



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 March 2026

by **S Bennett-Matthews**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 June 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/W2845/W/25/3373767

Ivy House Farm Stables, 18 Back Lane, Northampton, NN4 6BX

- 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 Clayson Country Homes Ltd against the decision of West Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application reference is 2025/1129/FULL.
 - The development proposed is the "Erection of 5no. dwellings".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that, in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, special regard must be had to the desirability of preserving the building, its setting, or any features of special architectural or historical interest which it possesses. Section 72 of the Act requires special attention be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.
3. The Council's decision notice identified a concern regarding the relationship between the first-floor windows serving Plots 3 and 5, which would have resulted in unacceptable loss of privacy owing to a separation distance of approximately 14 metres. I note that this concern was accepted by the appellant, and that an amended Plan for Plot 5 (Drawing No IVY 50007 Rev B) was submitted at the appeal stage. The Council has confirmed that this amendment overcomes its concerns in this regard. I agree and therefore find that the second reason for refusal has been satisfactorily addressed.
4. During appeal, Plan IVY 10001-1 and a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) were submitted by the appellant, neither of which formed part of the original submission. I exercised my discretion to accept these documents into the appeal, and both were circulated to interested parties. The Council confirms that they do not alter its position.
5. The appellant explains Plan IVY 10001-1 clarifies the site boundary of the approved scheme under reference WNN/2022/0243 (the "extant permission") in comparison with the appeal site boundary. Further, I note that the HIA provides further assessment of the historical development of the site and the significance and setting of the Listed Building and CA. I have exercised my discretion to accept both these as part of the appeal evidence.

6. In considering this material, I have had regard to the Procedural Guide to Planning Appeals (England) May 2026, which advises that the appeal process should not be used to evolve proposals and that revisions intended to overcome reasons for refusal should normally be the subject matter of a fresh application. I have also considered the principles set out in *Holborn Studios*, together with the extent to which the parties have engaged with this material and the Council's view on these matters.
7. However, in this case I do not find that the submitted documents materially alter the proposal before me. Rather, the HIA provides further evidence, in respect of the likely heritage effects, the amended plan for Plot 5 addresses the identified privacy concern without resulting in a materially different scheme and, Plan IVY 10001-1 provides clarification only. I am satisfied that no party has been prejudiced and, I have therefore taken this material into account.

Main Issues

The main issue is therefore:

- (a) the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area, having particular regard to its impact on the setting and significance of designated heritage assets, including the Hardingstone Conservation Area (CA) and the setting of Ivy House, a Grade II listed building ("the Listed Building").

Reasons

Significance and Settings

8. The appeal site is situated on the edge of the village of Hardingstone within the Hardingstone Conservation Area (CA), which is designated for its architectural and historical interest. The appeal site comprises an irregularly shaped parcel of land to the rear of the Listed Building and associated farmyard buildings which include a barn, together identified as the former farmyard complex. I note that the appeal site, the surrounding area includes open fields, paddocks, Hardington Pocket Park, and the modern development of Brackmills Industrial Park.
9. The HIA explains that the village of Hardingstone has its origins in the Saxon Period. The Listed Building is identified as an early nineteenth century farmhouse. Its statutory listing description, notes that it is constructed of coursed rubble with a Welsh slate roof and stone- coped end gables with kneelers. The Listed Building is described as three storeys in height, with irregular windows openings and door entrance on the southern elevation.
10. The HIA identifies that the buildings closely associated with the appeal site are the Listed Building and its associated buildings, which together formed the nineteenth-century farmyard complex. It also notes that while a number of Grade II listed buildings lie along Back Lane, of which the closest to the proposed development include numbers 1,3,10-12, and 14-16, intervening modern development results in no intervisibility between these buildings and the proposed development site.
11. The Listed Building occupies a prominent corner position on Back Lane, with the former barn and stables located between it and the appeal site. This arrangement reflects its historic edge of village context, in which the Listed Building reads as the

principal structure, with the associated buildings arranged in a subordinate relationship.

12. I find that the appeal site makes a positive contribution to the significance of the CA. Whilst part of the site benefits from the extant planning permission for limited development, the wider area retains an open character, with limited built form and a clear relationship with surrounding paddocks and fields. This gives the site an overall open and semi-rural character, helping to define the transition between the built -up part of the village and the surrounding countryside. It also reflects the historical agricultural use of the land associated with the Listed Building and its associated buildings.
13. In relation to the Listed Building, the appeal site forms part of the land historically associated with the farmhouse and its associated buildings. This contributes to its setting by allowing the Listed Building to be understood as part of a former agricultural complex, in which the Listed Building reads as the principal structure with the associated buildings arranged in a subordinate relationship. This arrangement reflects the historic edge of village siting and forms an important component of the asset's significance.

The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area

14. The appeal proposal seeks planning permission for the erection of five dwellings on land adjacent to the Listed Building and its associated buildings. The proposed development would comprise two dwellings of two- storey (Plot 3 and 4), each providing five bedrooms, and three 1.5- storey dwellings (Plots 1,2 and 5) each providing 4 bedrooms. The Design and Access Statement explains that the site would be accessed via the existing access off Houghton Hill, leading to a shared internal courtyard, with the dwellings arranged to face inward
15. Plots 1 and 2 would be similar in form and scale. Plot 4, although two-storeys in height, would have a larger footprint than Plots 1 and 2. Plot 5 would be located close to the access to the site.
16. The appellant places weight on the existence of an extant planning permissions for refurbishment and conversion of the Listed Building and its associated buildings, for the erection of two additional dwellings under reference WNN/2022/0243 and refer to Plan IVY 10001-1, contending that the current proposal extends only marginally beyond the red-line boundary of that consent. The extant planning permission is a material consideration and establishes that a limited amount of development on the site is acceptable in principle.
17. However, the scheme approved under the extant planning permission was closely related in siting to the Listed Building and its associated buildings, thereby retaining the established, close knit and subservient relationship and preserving its setting.
18. By contrast the proposed development would introduce a separate group of five modern dwellings, beyond the historic perimeter of the Listed Building and its associated buildings representing three additional dwelling compared to the extant permission. In particular, Plot 5 would be positioned close to the appeal site entrance and, by virtue of its siting and larger footprint, would appear visually prominent within the site. Further, the larger footprint of Plots 4 would also contribute to this effect.

19. As a result, the proposal would disrupt the established spatial hierarchy, eroding the prominence of the Listed Building and its relationship with the associated buildings. It would also, extend further into the site than the proposal approved under the extant planning permission, resulting in greater intrusion into the remaining open, semi-rural part of the site. The proposal would therefore introduce a competing and more dominant form of development that would detract from the Listed Building and erode the contribution made by the appeal site to its setting and to the character of the CA.
20. I therefore find that the proposed development would fail to preserve the historical edge of village character of the appeal site and would harm the setting of the Listed Building.
21. The Heritage Impact Assessment acknowledges that the appeal site lies within the setting of the Listed Building and within the CA. It accepts that the proposed development would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the Listed Building, arising principally from the scale, layout, siting, and form of the proposed development together with the erosion of the historic farmyard relationship. I agree with this conclusion and further find, for the reasons I have set out above, the proposal would also fail to preserve the character and appearance of the CA.
22. The appellant contends the site is located close to local services, employment opportunities at the Brackmills Industrial Estate and public transport, and that the proposal would make a positive contribution to housing supply. While these considerations carry moderate weight, paragraph 212 of the National Planning Policy Framework makes it clear that great weight should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets.
23. The harm to the significance of the Listed building and the CA would, in each case, be less than substantial. Paragraphs 215 and 216 of the NPPF, require that such harm be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. Having carried this balancing exercise and having attached considerable importance and weight to the harm identified, I find that the public benefits of the proposal advanced by the appellant do not outweigh the harm to the significance of the designated heritage assets.
24. For these reasons, the proposed development would fail to preserve the setting of the Listed Building, contrary to s66(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) and would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the CA as a whole, contrary to s72(1) of the Act. These statutory duties are matters to which I have given considerable importance and weight.
25. Accordingly, the proposed development would therefore conflict with Policy BN5 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, and Policies Q1 and ENV6 of the Northampton Local Plan (Part 2), which seeks to enhance and conserve heritage assets and their settings.

Other Matters

26. Concerns have been raised regarding loss of green space, construction traffic, and highway safety. However, no objections have been raised by the Council's

highway or ecology officers on these matters, and they do not alter my overall conclusions.

Conditions

27. I do not consider that the harm identified, which arises from scale, form, layout and siting of the development could be mitigated through the imposition of conditions. It is therefore unnecessary to consider the proposed conditions in further detail.

Conclusion

28. For the reasons given above, the development is contrary to the development plan when considered as a whole. There are no material considerations which indicate that the proposal should be allowed contrary to the development plan. Therefore, having had regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

S Bennett-Matthews

INSPECTOR