



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 21 October 2025

by **P Hanna PGDip MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21st January 2026

Appeal A Ref: APP/P2935/W/25/3370169

George Hotel, Humshaugh, Northumberland NE46 4EW

- 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 Chollerford G H LLP against the decision of Northumberland County Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/00052/FUL.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing pool house building and construction of a new pool house building, including drainage and external works.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/P2935/Y/25/3370175

George Hotel, Humshaugh, Northumberland NE46 4EW

- 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 Chollerford G H LLP against the decision of Northumberland County Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/00053/LBC.
 - The works proposed are demolition of existing pool house building and construction of a new pool house building, including drainage and external works.
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Decision

Appeal A

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal B

2. The appeal is allowed and listed building consent is granted for demolition of existing pool house building and construction of a new pool house building, including drainage and external works at George Hotel, Humshaugh, Northumberland NE46 4EW in accordance with the terms of the application ref. APP/P2935/Y/25/3370175 and subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The works hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
 - 2) Prior to the commencement of any above ground development, full details of the facing materials and finishes of the works, including windows and doors, walls and roofs shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. The details shall then be maintained in accordance with the approved details.

Applications for costs

3. An application for costs was made by Chollerford G H LLP against Northumberland County Council. This application is the subject of a separate decision.

Preliminary Matters

4. These decisions address both planning and listed building consent appeals for the same site and the same scheme. The remit of each regime is different, and the

main issues below relate either to the planning appeal (Appeal A), or the listed building appeal (Appeal B), or to both. To reduce repetition and for the avoidance of doubt, I have dealt with both appeals together.

5. As the appeal relates to a listed building, I have had special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, as required by sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act). Section 1(5)(b) of the Act establishes that any object or structure within the curtilage of the building, although not fixed to the building, forms part of the land and has done so since before 1 July 1948, shall be treated as part of the building.
6. The plans were amended twice during the course of the application but the second set of revised drawings, dated 17 April 2025, were not considered by the Council. The amendments shown are minor and could have been dealt with by condition, therefore I am satisfied that no party would be prejudiced by these latest revised plans. For the avoidance of doubt, the relevant plans are as follows: Existing Ground Floor and Site Plan, Drawing Number: XX-XX-SI-0010 P04; Proposed Site Plan (Dwg No: XX-XX-SI-1010 P03); Proposed Roof Plan (Dwg No: XX-XX-GA-1110 P03); Proposed Ground Floor and Site Plan (Dwg No: XX-XX-GA-1100 P05); Proposed South and West Elevations (Dwg No: XX-XX-EL-3100 P05); and Proposed North and East Elevations (Dwg No: XX-XX-EL-3110 P05).

Main Issues

7. For both appeals, the main issue is whether the proposal would preserve the Grade II listed George Hotel (list entry 1043025 as The George Inn) and the scheduled monument and Grade II listed Chollerford Bridge Over River North Tyne (list entry 1370563). For Appeal A only, a second main issue is whether or not the proposed development would be at risk of flooding or increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.

Reasons

Heritage

8. The George Hotel is a mid-eighteenth century hotel, extended in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It is two storeys with attic, single bay gabled elevation to east and six bays to the L-shaped courtyard elevation, with twentieth century glazed and flat roofed entrance porch, half dormer to attic, coped gables, corniced chimneys and slate roof. The extensive nineteenth and twentieth century additions to the east are not of significant historic interest, including the existing pool house. The Chollerford Bridge dates from 1785 to a design of Robert Mylne. It is square stoned, with five stepped round arches and triangular cutwaters that provide pedestrian refuges. The hotel lies close to the bridge, and the principal L-shaped elevation of the hotel faces south east directly towards the bridge.
9. Given the above, the special interest of the two structures derives in part from the quality of design and historic fabric, but also from the close visual relationship between the two buildings and their value as a group, understood to have arisen from the positioning of the hotel at the site of what was a historic ferry crossing point before construction of the bridge. Significance also derives from the two assets being set within the largely pastoral setting of the tree lined river and surrounding fields, notwithstanding the more recent hotel extensions, and modern adjacent road infrastructure and nearby built development.

10. From the Chollerford Bridge, the tree lined riverside of the North Tyne is uninterrupted on three sides, and it is this wider overall setting that provides the bucolic quality that contributes to the significance of the hotel and the bridge. The only prominent built form is that of the hotel building, and the modern extensions to the east of the hotel are a moderately detracting factor from the significance of the setting. The appeal site itself is reasonably well screened by both the extension and by mature riverside landscaping such that the site only makes a modest contribution to setting. During winter months, bare trees provide glimpses of the existing pool house, with its white plastic framing increasing visibility.
11. The proposal is for the replacement of an existing pool house which currently lies to the far east of the site, beyond the modern eastern extensions to the hotel, but within the setting of the hotel and bridge.
12. However, from locations where glimpses of the existing building can be seen, most notably from Chollerford Bridge, views are dominated by the much more prominent modern extension to the hotel to the east. This extension, whilst largely constructed in materials sympathetic to the listed building, very much reads as a modern intervention due to its form and fenestration. Whilst the extension is part of the listed building, and of some limited interest in explaining the history of the development of the wider building, it is not of any significant special interest as acknowledged in the Historic England listing. As such, the extension acts as a visual buffer between the appeal site and the significant historic elements of the hotel building.
13. The proposed building would have a larger footprint than currently, but the western and southern walls would align with the existing. As seen from the Chollerford Bridge, the building would not extend development further into the pastoral setting of the surrounding countryside, or any closer to the river than the existing building, notwithstanding the Council's position that the proposed building should be pushed back behind the building line. Instead, the additional footprint would be physically closer to the modern, and historically insignificant, extension to the hotel, such that it would also be seen as more closely associated with it. Although the increased footprint would make the overall form of the building larger, for the same reasons, this would not cause any greater impact to the significance of the listed buildings by way of impact upon the setting.
14. The proposed pitched roof would increase the bulk of the building's form but would better relate to the pitched roof forms of the hotel and its extensions than the existing structure. The Council's view that the building would resemble a modern agricultural shed is misplaced, in my judgement, subject to the materials being of appropriate specification and sufficiently high quality to reflect the building's historic context. Such details can be adequately controlled by condition.
15. The increase in height would create a taller structure in the landscape. However, the proposed pool house ridge would be considerably lower than that of the hotel extension. The additional height would be offset to a considerable extent by the proposed materials. Whereas the existing white plastic framing is highly visible, the proposed stone plinth and timber cladding of the amended design would, subject to appropriate surface treatment, ensure that visibility of the structure is lessened whilst also more readily blending into the riverside scenery when glimpsed through the trees. This would remain the case even if the trees and vegetation were to be

pruned back, noting that some trees require to be removed for physiological and safety reasons.

16. Whilst the key views of the site are experienced from the Chollerford Bridge, the proposed building would be visible from a limited number of other locations. From the immediate east of the site, within the hotel grounds, the proposed pool house would be a dominant feature, but it would not be seen alongside the significant elements of the heritage assets, instead the visual relationship would be primarily with the modern hotel extension. Other views, both to and from the heritage assets, would be heavily filtered by intervening screening, whether that be from landscaping or other buildings and structures, such that the effects of the proposal would again not be significant.
17. On this basis, continuing to site the proposed building on the same riverside building line as the existing building would not result in any greater harm than at present, even though the Council's suggestion of greater set back would represent a benefit. Furthermore, the proposal would not harm the significance of the nearby Humshaugh Conservation Area by way of impact upon its setting, due to the intervening topography, landscaping and the urban environment.
18. Although the Council asserts the harm to be substantial, that degree of harm is grouped in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) with the total loss of significance of an asset, with Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) advising that substantial harm may not arise in many instances. Here, the fabric of the two assets would not be directly affected by the proposal, and their architectural and historic interest would remain largely unaltered. Furthermore, the proposed pool house would be within the distant setting only of the significant aspects of the assets. The harm caused by the proposal is very far short indeed of substantial, and I return to this in my costs decision. Nonetheless, the degree of harm would be less than substantial, in the wording of the Framework, at the low end of that scale.
19. Accordingly, the degree of harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. Ten new jobs would be created by the operation and maintenance of the facility, up to 20 existing jobs would be additionally secured by the increase in occupancy associated with such leisure facilities, and short term employment and supply chain roles would be supported. There would be benefits to tourism in the area from the provision of a publicly available pool, as well as wider community and health benefits from use by local residents. Overall, I am persuaded that there would be public benefits of sufficient magnitude to outweigh the less than substantial harm to the significance of the heritage asset, and the considerable importance this carries.
20. Given that the wider public benefits would outweigh the less than substantial harm to the designated heritage asset, the proposed harm to the Grade II listed George Hotel and the scheduled monument and Grade II listed Chollerford Bridge, their settings and any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess, would be acceptable. The proposal would satisfy the expectations of sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Act, and accord with policies QOP1, QOP2 and ENV7 of the Northumberland Local Plan 2022 (LP), policy 4 of the Humshaugh Neighbourhood Plan, the historic environment chapter of the Framework, insofar as may be relevant in respect of the s20 appeal.

Flooding

21. Policy WAT3 of the LP and the Framework require the provision of site specific Flood Risk Assessments (FRA) for all developments in Flood Zone 3 amongst other things. Paragraphs 20 and 21 of the PPG set out the objectives of such assessments and the level of detail needed. The Council's reason for refusal relates specifically to these requirements.
22. The Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) undertaken by the appellant was based on flood mapping data dating from 2008, identifying that the site was broadly within Zone 3 (High Probability). In March 2025, the updated National Flood Risk Assessment data NaFRA2 was published, showing the risk of flooding to be higher than originally modelled. The site is therefore now deemed to be within Zone 3b. Despite this change, the updated modelling undertaken by the appellant continues to use the superseded flood levels at the site.
23. The effect of the site now being within Zone 3b is that the site is identified as functional flood plain, that is, land where water from the river is to be stored in times of flood. Therefore, in the absence of accurate modelling using the latest available information, development in this location has the potential to be at risk of flooding, as well as impede the flow of flood waters and increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.
24. It is well established that the assessment of planning applications should be made on the basis of the most up to date policy and information. In the wording of the PPG, the information provided in the FRA needs to be credible and fit for purpose, make optimum use of the information already available and, where the flood risk is greater, such as at the appeal site, provide a more detailed assessment. Although the Lead Local Flood Authority indicated that it may allow old data to be used for what were then current cases, this is heavily qualified and subject to review by the planning authority. In this case, there is a clear and significant change in the level of flood risk, and it is therefore both reasonable and appropriate that the latest information is used.
25. Given this background, in February and April 2025 the Environment Agency (EA) objected to the proposal due to the failure of the FRA to comply with requirements for site specific FRAs. The appellant's response, dated 16 April 2025, continued to use the older data and the applications were subsequently refused on 6 May 2025. The appellant is concerned that the LPA did not consider its information dated 16 April before refusing the applications and, further, that the EA did not consider its planning appeal technical note (TN) dated July 2025. The extent or otherwise to which either did so does not prevent me reaching my own conclusion on the appeal, although I return to this in my costs decision.
26. Either way, the EA's response to the appeal dated 16 September 2025 maintains its objection. In doing so, the EA affirm that it reached that conclusion based on the information submitted as part of the planning application. The TN post-dates the application but is nonetheless confirmed as being simply a collation of previously submitted information rather than containing substantially new information. Therefore, even though it is unclear if the EA considered the TN itself, it did consider the information contained within it. Overall, I have no substantive evidence to indicate that the EA failed to take relevant information into consideration.

27. In any case, the TN continued to reference and rely upon the older baseline data, notwithstanding revised finished floor levels and access arrangements, and the incorporation of a compensatory storage scheme. The assertion that the scheme would deliver the benefit of an 8.6% reduction in flows is of only limited weight, given this context.
28. Overall, I give greater weight to the EA's concerns about the robustness of the FRA. On that basis, the proposed development would be at risk of flooding and increase the risk of flooding elsewhere. The proposal is contrary to policy WAT3 of the LP, chapter 14 of the Framework, and PPG on flood risk and coastal change.

Other matters

29. The appellant raises a number of concerns relating to the handling of the applications. These matters do not affect my assessment of the merits of the proposal and are addressed separately in my costs decision.

Conditions

30. Paragraph 57 of the Framework sets out that conditions should only be imposed where they are necessary, relevant to planning and to the development (or works) to be permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects. A condition requiring details of materials and finishes is necessary for clarity and in the interest of preserving the listed building. The Council's suggested condition requiring compliance with plans is not necessary as progressing the works in accordance with the submitted plans is part of the formal decision above.

Conclusion

Appeal A

31. The proposed development would result in less than substantial harm, at the low end of the scale, to the significance of the George Hotel and Chollerford Bridge designated heritage assets, which is outweighed by the considerable public benefits of the proposal, such that the proposal's heritage impact is acceptable. However, this is outweighed by the harm that would be caused, in the absence of a sufficiently robust site-specific FRA, from the risk of flooding at the site and the increase to the risk of flooding elsewhere. For the reasons set out above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal be dismissed.

Appeal B

32. For the reasons set out above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal be allowed.

P Hanna

INSPECTOR