



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 25 November 2019

by J Somers BSocSci (Planning) MA (HEC) MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16 January 2020

Appeal A: APP/W3520/W/19/3228987

Honeypot Hall Farmhouse, Mannings Lane, Wattisfield, Diss, IP22 1NH

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (TCPA) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Ms Ann Robinson against the decision of Mid Suffolk District Council.
 - The application Ref DC/18/04352, dated 28 September 2018, was refused by notice dated 17 January 2019.
 - The development is the retention of a residential annexe.
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Appeal B: APP/W3520/Y/19/3228991

Honeypot Hall Farmhouse, Mannings Lane, Wattisfield, Diss, IP22 1NH

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (PLBCA) against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Ms Ann Robinson against the decision of Mid Suffolk District Council.
 - The application Ref DC/18/04353, dated 28 September 2018, was refused by notice dated 17 January 2019.
 - The works are the retention of a residential annex.
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Decisions

Appeal A:

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal B:

2. No further action is taken for the reasons set out in paragraph 3 below.

Preliminary Matters

3. Honeypot Hall Farmhouse is a Grade II listed building. The annexe which has been constructed retrospectively is free standing and located within the rear garden of the listed building. I agree with both parties that the building is a relatively recent construction and is therefore unlikely to have stood in its present form since before 1 July 1948. Having considered responses from my initial enquiries to both parties, when considered against the test in section 1(5)(b) of the PLBCA, the annexe building cannot be treated as part of the listed building. It follows that its retention does not require listed building consent and I intend to take no further action on Appeal B.

4. As part of the appeal documents the appellant has submitted a Heritage Statement¹ which was not subject to consideration during the determination of the planning application and has requested that I consider this as part of the appeal. This further information provides additional clarification to the main issue and which does not result in changes to the scheme. The Council have had sight of the document and have commented upon it. In accordance with the 'Wheatcroft Principles',² I believe the acceptance of the Heritage Statement would be appropriate and not deprive those who should have been consulted of the opportunity of such consultation. As such, I will accept this further information and will base my decision upon it.

Main Issue

5. The development has already been carried out. On this basis, the main issue is whether the retention of the residential annexe would preserve the setting of the Grade II listed building known as 'Honeypot Hall Farmhouse, Mannings Lane.'

Reasons

6. Section 66 of the PLBCA prescribes a duty upon a decision maker to give special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest it possesses.
7. The appeal building is an outbuilding which has been erected within the rear garden of a Grade II listed farmhouse and is used as a residential annexe. The farmhouse dates from the early to mid seventeenth century and is of timber framed construction that is clad in flint with red brick quoins and fenestration surrounds, with an eighteenth century extension to the rear. The farmhouse has since been severed from the greater farm, part of which now contains large broiler sheds to the north as well as smaller ancillary farm buildings. To the rear of the farmhouse within its residential curtilage is a small outbuilding which is detached, but located near to the appeal building. The appeal building is a larger rectangular building with pitched and gabled roof, with stone plinth and timber cladded walls with fibre cement roofing and uPVC windows and doors.
8. The relevant components of the significance of the listed building to this appeal derives from its use of timber framing, its historic form and agricultural function, and an inherent historic relationship to the rural context and setting. The land, ancillary buildings and open countryside surrounding are also important for their contribution to the significance of the listed building. It is unfortunate that a number of large broiler sheds have been positioned within close proximity to the farmhouse. Whilst these buildings are agricultural in nature and reflective of the evolution and development of agricultural land surrounding the farmhouse, they are detrimental from an aesthetic perspective in terms of their scale and have a negative impact to the setting of the historic farmhouse.
9. Comments in the appellant's Statement of Case (SoC) state that the annexe building is representative of a typical cluster of outbuildings associated with farmhouses in the locality. I have not been presented with any examples of farmsteads in the local area which are similar to the appeal site which takes

¹ Heritage Statement, Honeypot Hall, By John Selby, Dated 8th May 2019

² Bernard Wheatcroft Ltd v SSE [JPL 1982 P37]

the form of makeshift portacabin type buildings. I acknowledge that there are many variations to farmstead layouts with makeshift buildings appearing from time to time. However, a traditional historic steading would be reflective of the operations of the farm itself and were traditionally much narrower and linear buildings typically formed around courtyards. The location and design of surrounding historic barn buildings also typically utilised local vernacular materials such as pan tiles, brick and timber.

10. The location of the annexe building and its excessive size in terms of visual bulk and massing dominates the setting of the listed building. The annexe itself is more akin to a prefabricated portacabin type building which has a temporary and makeshift appearance that does not integrate well when seen in the context of the farmhouse, detracting from its setting. The use of materials is also poor and does not reinforce the qualities of local character and distinctiveness with uPVC doors and windows, uPVC rainwater goods and bargeboards, and a fibre-cement roof. These elements contribute to the annexe building appearing awkward and incongruous in this rural agricultural context.
11. It is clear to me that the annexe, by reason of its location, scale and materials would unacceptably harm the significance of the listed building, thus failing to preserve its setting in accordance with s66 of the PLBCA. The scheme therefore conflicts with the Framework, which directs, at paragraph 193, 'that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation ... irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to their significance.'
12. Although serious, the harm to the heritage asset in this case would be 'less than substantial,' within the meaning of the term in paragraph 196 of the Framework. Paragraph 194 states that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification. Paragraph 196 requires that, where a proposal would lead to less than substantial harm, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
13. The appellant's SoC does not put forward any public benefits and I am unaware of any public benefits that would outweigh the harm caused. That said, I am not convinced that the development is necessarily the only option available and that an equal amount of benefits could be gained by a more appropriately designed and located scheme. In its current form the annexe building would result in harm to the significance of the listed building from development within its setting which is given great weight in accordance with the PLBCA and the Framework.
14. In conclusion on this matter, on the basis of what I saw on my site visit and the evidence before me, the proposals would fail to preserve the setting of the listed building in accordance with the expectations of the PLCBA and the Framework.
15. Whilst I note the Decision notice in its reason for refusal does not specifically mention Development Plan policies, relevant policies to the decision are listed further on within the Decision Notice. The relevant policy in relation to this appeal and in which this scheme is contrary to is Mid-Suffolk Local Plan 1998 saved Policy HB1 (which places emphasis on attention given to protecting the setting of listed buildings).

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given above, the appeal is dismissed.

J Somers

INSPECTOR