



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 3 March 2026

by **Paul Martinson BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18th March 2026

Appeal A Ref: APP/E2001/W/25/3375526

Highfield, Windmill Hill, Driffield, East Riding Of Yorkshire YO25 5YP

- 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 The Highfield House & Grounds LLP against the decision of East Riding of Yorkshire Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/01597/PLF.
 - The development proposed is Erection of timber pergola with concrete path, fencing and gates and installation of walkway lighting to the north east entrance, erection of W.C. block, four storage sheds, bin store, bike rack and covered walkway to the courtyard, construction of stone path.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/E2001/Y/25/3375528

Highfield, Windmill Hill, Driffield, East Riding Of Yorkshire YO25 5YP

- 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 The Highfield House & Grounds LLP against the decision of East Riding of Yorkshire Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/01598/PLB.
 - The works proposed are Erection of timber pergola with concrete path, fencing and gates and installation of walkway lighting to the north east entrance, erection of W.C. block, four storage sheds, bin store, bike rack and covered walkway to the courtyard, construction of stone path.
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Decision

1. *Appeal A:* The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for Erection of timber pergola with concrete path, fencing and gates and installation of walkway lighting to the north east entrance, erection of W.C. block, four storage sheds, bin store, bike rack and covered walkway to the courtyard, construction of stone path at Highfield, Windmill Hill, Driffield, East Riding Of Yorkshire YO25 5YP in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 25/01597/PLF, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.
2. *Appeal B:* The appeal is allowed and listed building consent is granted for Erection of timber pergola with concrete path, fencing and gates and installation of walkway lighting to the north east entrance, erection of W.C. block, four storage sheds, bin store, bike rack and covered walkway to the courtyard, construction of stone path at Highfield, Windmill Hill, Driffield, East Riding Of Yorkshire YO25 5YP in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 25/01598/PLB, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

Preliminary Matters

3. I have taken the description of development and works in the banner headings above from the Appeal Form as it more accurately describes the appeal schemes.

4. The appeal schemes are partly retrospective in that some of the works and development have already taken place including the erection of some of the storage sheds. Therefore, I have determined the appeal on the basis that the works have, in part, already occurred, having regard to the application plans and information.
5. The appeal site includes a Grade II listed building, Highfield¹, referred to on the National Heritage List for England as '*High Field Country Club*'. It also lies within the Driffild North Conservation Area (the CA). I have therefore had special regard to sections 16(2), 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act).

Main Issue

6. The main issue is whether the proposals would preserve the Grade II listed building, High Field Country Club, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Reasons

Special Interest and Significance

7. Highfield is a large house that was constructed in 1864 and remodelled between 1883 and 1885. It has since been used as a country club from the 1950s and has had a more recent conversion to a hotel and restaurant. It comprises of white brick to the ground floor level with applied timber framing at first floor level. The timber framing is highly elaborate to the north and west elevations with notably less detailing to the south and east elevations. All elevations include bay windows to first floor level. These are also similarly more elaborately detailed to the north and west with attractive views over the grounds and driveway approach.
8. The grounds comprise of a large level lawned area and a smaller higher lawned area accessed via steps from a terrace adjacent to the west elevation, with a watercourse and dense woodland to its margins. There are fine views of the attractive west elevation and pair of gables of the house from the western edge of the lawn.
9. The principal ground floor rooms (including the drawing room/restaurant and parlour/public lounge and the first floor billiards room) are located within the north and west facing parts of the building overlooking the grounds. All of the hotel bedrooms are also located within these parts of the building, typically with bay windows, looking north or west, across the attractive grounds. To the east of the building are the kitchens and service functions, including the servants' entrance to the east elevation with access to the service staircase and the first floor service apartment, now a family suite within the hotel. These rooms typically have smaller, windows with views out onto the service yard.
10. The service yard is a partly enclosed area to the rear of the building formed by the predominantly blank east elevation of the projecting wing that forms the parlour/public lounge and the south elevation of the service area of the building. Doors accessing the staff areas and kitchens open onto this area. The land slopes away steeply towards the boundary to the east which is lined with trees and mature vegetation which screen the site from the road.

¹ List Entry Number: 1244864.

11. The special interest and significance of Highfield is derived, in part, from its architectural and historic interest as an example of a large Victorian house designed for a wealthy individual. Key contributors in these regards, are its extensive surviving internal features, its plan form and distribution of rooms, taking advantage of views of the grounds, its elaborately detailed elevations and its distinctive use of materials.
12. The service yard, having no surviving external buildings or boundaries, comprising of a hardsurfaced area, makes a limited contribution to the special interest and significance in its own right but nonetheless allows for an appreciation of the functional nature of the rear of the building and the clear distinction between this and the more elaborate north and west elevations.

Proposals and Effects

13. The works and development the subject of this appeal comprise in part of a new short, covered walkway adjoining a pair of gates which attach to a new fence enclosing a bin storage area. The connecting pergolas and walkway have been installed adjacent to the former servants' entrance to the east elevation of the building.
14. The bin store replaced a previously existing structure, although I am provided with little detail of the previous iteration. Nonetheless, the bin store is not particularly large, and is relatively simple and unobtrusive, comprising of a square fenced enclosure with a boarded door. Located to the edge of the site, and set apart from the building and the guests area, I do not consider that the bin store prevents an appreciation or understanding of the listed building and it performs a positive function in screening views of various modern bins. I therefore conclude that the bin store has not resulted in harm to the special interest or significance of the listed building.
15. Whilst I understand that pergolas have previously been approved at the site under an earlier planning permission², it is not clear where these would have been located or whether what has been constructed reflects that approval in any way. Nonetheless, the pergolas are lightweight and open garden structures located on the edge of the gardens to the north of the building. They are not visible from any other part of the building and for these reasons have not adversely affected the ability to appreciate or understand the special interest and significance of this listed building.
16. The small covered walkway appears to perform a function of separating the private and guest areas through its gated entrance. It is attached to the newly constructed workshop building, one of four buildings proposed within the service yard. It is understood that the workshop replaced an earlier building on this footprint, although, again, I have no details of this previous building. The building has a low shallow pitched corrugated sheet roof with dark stained timber boarded sides. A smaller building of matching materials, incorporating the fridges serving the kitchens immediately adjacent has been constructed a short distance from the rear (south) elevation facing the doors of the kitchens.
17. In addition to these in situ buildings, a further two adjoining buildings are proposed to be constructed close to the predominantly blank east elevation of the projecting

² Ref 16/03994/PLF.

wing. This would incorporate disabled toilets and furniture storage. It would result in a long narrow building that would be finished with dark stained timber and a corrugated sheet roof. It is understood that this was a previously approved structure providing disabled facilities although I have no details and note that the location is slightly altered from that approved.

18. The buildings that have been installed and those proposed have proportions that indicate an ancillary function that is consistent with their location within the service yard. Their lightweight timber construction, lack of openings and low roof height, as well as their dark stained finish results in a recessive appearance that would not dominate the space here, leaving much of the central part of the service yard open. Whilst the structures would be modern, boarded timber and corrugated sheeting are materials consistent with Victorian outbuildings, as indicated by the appellant's investigations below ground on the site. The buildings are set away from the south elevation, allowing this elevation to continue to be appreciated within the site, albeit that the proposal would obscure the lower brickwork elements of the building in more general views from within the service yard.
19. Owing to their proportions and their tight arrangement, this does not give the impression of an overly sprawling form of development. I am mindful that this is a service yard and that there have been multiple ancillary structures in this space over time, having a functional relationship with the service areas of the house. The proposal would maintain this use of the space with all of the buildings associated with the operation of the hotel. In that sense, this would be an authentic use of the service area. Indeed, the proposed buildings would not be prominent from outside the service area being screened from the road by the wooded margins and by the building itself from within the site. Views from the first floor apartment would be limited to a series of corrugated sheet roofs, a not unexpected feature within a service yard, with the principal views being towards the adjacent trees.
20. Additionally, the provision of the required space in outbuildings has resulted in the existing elevations remaining intact in a manner that could not be achieved were an extension to the building provided for example. I am mindful that were the outbuildings not required in the future, these could be easily removed, leaving the rear elevations unaltered. Moreover, the provision of external structures has avoided new penetrations, extensions and service runs within the historic fabric.
21. Having regard to my above reasoning, much of the effect of the proposed service yard buildings on the special interest and significance of the heritage asset would be neutral. Nonetheless, through the siting of the buildings adjacent to the rear elevations facing onto the service yard, it would result in an obscuration of much of the lower part of the rear sections of the building which would diminish the ability to appreciate these parts of the building from the service yard. This would result in a minor level of localised harm.
22. A final storage shed has been installed between the south elevation of the projecting wing and the wooded area. Unlike the other buildings, this is not dark stained and has a wide gable with a pitched roof. It has a more domestic character than the other buildings that form part of the appeal. However, its siting between built form and vegetation ensures it is not a prominent building, and views from within the grounds are limited to glimpses between trees. A view of the upper part of the gable is also possible from the road outside of the site. This view of the building, elevated above the level of the boundary wall, in particular has a slight

negative effect on the appearance of the site from the road, adversely affecting the appreciation of the asset from here, notwithstanding that the listed building itself is barely perceptible through the trees at this point. On this basis it has resulted in a small degree of harm to the special interest and significance of Highfield.

23. The proposals would not closely match the materials of the existing building. However, in my view, finishing the outbuildings in Victorian brickwork, elaborate applied timber framing and plain tiled roofs would be inappropriate in this context, resulting in larger, more prominent structures that would visually compete with the historic building. I would nonetheless highlight that the use of dark stained timber is reflective of the dark stained timber of the timber framing and is complementary to the existing building in that regard. On this basis, the failure to use matching materials is justified in accordance with Design Codes C52 and C53 of the East Riding Design Code Supplementary Planning Document (2025) (the ERDC).
24. Overall, whilst I have found that some aspects would preserve the special interest of the listed building, the proposal would nevertheless result in a low level of harm arising from the obscuration of the rear elevations through the position of the service yard buildings and from the visibility of the furniture storage building within and around the appeal site. In that regard the scheme would fail to preserve the Grade II listed building, Highfield Country Club, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. This would be contrary to the requirements of sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Act. As such the proposal would cause harm to the significance of the listed building.

Public Benefits and Balance

25. Paragraph 212 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) advises that when considering the impact of development on the significance of designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to the assets' conservation. Consistent with that approach, paragraph 213 sets out that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset, should require clear and convincing justification.
26. Given the extent and nature of the proposal, I find that the harm to the heritage asset in this instance would comprise a low level of 'less than substantial' harm. Under such circumstances, paragraph 215 advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
27. The use of the building as a hotel and wedding venue has enabled a heritage asset of considerable scale to continue to be maintained and operated as a single building, whilst retaining much of the planform, the hierarchy of rooms and preserving the extensive surviving internal features and fabric. In that regard the proposal represents the optimum viable use of the building.
28. The proposal would support the business and allow for the continued operation of that use. The appellant has demonstrated that furniture storage is essential in order to host weddings and other events and that its external storage has reduced the potential for knocks and damage to the interior surfaces, whilst also allowing for storage close to the point of use, limiting the carry distance and avoiding the need to repurpose an interior room for storage. The provision of outbuildings for food storage has been driven through the need for separate food preparation and storage areas in the interests of meeting hygiene standards and is well located for

direct access from the external doors of the kitchen. The provision of an external toilets building would ensure disabled facilities could be provided in line with the Building Regulations without resulting in extensive alterations to an internal room in a constrained ground floor.

29. On the above basis, there is a clear justification for the proposed outbuildings, and, from the evidence before me, the failure to provide such facilities would likely have an adverse effect on the existing business. Given the sensitive nature of the appeal site, it is unclear how such facilities could be provided in a manner that resulted in distinctly less harm. I have limited financial information, however, the evidence indicates that adverse effects on a hotel business such as this have potential to threaten its future. On this basis, through meeting several business needs, the proposal would help to sustain the asset's optimum viable use as a hotel and wedding venue, an enterprise that employs 50 people and generates economic benefits locally. I give this significant weight in favour of the appeal.
30. Whilst I am mindful that any harm is of considerable importance and weight, the total sum of public benefits arising from the proposal would clearly outweigh the low level of less than substantial harm to the heritage asset that would ensue.
31. On this basis I conclude that the proposal would comply with Policy ENV3 of the East Riding Local Plan Strategy Document Update (2025) (the ERLPSDU) which seeks to avoid harm to heritage assets, unless it can be demonstrated that proposals will provide public benefit that would outweigh the harm, in accordance with the provisions of the Framework.
32. I have found that the proposed outbuildings are appropriate in terms of their form and in particular their considered use of materials. In this regard there would be no conflict with Policy ENV1 of the ERLPSDU which, amongst other things, supports new development that achieves a high quality of design, including through considering the appropriate use of local materials, architectural styles and features that have a strong association with the area's landscape, geology and built form, with particular attention to heritage assets.
33. As the proposed materials are justified in this instance, and, as set out above, the proposal would not represent a conflict with C52 or C53 of the ERDC.

Conditions

34. I have had regard to the conditions suggested by the Council and considered them against the tests in the Framework and the advice in the Planning Practice Guidance, making such amendments as necessary to comply with those documents. Given that some elements of the proposal have not yet been constructed I have still included conditions requiring commencement with the standard statutory periods and specifying the approved plans.
35. With regard to both the planning permission and listed building consent, having regard to the part retrospective nature of the appeal, a condition requiring the submission of details of the colour finish of the materials of the buildings, particularly those yet to be installed, would ensure continuity and allow for agreement of an appropriate dark stain and its retention on all buildings thereafter. I have reworded the Council's suggested condition to provide a timeframe for implementation. Given the advanced stage of the works, it is considered that a year for compliance is reasonable.

36. With regard to the planning permission, a condition for the protection of adjacent trees is also necessary in the interests of the character and appearance of the CA and biodiversity. Similarly, further details of proposed drainage are required with regard to ensuring sustainable drainage in line with the Framework requirements. Given that these principally relate to the WC block, at least in terms of foul drainage, I have altered the compliance time for this condition in order to provide a clear date for implementation, given the retrospective nature of the appeal scheme.

Other Matters

37. The site is within the CA, which extends across the heart of the town of Driffield and in a linear nature to the north. Whilst predominantly concealed behind the site's high brick walls and extensive vegetation, Highfield is a high status building within the CA and thus makes an important contribution to its special interest and significance. However, given the lack of visibility and the nature and extent of the works as described above, the character and appearance of the CA as a whole would be preserved as required by section 72(1) of the Act. I note that the Council concluded similarly. There would also be no conflict with Policy ENV3 of the ERLPSDU or the provisions of the Framework in this regard.

Conclusion

38. For the reasons given and subject to the conditions in the schedule below, I conclude that both Appeal A and Appeal B should be allowed.

Paul Martinson

INSPECTOR

SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS

Appeal A Ref APP/E2001/W/25/3375526

- 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 the following approved plans:
Location Plan
HF01 012 REV A
HF01 110B REV A
HF01 112B REV A
- 3) For the avoidance of doubt, the walls of all outbuildings are to be faced with horizontally boarded timber, and the roofs are to be finished with corrugated sheeting. Notwithstanding the approved details, within one year of the date of this decision, the external walls and roofs of all outbuildings shall have been installed and finished in colours that have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The materials and colour finish of the external walls and roof shall thereafter be maintained as such.
- 4) In this condition "retained tree" means an existing tree which is to be retained in accordance with the approved plans and particulars; and paragraphs (a)

and (b) below shall have effect until the expiration of five years from the date of this permission.

(a) No retained tree shall be cut down, uprooted or destroyed, nor shall any retained tree be topped or lopped other than in accordance with the approved plans and particulars, without the written approval of the Local Planning Authority. Any topping or lopping approved shall be carried out in accordance with British Standard (3998 Tree Work).

(b) If any retained tree is removed, uprooted or destroyed or dies, another tree shall be planted at the same place and that tree shall be of such size, species and maturity, and shall be planted at such time, as may be specified in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

- 5) Prior to the first use of the WC block hereby approved, all foul and surface water drainage relating to the development hereby approved shall have been installed in accordance with a scheme for the discharge of foul and surface water from the site, incorporating a sustainable drainage system and associated management and maintenance plan which has first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This shall include the submission of the full test results of percolation tests (carried out in accordance with the BRE Digest 365) to determine whether any proposed soakaway is a suitable method of surface water drainage within the site. Should these tests indicate that soakaways are not effective in this location, then details of alternative drainage for surface water shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The foul and surface water drainage shall thereafter be managed and maintained in an operational condition in accordance with the approved details.

Appeal B Ref APP/E2001/Y/25/3375528

- 1) The works hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
- 2) The works hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:
Location Plan
HF01 012 REV A
HF01 110B REV A
HF01 112B REV A
- 3) For the avoidance of doubt, the walls of all outbuildings are to be faced with horizontally boarded timber, and the roofs are to be finished with corrugated sheeting. Notwithstanding the approved details, within one year of the date of this decision, the external walls shall have been finished in a colour that has first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Once the colour finish has been applied it shall thereafter be maintained as such.