
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 December 2025

by **C Housden BSc(Hons) MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26 January 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/C3620/D/25/3373222

Pear Tree Barn, Henfold Lane, Newdigate, Surrey RH5 5AF

- 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 Steven Reeves against the decision of Mole Valley District Council.
 - The application ref is MO/2025/0373/PLAH.
 - The development proposed is retention of static outbuilding, having ancillary use to the main house.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have taken the description of development as set out above from the application form as neither party has provided written confirmation that the revised description had been agreed.
3. I observed that the proposed development was already in situ. However, 'retention' as referred to in the application form does not constitute an act of development. As such, I have dealt with the appeal on the basis that planning permission is sought for the development as proposed.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect on the character and appearance of the area, including whether the proposal preserves the setting of the Grade II listed Gosscroft Cottage.

Reasons

5. The appeal site comprises a timber dwelling with associated timber outbuildings. It has a large plot with open green space to the front and side of the dwelling. The wider area has a rural verdant appearance, characterised by open fields, bound with hedgerows and trees with development set in a mostly informal pattern in the landscape. Buildings predominantly comprise a traditional style utilising gable features and finished with red brick and sometimes tile hangings. Timber barn style buildings, such as the host dwelling, also feature within the area.
6. The appeal site is situated within the setting of Gosscroft Cottage, a Grade II listed building. In accordance with the statutory duty set out in Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, I have had special regard to the desirability of preserving its setting.

7. The evidence shows that the significance of Gosscroft Cottage lies in its architectural and historical merits as a medieval hall house set in a rural and open landscape. Important architectural features include the black timber beams with white render on the rear and side elevations along with the hanging tile façade and the hipped roof form. Furthermore, the open landscape surroundings positively contribute to how the asset is experienced as a historic rural dwelling. On my visit I observed that some recent additions had been made to Gosscroft Cottage, including a timber extension and garage. However, the significance of the asset, as described above, is still readily apparent.
8. The proposed development has the appearance of a modern static mobile home style building with an off-white finish. It is set towards the rear boundary of the plot and to the side of the host dwelling. It is also located to the rear of Gosscroft Cottage. Views of the development are possible from public vantage points through the vehicular access serving the wider site.
9. The proposed development fails to take cues from the surrounding rural development. Instead, the modern utilitarian appearance is distinctly out of keeping with the character and appearance of the vernacular and form of the surrounding development. Instead, it appears as highly incongruous to and distinctly at odds with the open rural surroundings. This causes considerable harm to the character and appearance of the area and erodes the positive open rural setting in which Gosscroft Cottage is experienced.
10. The appellant contends that recent additions to Gosscroft Cottage screen some views of the proposed development from the heritage asset. However, the setting in which the heritage asset is experienced is not just from direct views from Gosscroft Cottage itself. From other angles, including the public vantage points from the road, the development is seen within the setting of the asset where it appears as a detracting feature.
11. As such, I conclude that the appeal proposal causes significant harm to the character and appearance of the area whilst also not preserving the setting of Gosscroft Cottage. In the context of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), the level of harm identified is less than substantial and lies within the middle of the spectrum due to the overall scale of the proposal.
12. Paragraph 212 of the Framework states when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. This is a matter which I attach great importance and weight. Paragraph 215 of the Framework requires less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
13. The appellant has suggested that screening measures would mitigate the visibility of the proposal. I have not been provided any specific details of such screening. However, at the time of my visit, I observed that timber posts with a solid backing and synthetic green leaves had been installed in front of the proposal, along with some low-level hedgerow planted in front of this screen.
14. An important characteristic of the setting of the listed building relates to the open rural landscape. The enclosure of an area within its setting through screening to hide the development, even once the hedgerow is matured, would not represent

an enhancement to the setting of the heritage asset. The proposed screening would therefore not carry any positive weight as a public benefit.

15. I have been presented with a list of benefits which include the use of the space as a home office, occasional guest accommodation and as temporary accommodation during building works on the host building. However, the modest increase in the floor area of a private dwelling within the existing housing stock only carries very limited weight as a public benefit. As such, the public benefits do not outweigh the harm caused to, and the desirability of preserving, the setting of the heritage asset.
16. I therefore conclude that the proposal would result in considerable harm to the character and appearance of the area and would not preserve the setting of the Grade II listed Gosscroft Cottage. The appeal proposal therefore conflicts with Policies EN4 and EN6 of the Mole Valley Local Plan (2024). These policies, amongst other matters, seek to ensure that development is of a high-quality design that makes a positive contribution to local character, along with not permitting development within the setting of a Grade II listed building which causes less than substantial harm and the public benefits of the proposal do not outweigh the harm to the asset's significance.

Other Matters

17. As previously mentioned, the benefits of the proposal involve improving the living conditions of the occupiers of the host property by providing additional floor space. However, this is a personal benefit of the scheme, and it therefore attracts limited weight in favour of the development. This is insufficient to outweigh the harms that I have identified.
18. The appellant has questioned the consistency in the decision making of the Council in allowing the additions at Gosscroft Cottage whilst refusing the appeal scheme. However, I have not been provided with full details of the circumstances under which these additions were approved, so I cannot be certain if the circumstances are comparable. In any case, each proposal should be assessed on its individual merits, which I have done so in this case.

Conclusion

19. The proposal conflicts with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. Therefore, for the reasons given above, the appeal should be dismissed.

C Housden

INSPECTOR