such, and despite the extensive works and rebuilding that have occurred to these outbuildings - which were observed to be in use for residential storage purposes, they continue to contribute positively to the significance of the heritage asset. This is due to both their historic relationship to the Manor House and, to a lesser extent, their architectural interest.
16. The fairly small CA encompasses part of the village of Great Houghton. Development within this area has largely respected the historic plan form of a main street with side roads, with buildings informally laid out around these carriageways. In addition, and despite the variety in ages and architectural styles of buildings in the CA, the limited palette of local materials used in these buildings, which include limestone, ironstone and red brick, have a unifying effect. These development characteristics, together with the undulating land levels, and the open 'green' spaces, trees, hedgerows and shrubs between and around some of the buildings in the CA, add to its verdancy and contribute to its significance.

17. The generally verdant appeal site, which occupies a prominent elevated position within the CA, and which contains a well-preserved historic house with walls of limestone with ironstone banding, exemplifies many of the special qualities of the CA. Consequently, it makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the CA as a whole.

Effects of the works and development

18. Of itself, the careful removal of the circa late 1980's northeastern extension would preserve the listed building and not harm its significance. However, the replacement structure would project well beyond the back of the existing rear gable and the current eastern end of the house. It would also result in some loss of historic fabric - including to the well head. Moreover, the design of this proposed extension, which includes large expanses of glazing and a hipped lead-covered roof structure, would be incongruous with the fenestration pattern, roof form, and materials commonly found within the Manor House. The provision of a large new open-plan kitchen/living space within the proposed extension would also erode the historic single-room depth plan form of the main ground-floor living spaces of the house.
19. Despite being single-storey, this extension would also change the way that the Manor House as a whole would be experienced, and especially so from the public right of way (PRoW) running through the site and on approach from the Cross. Notwithstanding the walls and fencing within the site, in such views, the extension would read as a prominent and disjointed addition that would jar with the form and design detailing of the exterior of much of the rest of the house. That being the case this element of the scheme would harmfully reduce the integrity of the listed building as a whole, and erode the contribution that this house makes to the character and appearance of the CA as a whole.
20. The new garage building would be located close to a boundary wall adjacent to Willow Lane. A section of the existing hedgerow that is visible above this wall would need to be removed to facilitate this. As such, and because of both its proximity to the site boundary and its height, the upper parts of the timber-clad walls and the timber shingle roof of the garage would be clearly visible from the adjacent street and from the open greenspace at the Cross. Such development and works would result in a local loss of verdancy in an elevated position that is highly visible in the CA. In addition, the use of timber to clad this structure would be incongruous with other nearby buildings that are visible on approach to the site from the Cross. For these reasons, the works and development associated with the replacement garage building would detract from the positive characteristics which underpin the special interest of the CA as a whole.
21. For these reasons, the scheme would not preserve the Grade ii* listed building - The Manor House, or features of special architectural or historic interest it possesses. Nor would it preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA. As such, it would harm the significance of these designated heritage assets. Consequently, it would conflict with policy BN5 of the Council's Core Strategy², and policies ENV6 and Q1 of the South Northamptonshire Local Plan³. Collectively

² West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit - West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) – adopted December 2014.

³ South Northamptonshire Part 2 Local Plan 2011-2029 – South Northamptonshire Council

and amongst other things, these seek to ensure that schemes conserve and enhance heritage assets and their settings.

Heritage balance and conclusions

22. The main parties agree that the harm that would be caused to the significance of these heritage assets – The Manor House and the CA, would be at the moderate level of less than substantial. Given the nature and extent of the proposal and being mindful of the high status of the listed building, I agree. Nevertheless, these findings of harm carry considerable importance and weight.
23. In accordance with paragraph 212 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), great weight is given to the conservation of both of the previously referenced designated heritage assets. Moreover, paragraph 215 of the Framework indicates that where a development proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighted against the public benefits of the proposal, including, where appropriate, securing the optimum viable use.
24. The removal of the existing conservatory and northeastern extension would reveal more of the listed buildings historic fabric – a public benefit. Furthermore, the alterations to the barn and the potting shed would help to preserve these outbuildings, which would also be a public benefit. As would the replacement of some timber panelling with stone walls, which would better reflect other nearby boundary treatments that contribute positively to the character and appearance of the CA. However, these elements comprise only part of a wider proposed scheme that would cause harm to the significance of the CA and the listed building. Very little weight can therefore be given to the heritage-related public benefits that would result from these discrete elements of the scheme.
25. Economic benefits would arise during the implementation of the scheme. Moreover, I do not doubt that the enlarged dwelling, the altered garage and potting shed, and the proposed new buildings would all afford the appellant and future occupiers with improved living conditions. However, if the scheme were not implemented, I do not anticipate the cessation of use of the house, the existing garage or the potting shed. As such, and because of the modest scale of the proposals, these public benefits would be small, and very little weight is attributed to each of them.
26. When taken together, these public benefits would not outweigh the harm that would be caused to the Manor House or the CA. Consequently, the scheme would fail to satisfy the requirements of the Act and the provisions of the Framework that seek to conserve and enhance the historic environment.

Other Matters

27. Historic England has indicated that the harm that would be caused by the scheme is likely to be outweighed by the public benefit of securing a viable use for the buildings. Nonetheless, and for the reasons as set out above, I have reached a different conclusion.
28. Even if planning permission and listed building consent was previously granted for works and development to enlarge or alter 2 other listed buildings in the CA⁴,

⁴ Hill Cottage, 2 Willow Lane, and Stone House, 34 High Street

these properties - which I am advised are grade II listed, are materially different to the Manor House. As such, these other permissions do not lead me away from my previous conclusions.

29. The evidence indicates that the appeal site is within the zone of influence of the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area. However, there is no need to consider the implications of the proposed development on this protected site, because the scheme is unacceptable for other reasons.
30. The Grade II listed building known as Hill Cottage⁵ occupies land on the opposite side of the Cross from the appeal site. Although the significance of this designated heritage asset mainly stems from its historic and architectural interest as an early coursed rubble cottage that was altered in the 17th or 18th century and again in the 19th century, it also derives some significance from its wider built backdrop within the village. While parts of the proposed new garage building could be experienced together with Hill Cottage, this and other elements of the proposed scheme would be separated from it by a lane and sections of boundary walls to which no alterations are proposed. As such, and given the residential nature of the proposed works and development and because it would be generally well contained by The Manor House's boundary walls and fences, the setting of Hill Cottage would be preserved, and the significance of this listed building would not be harmed.

Conclusion

31. The development subject of appeal A would conflict with the development plan as a whole, and there are no material considerations, either individually or in combination, that outweigh the identified harm and associated development plan conflict. I therefore conclude that these appeals should be dismissed.
32. Moreover, and for the reasons previously given, I also conclude that appeal B should be dismissed.

V Simpson

INSPECTOR

⁵ Official list entry number 1293636