



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 November 2021

by Neil Pope BA (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30 November 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/U1105/Y/21/3279137

Hillside Farm, Harcombe, Lyme Regis, Devon, DT7 3RN.

- 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 Benjamin Tomlinson against the decision of East Devon District Council.
 - The application Ref. 20/1939/LBC, dated 7/9/20, was refused by notice dated 29/1/21.
 - The works proposed are the demolition of rear extension and construction of single and two storey rear/side extensions, raised terrace with steps and associated landscaping, alterations to the existing house including windows replacement and creation of new opening to kitchen, removal of current porch doors and replacement with windows, replacement of 9 no. windows. (*Agreed amended description.*)
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. In September 2021, planning permission was granted for a single storey side/rear extension with alterations to fenestration at the appeal property (ref. 21/1227/FUL). At the same time, listed building consent was granted for a single storey rear extension and courtyard, and replacement windows on the first and ground floor (ref. 21/1228/LBC). This permission and consent are a fallback position available to the appellant.
3. Previous applications to extend the appeal building were permitted a number of years ago (refs. 10/1351/FUL and 10/1352/LBC). It is unclear if this permission and consent were implemented. Even if they were, there is no suggestion that this previously approved extension would be completed. On the basis of the information before me, this is not a fallback position.
4. In refusing consent, the Council's concerns are limited to the scale and the design/finish of the proposed extensions. I have taken this into account in framing the main issue.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is whether the proposed extensions would preserve the Grade II listed building listed as Hillside Farmhouse or its setting or its features of special architectural or historic interest.

Reasons

6. Hillside Farmhouse (Hillside Farm) is a small, late 18th century limewashed stone rubble house with a slate roof (including catslide). It has a front

entrance porch and a modest, shallow pitched roof lean-to at the rear. The significance (heritage interest) of this listed building is primarily derived from its special architectural and historic qualities. These include its size and simple form, modest proportions, window arrangement, brick chimney stacks, surviving 18th century fabric and its past associations with agricultural activities within this part of the East Devon¹. This dwelling reflects the Devon vernacular and, nestling into the hillside, it is a pleasing feature of the local rural scene.

7. The proposed works would increase the size and standard of living accommodation for the appellant and his family and would allow him and his partner to work from home. The extensions would take place at the rear of the house and some parts would be excavated/sunk into the sloping hillside so as not to project above the roof ridge of the house. I note from the Design & Access Statement that the extensions would comprise "*three volumes connected together*", with pitched slate roofs and some corrugated metal sheets, painted render and flint walls, and some stained larch timber cladding.
8. If taken on their own, each of the proposed building volumes would be subservient in size and scale to the host dwelling. If also taken as individual elements, the proposed external materials/finishes volumes would sit comfortably alongside this rural dwelling without harming the natural beauty of the area. The appellant's architect has given thoughtful consideration to accommodating the appellant's needs, whilst attempting to safeguard the integrity and significance of this listed building and conserving the AONB.
9. However, the proposed extensions must be properly considered as a single addition to this listed house. When this is undertaken, the combined scale of the three building volumes, including the proposed two storey element, and the sizeable enlargement to the 'footprint' of the house, would considerably and abruptly detract from an appreciation of the very modest size and simple form of this designated heritage asset. I agree with the Council's conservation officer that the proposed extensions would compete both in scale and overall composition with this important vernacular building. This adverse impact upon the significance of the listed house would be accentuated by the proposed series of roof pitches and the combination of different external materials.
10. The harmful impact that I have identified above, would not be outweighed by the benefits of providing enhanced living accommodation and the removal of the existing lean-to, or other minor detracting elements of the building. The fallback position is for a smaller and more compact scheme, with the first floor element removed and simplification in the external materials/finishes. This approved scheme would not outweigh the adverse impact that would arise from proposal that is before me in this appeal.
11. The proposed extensions would fail to preserve the features of special architectural and historic interest that Hillside Farmhouse possesses and would be at odds with the objectives of the development plan² that are aimed at protecting designated heritage assets. Having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should not succeed.

Neil Pope

Inspector

¹ The site lies within the East Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

² Policy EN9 of the East Devon Local Plan 2013-2031.