



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 November 2025

by Helen Smith BSc (Hons) MSc MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 2 December 2025

Appeal Ref: 6000547

Land South of B4380, Atcham, Shrewsbury, SY5 6QG

- 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 D Sturman (Bunning and Price Limited) against the decision of Shropshire Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/04428/FUL.
 - The development proposed is a car park.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. As the proposal relates to the setting of several listed buildings, I have had special regard to sections 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act), which requires the decision maker, in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - whether the proposal would fail to preserve the significance of the nearby designated heritage assets by reason of its impact on their setting, and the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the surrounding landscape.

Reasons

Special interest and significance

4. The appeal site comprises a parcel of land in the northern part of an agricultural field west of the River Severn at Atcham. It lies immediately south of the B4380 highway, opposite the historic village of Atcham, located on the other side of the river. It is within the setting of the Mytton and Mermaid Hotel, a Grade II listed building, and the 18th century Atcham Bridge, which is Grade II* listed. It is also within the setting of St Eata's Church, a Grade I listed building, and a cluster of other listed buildings along the B4380. Longner Hall, a Grade II registered park and garden is also located north-west of the site on the opposite side of the B4380.

5. Atcham Bridge is positioned to the north-eastern boundary of the appeal site. It is a Grade II* listed¹ bridge designed by John Gwynne, a recognised architect and civil engineer. The humped-back bridge is a former road bridge built between 1769 and 1771. It is constructed of grey sandstone ashlar with seven rounded arches forming the base structure, which enables the bridge to span the River Severn. The arches spring from capped breakwaters and are detailed with voussoirs and a vermiculated keystone. Above the arches is a string course. The bridge is topped by a coped parapet which ramps up to central pediments and date stones. Curved piers with pyramidal cap stones mark the ends of the bridge with low parapet walls extending out to the adjacent footpaths.
6. For the purposes of this appeal, the special interest and significance of Atcham Bridge primarily stem from its historical and architectural interest as a former road bridge. It is also derived in part from its age, historic fabric, structural characteristics, and its historical relationship with John Gwynne.
7. The special interest and significance of Atcham Bridge also stem in part from its setting. Its position crossing the River Severn and its proximity to the historic road to Shrewsbury, contributes in a positive way to its heritage merit. Whilst it is no longer used as a road bridge since the construction of the new Atcham road bridge, it does maintain a public footpath route. Therefore, the bridge remains as a crossing over the River Severn and an important visual landmark monument, particularly in views from the banks of the river and in views experienced from the Mytton and Mermaid and the Church of St Eata. The rural appearance of the appeal site contributes positively to how the asset is experienced and appreciated.
8. The Mytton and Mermaid Hotel is a Grade II listed² building. It dates from the mid-to late 18th century with 19th century alterations. It has three storeys and a basement, constructed of red brick over seven bays with hipped machine tile roof. Architectural features include wooden dentil eaves cornice, rusticated brick stacks, glazing bar sash windows and painted blind windows, central six-panel door with rectangular overlight with three intersecting ovals, and door-case of Doric pilasters. It was bought by Sir Clough William-Ellis in the 1930s and converted back into a hotel.
9. According to the evidence, the former stable to the east was first shown on the 1882 Ordnance Survey Map. Its form is of a lower scale than the main building, but its distinguished architectural detailing contributes to the listed building's heritage value. Although the building has undergone additions during the 20th and 21st century, these are ancillary in appearance built using similar material palettes.
10. From the evidence before me, and my own observations on site, the special interest and significance of the building as a heritage asset are largely derived from its age, historic use, and architectural style. Of note is its Georgian architectural form and use of traditional construction techniques and materials. It is also derived from its historical association with Sir Clough William-Ellis.
11. Pertinent to the appeal, the listed building's special interest and significance also stem in part from its setting. The largely open area immediately in front of the building, its prominent siting near the road and its position adjacent to the riverbank and Atcham Bridge is the primary space where it is experienced, and its

¹ List Entry Number: 1176588

² List Entry Number: 1055126

significance appreciated. As such, it contributes in a positive way to its heritage merit. The wider setting includes the built form of the village of Atcham to the east and a more rural setting to the west on the other side of the river.

12. The appeal site is located to the west of the Mytton and Mermaid on the opposite side of the river, forming part of the more rural and open wider setting of the listed building. Whilst there is some intervening vegetation, views of the appeal site can be seen. As such, the site makes a positive contribution to the setting of the listed building.
13. The Church of St Eata is a Grade I listed³ church that has origins in the 12th and 13th century, with a 12th century nave and late 13th century chancel. However, there are elements of the church which appear to be incorporated from an earlier church, such as the late Saxon/ early Norman window in the north wall. Later elements include the 15th century nave roof, 16th century tie-beam chancel roof, 17th century south porch, and two large grey sandstone ashlar buttresses dated 1917. The church is mainly constructed from red and grey sandstone with an ashlar top stage to the tower, set under machine plain tile roofs.
14. The special interest and significance of the Church of St Eata stem from its historical and architectural interest as a Norman church, although incorporating earlier and later additions. It is also derived in part from its age, historic fabric, structural characteristics, and its unique association with St Eata and prominent local landowning families. It provides a distinct local landmark from within the village and its immediate environments, including views of the church from Atcham Bridge and over the River Severn where it can be seen in context with the Mytton and Mermaid Hotel listed building.
15. Pertinent to the appeal, the special interest and significance of the church also stem in part from its setting. The church is positioned within its associated churchyard and gardens, which give the building an open and tranquil setting. However, to the east of the church, it is mainly contained by the built form of the village. Within the churchyard are a number of funerary monuments, some of which are also listed. The close proximity of the River Severn adds to the quiet and tranquil setting of the church. To the west on the opposite side of the river are open fields, placing the church within a rural village context.
16. The appeal site is located to the west of the church on the opposite side of the river, forming part of the more rural and open wider setting of the listed building. Whilst there is some intervening vegetation, views of the appeal site can be seen. As such, the site makes a positive contribution to the setting of the listed church.
17. Atcham Grange is a Grade II listed vernacular style farmhouse building located to the south of the Church of St Eata. It dates from the 16th or 17th century and was a timber-framed hall house with a cross wing. In the mid to late 19th century it was refaced, partially rebuilt and extended in red brick with a plain tile roof. It is of two storeys with an attic over the main range of the house, there is also a single-storey range to the right of the building.
18. I find that the listed building's special interest and significance, insofar as it relates to this appeal, derives from its historic and architectural interest as a 16th or 17th century farmhouse. The timber-framing, surviving historic fabric, use of traditional

³ List Entry Number: 1176664

materials and construction techniques, and its attractive architectural style all contribute meaningfully to its heritage value.

19. Pertinent to the appeal, the special interest and significance of Atcham Grange also stem in part from its setting. Its immediate setting comprises its associated farmstead. Its position near the River Severn contributes in a positive way to its heritage merit.
20. The appeal site is located to the west of Atcham Grange on the opposite side of the river, forming part of the more rural and open wider setting of the listed building. Whilst there is some intervening vegetation, distant views of the appeal site can be glimpsed. As such, the site makes a moderate contribution to the setting of the listed building.
21. The entrance screen and east and west front lodges to Attingham Park are Grade II* listed⁴. They were built around 1805-7, probably by John Nash, with later additions to the lodges. They are mainly constructed from grey sandstone ashlar over five bays and feature wrought-iron gates. The large central carriage arch is flanked by pedestrian arches and small square lodges. Architectural details include moulded plinth, frieze, cornice and blocking course, banded rusticated piers with swagged urn-finials, central round arch with impost, moulded architrave, scrolled keystone and carved bas reliefs in spandrels. The entrance screen and lodges are flanked by lower screen walls with end piers, which are Grade II listed⁵, also dated around 1805-7 and probably by John Nash. These comprise red brick walls with sandstone ashlar plinth and coping, and grey sandstone ashlar end pier.
22. The special interest and significance of the entrance screen, lodges and flanking walls is largely derived from its form and construction, to which its height and alignment, as well as its surviving historic fabric all contribute. Its prominent position near the road and the entrance to Attingham Park, and its connection to John Nash, reinforce its links with the area's history, and it therefore makes a positive contribution to the area.
23. Pertinent to the appeal, the special interest and significance of the entrance screen, lodges and flanking walls also stem in part from its setting. Its immediate setting comprises its associated connections with Attingham Park. Its position opposite the Mytton and Mermaid Hotel and near Atcham Bridge contributes in a positive way to its heritage merit.
24. Views of the appeal site from the entrance screen, lodges and flanking walls are obscured mainly by Atcham Bridge (old and new) and the intervening vegetation. As such, the site makes a neutral contribution to the setting of these listed structures.
25. Additionally, the appeal site is within the setting of Longner Hall, a Grade II registered park and garden⁶ (RPG). The RPG extends for some 70 hectares and contains the principal house, a number of outbuildings, formal gardens and pleasure grounds, kitchen garden and parkland.
26. For the purposes of this appeal. The significance of the RPG relates to its overall layout and history, mainly as an early 19th century landscaped park. Its

⁴ List Entry Number: 1176543

⁵ List Entry Numbers: 1055122; 1055123

⁶ List Entry Number: 1001128

significance is also derived from its association with an influential architect and landscape designer as well as its long-standing occupation by a notable family.

27. Pertinent to the appeal, the special interest and significance of the RPG also stem in part from its setting. The open fields to the north, the estate parkland of Attingham Park to the east, and its positioning near to the River Severn, with further open fields beyond, give it a predominantly rural setting.
28. The appeal site is located directly to the south of the RPG, forming part of the wider open and rural landscape in which the RPG is experienced. However, the River Severn, the new Atcham road bridge, B4380, and the intervening vegetation obscure views of the site from the RPG. I therefore agree with the appellant that the site makes a neutral contribution to the setting of the RPG.

Proposal and effects

29. The appeal site comprises grass pasture with a gentle slope towards the River Severn. The western boundary is defined by a mature hedgerow and includes a gate providing access to a minor vehicular lane. The northern boundary is similarly enclosed by mature hedgerow, with a gap affording access to a pedestrian footpath that connects the lane to the historic Atcham Bridge. The eastern boundary faces the river, with some intervening vegetation along the riverbank.
30. The site lies immediately adjacent to the listed bridge, and several listed buildings are situated on the opposite side of the river. Planning permission is sought for the construction of a car park accommodating around 93 spaces. Although the proposal would incorporate a permeable gravel-filled grid system intended to allow grass growth at ground level, the site would nonetheless be occupied by parked vehicles for the majority of the time. The use of the site as a car park would therefore be clearly perceptible and would fail to respect the rural character and appearance of this part of the river corridor.
31. During my site visit, I observed that direct views of the proposed car park would be available from public vantage points on Atcham Bridge, from the grounds of the Church of St Eata and the Mytton and Mermaid listed building, and from the public footpath that runs adjacent to the site.
32. The presence of numerous vehicles, with their varied colours and reflective surfaces, would be visually intrusive and would detract from the setting of these nearby heritage assets. Furthermore, the proposal includes ancillary features such as an access barrier, lighting columns, ANPR cameras and signage. These elements would reinforce the car park's functional character and introduce an urbanising influence into an otherwise undeveloped and rural parcel of land. The proposal's lighting would also increase the awareness of the car park during hours of darkness.
33. While existing boundary vegetation, including hedgerows and trees, provides partial screening, it does not fully obscure the site. Additional planting is proposed and could be secured by condition; however, such planting would require many years to mature and its long-term survival and maintenance cannot be guaranteed. Seasonal variation in foliage and gaps in the vegetation would ensure that the car park remained visible from the vicinity of the listed buildings.

34. Furthermore, setting is not solely a matter of visual connection. The open character of the site, its rural quality, and its contribution to the listed buildings' sense of place and historic context are key considerations. The proposed car park would compromise these qualities by introducing an incongruous and urbanising feature into an area that has remained largely free of development. Its proximity to the listed buildings would erode their relationship with the surrounding rural landscape.
35. Accordingly, the proposal would cause harm to the setting of these listed buildings by diminishing the openness and rural qualities that currently underpin their heritage value. It follows that the adverse impact on the setting of the listed buildings would also detract from the positive attributes of the wider rural landscape.
36. The proposal also includes lighting that would be attached to Atcham Bridge. However, insufficient information has been submitted as to exactly how the proposed lights would be attached to the bridge. It is likely that the lights would include fixings that would need to penetrate the historic fabric of the bridge. As such, I cannot be certain that the proposal would not result in the loss of or damage to the listed structure's historic fabric.
37. I find that the appeal site would be physically and visually separated from the entrance screen and east and west front lodges to Attingham Park, and Longner Hall registered park and garden. The physical structure of the historic Atcham Bridge, the B4380 and the new bridge, and the intervening vegetation would provide substantial screening. Views of the proposal would also be limited from Atcham Grange, due to the distance from the site, its low-lying nature and the existing intervening mature vegetation. Given the extent and nature of the proposal, I find that the settings of these designated heritage assets would be preserved and the contribution they make to the assets' significance would not be harmed.
38. However, for the reasons explained above, the proposal would fail to preserve the significance and special interest of the listed Atcham Bridge, Church of St Eata, and the Mytton and Mermaid Hotel, by bringing forward development within their settings. It would also have an adverse effect on the surrounding landscape.
39. In reaching my decision, I have considered the landscape and heritage evidence submitted by the appellant, including the Landscape and Visual Appraisal (dated August 2025), Heritage Appeal Statement (Berrys, dated August 2025), Heritage Statement (Bidwells, dated March 2025), and Heritage Technical Note (Berrys, dated April 2025). Nevertheless, following the consideration of the evidence before me and my own observations of the site and its surroundings, I find that the proposal would result in harm for the reasons explained.

Public benefits and balance

40. With reference to paragraphs 214 and 215 of the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework), in finding harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the magnitude of that harm should be assessed. Given the extent and fairly localised nature of the proposal, I find that the harm to the significance of the designated heritage assets assessed above would be 'less than substantial' but nevertheless of considerable importance and weight. I place this harm in the

mid-level within the less than substantial range. Paragraph 215 of the Framework requires this harm to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

41. The proposal would result in economic benefits during the construction phase. It would deliver environmental benefits in the form of biodiversity net gain at the site.
42. The appellant states that the proposed car park would enable the Mytton and Mermaid, which includes a pub and restaurant, to operate at full capacity, thereby creating additional employment opportunities and supporting the long-term sustainability of the business and use of the listed building. However, no substantive evidence has been provided to demonstrate that, without the car park, the business would become unviable or that existing jobs would be at risk.
43. I acknowledge that the provision of additional car parking spaces for the business could reduce the incidence of vehicles being parked along Malthouse Lane or within other undesignated parking areas in the village, which would ease highway safety concerns. Such an outcome may reasonably be regarded as enhancing the character and appearance of the village, reducing visual clutter and verge damage, and alleviating a potential nuisance or inconvenience for local residents.
44. Nevertheless, the evidence submitted does not provide adequate information regarding the existing level of parking demand. No parking survey has been undertaken, nor has any photographic record been provided. There is also an absence of analysis as to whether parking demand fluctuates throughout the day, week or year. Furthermore, there is no compelling justification for the proposed scale of the car park, around 93 spaces, nor any indication that a smaller car park has been considered.
45. In these circumstances, the harm identified to the significance of the designated heritage assets has not been clearly and convincingly justified as required by paragraph 213 of the Framework.
46. The appellant claims that the proposal would bring the Grade II* listed Atcham Bridge back into greater use. However, the bridge is already used as a key pedestrian crossing point and historic route over the river. I also note that the bridge is not within the appellant's ownership.
47. On balance, the moderate weight that I ascribe to the public benefits which would accrue from the development is not sufficient to outweigh the considerable importance and weight that I attach to the harm to the significance of these heritage assets.
48. Accordingly, I conclude that the proposal would fail to preserve the heritage assets by reasons of its impact on their setting, causing less than substantial harm to the significance of each of these designated heritage assets. It would also have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding landscape. It would therefore fail to satisfy the requirements of the Act and the provisions within the Framework which seek to conserve and enhance the historic environment. It would also conflict with Policies CS5, CS6 and CS17 of the Shropshire Local Development Framework: Adopted Core Strategy (2011), and Policies MD2 and MD13 of the Shropshire Council Site Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev) Plan (2015). Collectively, these policies seek to ensure development conserve and enhances heritage assets, including their setting, and respects local distinctiveness and landscape character.

Other Matters

49. The appellant claims that no objections were raised by Historic England and the Council's heritage team. However, the evidence indicates that concerns were raised regarding the application on heritage grounds.
50. I note that the appellant did undertake some community engagement and pre-application advice was sought from the Council. There has also been support for the proposal from Shropshire Council Highways, the Parish Council and from some local residents. Nevertheless, this does not alter my conclusions.
51. Reference has been made to the Milestone at west end of Atcham Bridge, a grade II listed⁷ structure. However, the milestone appears to be missing from its position as recorded in the evidence before me. The appellant suggests that although the milestone retains some historic value as a record of a former asset, as it is no longer present it cannot be considered as a heritage asset for the purposes of this appeal, to which I agree.
52. My attention has been drawn to car park extensions at the Attingham Park National Trust estate, which has a Grade II* Registered Park and Garden. However, the Council has indicated that these car parks were existing overflow grass car parks and therefore these previous permissions were not for a new car park but instead to improve the existing ones. I therefore find that this is significantly different to the proposal before me, which would be for a new car park on rural land that has not previously been used for car parking. In any event, I have determined this appeal on its own merit based on the evidence before me and my own observations of the area.
53. Letters of objection have been received from local residents. In addition to matters I have addressed above, the letters of objection raised other concerns including flooding, wildlife, anti-social behaviour. These other matters are not in dispute between the main parties and as I am dismissing the appeal, I do not need to give these matters further consideration.

Conclusion

54. For the reasons given and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the proposed development would be contrary to the development plan when taken as a whole. There are no material considerations to suggest a decision other than in accordance with the development plan and therefore the appeal is dismissed.

H Smith

INSPECTOR

⁷ List Entry Number: 1055125