
Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 16 January 2017

by Jonathan Hockley BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 26th January 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Z1510/W/16/3156758

New House Barn, Church Road, Cressing, Braintree, Essex CM77 8PF

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Jarvis against the decision of Braintree District Council.
 - The application Ref 16/00641/FUL, dated 12 April 2016, was refused by notice dated 9 June 2016.
 - The development proposed is an oak framed extension to rear.
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Appeal Ref: APP/Z1510/Y/16/3156769

New House Barn, Church Road, Cressing, Braintree, Essex CM77 8PF

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Jarvis against the decision of Braintree District Council.
 - The application Ref 16/00642/LBC, dated 12 April 2016, was refused by notice dated 9 June 2016.
 - The works proposed are an oak framed extension to rear.
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Decisions

1. The appeals are dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in both cases is whether the proposal would preserve the special architectural and historical interest of the Grade II listed building.

Reasons

3. New House Barn is an attractive early 17th century timber framed and thatched barn. The main two storey building has a byre extending from the southern end of the barn, described as 19th century in the listing, and a long 19/20th century single storey former stable range extending to the north. Both of these extensions are constructed in redbrick with red clay pantile roofs and the whole building appears to be in residential use. Despite the conversion, the essential character of the barn remains. The special interest of the building is largely defined externally by the appearance and age of the barn, with high quality materials redolent of the local vernacular tradition. The dominance of the original barn is maintained and preserved over the later extensions, largely due to the height and siting of these extensions.
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4. Policy RPL100 of the Local Plan¹ states that development involving external alterations and extensions to listed buildings will only be permitted if the proposal does not harm the setting and character of the building, and does not result in the damage to the building's historic and architectural elements of special importance. Policy RLP90 seeks a high standard of design in all development and Policy RPL18 states that permission will be granted for extensions to existing dwellings in the countryside, subject to the design of the extension being in harmony with the countryside setting and compatible with the scale and character of the existing dwelling. Extensions will be required to be subordinate to the existing dwelling in terms of bulk, height, width and position. The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires special interest to be given to the desirability of preserving a listed building and any features or architectural interest it possesses.
5. The proposed extension would extend to the north east on the end of the former stable range, and would take the basic form of a 'T' plan, with the stem of the 'T' being of single storey height to match the stable range, and the crossbar being a two storey structure. Dormer windows would be included on the south western elevation of the two storey element, facing back towards the 17th century barn, and the proposal would be constructed in oak with weather-boarded sections. A significant amount of glazing is proposed in the design.
6. Although the plans indicate that the height of the proposed ridge and eaves of the two storey element of the scheme would be set at a level below those of the main barn, and I note that this would be some 24m away from the main building, the effect of constructing such a large two storey extension at the end of the single storey extension would counterbalance the building as a whole, reducing the dominance of the 17th century elements of the barn in a negative manner. Whilst the existing extension to the north is lengthy, it remains fully subordinate to the original building through its siting and height.
7. Visually the extension would compete with the original building, thereby reducing its significance, with the materials of the proposed extension, whilst sustainable and clearly of high quality, would not present a lightweight design due to the bulk and mass of the design, despite the glazing proposed. In totality the design would create a rather sprawling building, detracting from the original barn, creating a separate element to the building which would detract from the main building.
8. I understand that an existing consent remains extant on the site which has a similar footprint to that before me. I only have limited details of the design of this consent but note that the height of the end section of the proposal is lower than that proposed in this case. The appellant states that the height difference is only 1.5m and considers that this is not significant. However, the annotated plans demonstrate that the effect of this reduced height brings the ridge of the extension to a level only just above the eaves of the main barn, visually significantly lower than the proposal. I do not consider therefore that the fall-back position would have the same adverse effect on the listed building that the proposal would do.
9. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) makes it clear that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a listed building, great weight should be given to its conservation. Significance

¹ Braintree District Council Braintree District Local Plan Review Adopted Plan July 2005

can be harmed or lost through alteration of the heritage asset, and as they are irreplaceable, any harm should require clear and convincing justification. For the reasons given above, I consider the proposal would result in harm being caused to the significance of this listed building. However, and particularly as the proposal would not affect the fabric of the original part of the cottage, which would remain intact, I am satisfied in this case that the degree of harm caused would be less than substantial.

10. In such situations this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of a proposal, including securing the asset's optimum use. I note that the proposal would make the property larger and that the appellant states that this would make the house suitable for modern living, thereby securing the optimum use of the building. However, leaving aside whether the appellants' enjoyment of the property can be properly regarded as a public benefit, it appears to function as a dwelling already. It appears well maintained and seemingly in good repair, and it has not been shown that its continued occupation is in anyway dependent on the proposed development. The property is also already a substantial one. As a consequence, what public benefits there might be are insufficient to outweigh the harm caused.

Conclusion

11. I conclude that the proposal would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of this Grade II listed building, and would not preserve its special architectural or historic interest. It has not been shown that public benefits would outweigh this harm, and the proposal would conflict with the Framework and the Local Plan policies RLP90 and RLP100, thereby also conflicting with policy RLP18. Therefore, for the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeals should fail.

Jon Hockley

INSPECTOR