



Appeal Decisions

Site visits made on 25 November 2025 and 27 March 2026

by Helen Heward BSc (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 08 April 2026

Appeal A: APP/M2515/W/25/3365903

The White Hart Hotel, Bailgate, Lincoln, LN1 3AR

- 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 Travel Sector Property Ltd against the decision of City of Lincoln Council.
 - The application reference is 2024/0617/FUL.
 - The development proposed is described as “Construction of a new external roof terrace and frameless glass balustrade, formation of a new glazed screen and access doors to the roof terrace from the existing fourth floor private lounge accommodation. Removal of existing steel balcony to south/east elevation and removal of roof mounted water tower”.
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Appeal B: APP/M2515/Y/25/3365905

The White Hart Hotel, Bailgate, Lincoln LN1 3AR

- 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 Travel Sector Property Ltd against the decision of City of Lincoln Council.
 - The application reference is 2024/0618/LBC.
 - The works proposed are described as “Construction of a new external roof terrace and frameless glass balustrade, formation of a new glazed screen and access doors to the roof terrace from the existing fourth floor private lounge accommodation. New internal steps and balustrade from the existing lounge to accommodate the change in levels. Removal of existing steel balcony to south/east elevation and removal of roof mounted water tower”.
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Decision

Appeal A

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal B

2. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

3. As the proposal is in a conservation area and relates to a listed building, I have had special regard to sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act).
4. It is common ground between the parties that the formation of a new glazed screen and access doors to the proposed roof terrace alongside timber access steps are an acceptable intervention which do not result in harm to the historic façade and

significance and setting of the White Hart Hotel. On my visit I was informed that the steel balcony to the south east elevation had been removed.

5. The Planning Officer's report advises that it is not considered that the proposal would have an unduly harmful impact as a result of noise and disturbance on neighbouring residential properties or visitors to the church. Therefore, I have understood references to activity and noise in the reason for refusal to be limited to their effect on character, and not reasons for refusal in their own right.
6. The Council had no objection to the Appellant submitting additional photorealistic renderings provided by the Appellant at appeal. The Council addressed them and I have had regard to them.

Main Issues

7. The main issues are whether the proposal would preserve the White Hart Hotel, a Grade II listed building (Ref: 1388461) and any of the features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses, and the extent to which it would preserve or enhance:

the setting of Lincoln Cathedral (Ref: 1388680), by way of change to important views towards with particular regard to views of the Cathedral from Lincoln Castle (Ref: 1388491), both Grade I LBs and SMs,

the character or appearance of the Cathedral and City Centre Conservation Area (CA) including the settings of nearby LBs Judge's Lodgings, Grade II* (Ref: 1388484), 6 and 7 Castle Hill, Grade II* (Ref: 1388486), Church of St Mary Magdalene, Grade II (Ref: 1388540), Leigh-Pemberton House, Grade II* (Ref: 1388487), and Exchequergate Grade I (Ref: 1388541).

Reasons

8. The White Hart Hotel is located on the corner of Eastgate and Bailgate, situated in the Bail area of Lincoln, within the CA and between Lincoln Castle and Lincoln Cathedral.
9. The hotel sits on a key site for hostelry in Lincoln, and dates from 1722, re-fronted 1844. Also fronting Bailgate, a 4-storey with attics element dates from around 1900, and another 4-storey addition by Watkins, Coombes & Partners from 1962. The Bailgate elevations are characterised by stucco at lower levels with brick facades. A Heritage Impact Assessment informs that the decorative pedimented roofline of the 1900 section has been lost through the installation of the uppermost floor with dormers in 1949-56 and further alteration following the insertion of the reasonably sympathetic, but clearly modern 1962 addition at the southwest corner. Notwithstanding these changes, and in so far as these appeals are concerned, the restrained classical and neoclassical features with vertically aligned fenestration under coped parapets of the Bailgate frontage contribute to the special interest of the LB.
10. Lincoln Castle, dates from 1068 and Lincoln Cathedral, originates from 1072. Both built for William the Conqueror and strategically located to either side of the line of the Roman Ermine Street on high ground. The East Gate, or Mian Gate to Lincoln castle and the West Face of the Cathedral face each other and are linked by Castle Hill and Exchequergate. The West Face of the Cathedral retains a large section of the Norman west front and is one of the country's finest medieval buildings of both

national and international importance. The parties cite that John Ruskin declared; *"the Cathedral of Lincoln is out and out the most precious piece of architecture in the British Isles."* Insofar as it relates to these appeals, the special interest of both these assets is derived from their dominating positions within the townscape and the direct facing relationship, intervisibility and in particular key views available from the Castle walls of the West front of the Cathedral.

11. The CA has a complex townscape character particularly influenced by the Roman and High Medieval eras. The traditional character of Bailgate and Eastgate form a key part of the CA. Views along the historic streetscapes are characterised by high density and small-scale buildings, predominantly 3-storey in scale and with a wealth of well-preserved facades and other architectural details, under the muted tones of the roofing materials. The significance of the CA, insofar as it relates to these appeals, is primarily associated with the well-preserved small scale historic townscape and roofscape, and its modest subservient scale nestled under and between the defensive Castle and the majestic towering West face of the Cathedral.
12. The Council refers to a number of LBs within the CA and in the vicinity of the appeal site. Judge's Lodgings, c1810, is a 2-storey judicial building facing Castle Hill, with a yellow stock brick façade under a hipped slate roof. No's 6 and 7 Castle Hill was formerly a pair of C18 houses. It is 3-storeys with a brick façade rising to an ornate coped parapet. The Church of St Mary Magdalene was rebuilt in 1695 and located at the corner of Bailgate and Exchequergate. Its square northwest tower is directly adjacent to the appeal site. The tower and gabled slate roof to the nave and chancel sit below the height of the White Hart Hotel. Leigh-Pemberton House, on the opposite side of Bailgate, is a distinctive 16 century merchants house characterised by its timber frame construction and jettied floors under pitched tiled gables. Exchequergate, is a magnificent mid 14 century 3-storey stone faced with coped parapet West gatehouse in the Cathedral Close wall.
13. They are all located around the public square at the top of Steep Hill, and in a locality where people enjoy views of the town including multiple heritage assets in a well-preserved high status historic townscape. The significance of these LBs as far as they relate to Appeal A, is primarily associated with the available views of their well-preserved high-quality facades, traditional roofscapes and their modest height and scale. With the exception of Leigh Pemberton House their stone or brick facades are all topped with parapets.
14. The proposed roof terrace would be on an existing flat roof over an extension built in the 1960's. The frameless glass balustrade measuring 1.8m high would be installed around the perimeter. The balustrade would be inset approximately 600mm from an existing parapet wall and a minimum of 900mm from the parapet edge to Bailgate. The glazing would have a low reflective specification. To the rear the balustrade would be acid etched up to a height of 1.55m. The terrace would operate as an extension of a lounge/bar.
15. The proposals do not involve major structural alterations, and the roof terrace and associated works are proposed within the part of the hotel which was remodelled and altered in 1962. The set back would prevent views from street level immediately below and adjacent to the building, but the balustrade and activity behind would be visible in other views from Bailgate, Castle Hill and Steep Hill. In the available views the glass balustrade would be a prominent, incongruous

- modern addition. It would be uncharacteristic of, and detrimental to the prevailing classical architectural style and features.
16. The balustrade and activity on the roof would also be clearly visible from the walls at Lincoln Castle which offer an uninterrupted view of the West Front of the Cathedral. The Appellant agrees that there is a section of the Castle wall walk where the development would sit directly in front of the Cathedral's west front. Historic England (HE) noted that the view epitomises the historic character of this section of the city at the heart of the CA and that the view from the Castle walls provides a sweeping aspect of the city which encompasses heritage assets, including Lincoln Cathedral. In the views the proposed terrace would be roughly midway, directly along the view corridor, and at an elevated level.
 17. The Appellant submits that views from the Castle wall walk are dynamic and that in views from the Observatory Tower, south of the East Gate, and from close to Cobb Hall the proposed roof terrace would not directly impact on sight lines towards the west front of the Cathedral. The Appellant also draws attention to activity that often populates the foreground, with Castle Hill forming a dynamic and multipurpose area of public realm within the city's main tourism quarter. They argue that this forms part of the wider vista from the Castle's walls with activity and associated movements contributing to the overall interest and sense of place and, in turn, the setting of designated heritage assets including Lincoln Cathedral.
 18. Nonetheless, the proposal would be especially intrusive in views from the Castle Walls offering direct views of the Cathedral where the viewer can enjoy the full impact of the Cathedral's West front. In the views 'people activity' in the intervening town is focussed on street level. In contrast, the roof terrace would be in an elevated position. The balustrade and roof activity would appear most incongruent, unexpected and out of character and would noticeably impinge upon the view of the Cathedral at an elevated level and draw the eye away from the view of the Cathedral's West Front. The glow, albeit limited, from table lighting together with the unexpected sight of people moving on the roof top, would further draw attention to the balustrade and roof terrace, creating a distraction that would extend into the evenings, at times of low lighting, which would be particularly unfortunate and detrimental when the West face of the Cathedral is illuminated. These views are important to the setting of both the Castle and the Cathedral.
 19. HE noted that the roofscape is a fundamental part of the historic character of the CA, which is highlighted and appreciated when viewed from the height of the Castle walls. In the views from the Castle walls, the glass balustrade, lighting and occasional views of people on the roof terrace would create a horizontal plane of development and activity appearing to sit atop the small-scale subservient town. It would be a discordant and incongruent feature, at odds with the inactive and muted tones of the roofscape of the town.
 20. Having studied the visualisation materials submitted and from my site visit observations I consider that the balustrade installation would also be quite widely visible from street level within the CA. The area has seen little modern intervention to date and is sensitive to change. The proposed glass balustrade would catch the eye and represent a jarring element in the historic streetscape, when viewed from Steep Hill, Castle Hill, Bailgate and Eastgate. In some views the proposed balustrade would be seen in proximity with Leigh-Pemberton House and the Square tower to the Church of St Mary Magdalene. Whilst more distant from the

Judges Lodgings, 6 and 7 Castle Hill and Exchequergate, the glass balustrade would be seen in some views where the facades of these LBs collectively add to the rich character and appearance of the CA.

21. The Appellant's Design and Access Statement acknowledges that the creation of a roof terrace will have some impact on views from both the Cathedral (roof tours) and the Castle (wall walk) through the ability for a small number of people to gather on the new roof terrace. The Appellant argues that the impact would be "measured" and should be considered within the context of the ability for people to gather on the Castle and Cathedral. However, I did not find that the access to the Castle walls or cathedral roof provided a facility that was comparable to the roof terrace proposed.
22. An Operating Statement, Conditions & Restrictions set out a number of principles and management arrangements for the proposed terrace. These would include no structures or furniture above 1.5m on the terrace and limiting furniture to a maximum of 9 tables and 28 chairs. Limiting the number of people in the fourth floor lounge bar and on the roof terrace to not more than 60 persons. Limiting the operating hours to between 8am and 11pm, prohibiting live or audio music on the roof terrace and restricting noise levels emitted from the fourth floor lounge. Preventing the roof terrace from being used as an external bar selling and/or serving alcohol and limiting lighting on the roof terrace to battery operated tabletop lamps with a maximum 4w LED of 2700k brightness, 250 lumens. These would offer some mitigation but would not materially change the impacts arising.
23. The Council did not contest the findings of a Noise Assessment that there would be a low noise impact on nearby public spaces. I am not persuaded that there is evidence to say that noise would have material adverse impact.
24. In relation to Appeal B I conclude that the physical characteristics of the balustrade table lighting glow and occasional view of people and activity on the roof top would not preserve the special interest of the White Hart Hotel LB. Having regard to the Framework, the level of harm would be less than substantial.
25. In relation to Appeal A the proposal would fail to preserve significant aspects of the setting of Lincoln Cathedral and Lincoln Castle. Having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework), the national importance of these Grade I heritage assets and the importance of the views between the Castle and Cathedral, I conclude that the harms would be less than substantial, but towards the higher end of harm in this category. There would be a low level of less than substantial harm to the setting of nearby LBs Leigh-Pemberton House, and the Church of St Mary Magdalene, the Judges Lodgings, 6 and 7 Castle Hill and Exchequergate and a low level of less than substantial harm to the character and appearance of the CA.
26. Having regard to Paragraph 212 of the Framework I find the harms individually and collectively would be less than substantial, but nevertheless of considerable importance and weight. Under such circumstances, paragraph 215 of the Framework advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, which includes the securing of optimal viable use of listed buildings.
27. An existing east facing roof terrace to the Brownlow Suite had been removed by the time of my site visit. A rooftop water tank detracts from the special interest of the

- White Hart Hotel, the setting of Lincoln Cathedral and the significance of the CA. Its removal would be a public benefit to which I attach moderate positive weight.
28. There is little evidence that re-purposing the flat roof as a terrace is necessary to reduce or remove a risk to the building, or that there are no other options. I attach no weight to these arguments.
29. The Appellant advises that the proposal would result in investment in the White Hart Hotel and create a unique feature helping secure the hotel's position as Lincoln's premier hotel destination. Part of the significance of the LB is as a key site for hostelry in Lincoln. For this reason, I attach moderate positive weight to these benefits.
30. The investment might also contribute towards enabling continued employment opportunities to be maintained. Construction works would make a contribution to the local economy through the employment of local contractors and subcontractors, but the extent of contribution is not qualified and would in any event be relatively small and attracts very limited positive weight.
31. The Appellant argues that the roof terrace would better reveal the significance of a number of designated heritage assets including an elevated view towards Castle Hill and Lincoln Castle, offering a new vantage point of this important collection of designated heritage assets. In particular the Appellant argues that the roof terrace would open up new views towards the Cathedral's imposing and magnificent West Front, including a superior and close up view of the Cathedral's West Front allowing an appreciation of the pointed arches and Romanesque carvings and an ability to appreciate the intricate detailing of the carvings and stone masonry of the internationally renowned West Front from the proposed roof terrace.
32. The Appellant is of the opinion that weight afforded to the public benefit arising from revealing of a new publicly accessible view of Lincoln Cathedral should be substantial and that extended public access would be secured through the submitted planning obligation which is legally binding and enforceable.
33. Planning Practice Guidance on the Historic Environment advises that public benefits may follow from many developments and could be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental objectives as described in the National Planning Policy Framework. Benefits do not always have to be accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefits. However, they should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large and not just be a private benefit.
34. Users of the terrace would be able to take advantage of significant views of the West face of the Cathedral, over the historic townscape and towards the Castle. However, the number of people who would benefit from these views would be limited and restricted and the views would not be accessible for the public at large. Views of the Romanesque frieze and other carvings are also available from the parvis in front of the Cathedral West front. In comparison the views that would be disrupted and harmed by the development would be available to the public at large. Taking all of this into consideration, I attach very limited weight to the public benefit from the creation of views.
35. Overall, the benefits that would accrue would not individually or collectively outweigh the level of less than substantial harm that I have found. I am not

persuaded that a clear and convincing justification for the harms that would be caused by development has been provided.

36. Given the above and in the absence of sufficient public benefit, I conclude that the proposals associated with Appeals A and B would fail to preserve the special historic interest of the White Hart Hotel, be harmful to important views from Lincoln Castle towards Lincoln Cathedral and thereby harming the setting of these Grade I listed buildings. The proposal would also fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Cathedral and City Centre Conservation Area and would cause harm to the setting of nearby LBs Judge's Lodgings, 6 and 7 Castle Hill, Leigh-Pemberton House, St Mary Magdalene Church and Exchequergate. The proposal fails to satisfy the requirements of the Act.
37. The proposal also fails to meet requirements of Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (2023) Policy S53, Design and Amenity, that require that development should relate well to the site, its local and wider context and existing characteristics to ensure that the development can be satisfactorily assimilated into the surrounding area; protect any important local views into, out of or through the site; and reflect or improve on the original architectural style of the local surroundings. As well as failing to satisfy requirements of Policy S57, Historic Environment, and Policy S58 Protecting Lincoln, Gainsborough and Sleaford's Setting and Character which require, amongst other things, that development proposals should protect Lincoln's distinct built heritage and townscape character, preserve and enhance the special character of conservation areas, and protect the significance of heritage assets (including where relevant their setting) by protecting and enhancing architectural and historic character, historical associations, and townscape features and through consideration of design, architectural detailing, materials, siting, use, and views and vistas both from and towards the assets.

Other Matters

38. I have noted that Lincoln Cathedral did not object to the proposed balustrade and roof terrace, support the removal of the water tower and old viewing platform, and provided that controls would be enforceable through legal agreements and binding on future owners the Cathedral is in support of the application.
39. I have also noted concerns from the Priest in Charge and Church Wardens for St Mary Magdalene with St Paul in the Bail and St Michael on the Mount Bailgate Lincoln.
40. Matters pertaining to how the Council dealt with the applications are not material to my decisions.

Conclusion

41. For the above reasons and having regard to all other matters raised I conclude that Appeals A and B should be dismissed.

Helen Heward

INSPECTOR