



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 30 April 2024

by A James BSc (Hons) MA MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14th May 2024

Appeal A: APP/N0410/W/23/3324110

Leys Farm Barn, Thompkins Lane, Farnham Royal SL2 3TD

- 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 Mr and Mrs B Prior against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council.
 - The application reference is PL/22/4136/FA.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a single storey side extension and the extension of the existing entrance hall outwards under the current porch.
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Appeal B: APP/N0410/Y/23/3324109

Leys Farm Barn Thompkins Lane, Farnham Royal SL2 3TD

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mr and Mrs B Prior against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council.
 - The application reference is PL/22/4137/HB.
 - The works proposed are the erection of a single storey side extension and the extension of the existing entrance hall outwards under the current porch.
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Decision

1. Appeal A is dismissed.
2. Appeal B is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

3. As the proposal relates to a listed building, I have had special regard to sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act).
4. To the south-west of the appeal site is a Grade II listed farmhouse, which is known as 'Ley's Farmhouse'. Ley's Farmhouse dates back to the 18th century and was listed in 1985 (Ref: 1124484). I have had special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of the listed building in the determination of this appeal and I am satisfied that there would be no harm to the special interest of Ley's Farmhouse through changes to its setting.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve a Grade II listed building, known as 'Barn at Ley's Farm' (Ref: 1309765), and any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses.

Reasons

6. The Barn at Ley's Farm is a Grade II listed building, which dates back to the mid-19th century. It comprises of a timber framed barn, which has an attached brick built structure on its western side. The building was converted from agricultural to residential use in the early 21st century. The timber framed barn has a linear form, with a central cart entrance. It is finished with black weatherboarding and has a slate roof. Internally this part of the building retains most of its open plan character and has an exposed timber frame. The brick built structure extends further forward than the timber frame section of the building, creating an L shape layout.
7. Based on my site visit and the evidence before me, I find that the listed building's special interest insofar as is relevant to this appeal is derived from its historic and architectural interest, as an illustration of 19th century agricultural architecture. The building's timber frame, which includes 4 queen post trusses; the predominately open form of the timber framed part of the building; the use of traditional materials; and its rural surrounds all make important contributions in these regards.
8. The proposal seeks to construct an extension on the eastern side of the building. The proposal would extend further forward than the front building line of the timber framed part of the building, but not as far forward as the existing brick built projection and would create a U shaped layout. The proposed extension would be constructed of brick and would have a clay tiled pitched roof. The proposed design and materials would be in keeping with the existing brick built projection. Similarly, to the existing brick built projection, it would be attached to the timber framed barn by a link section. No works or alterations to the timber frame are required to facilitate the proposal.
9. One side of the timber framed barn is partially obscured by the existing brick built projection. Although not visible from a public viewpoint, the other side is unobstructed and this allows one to better appreciate the form and architectural interest of this former agricultural building. The proposal would mean that both side elevations of the timber framed section of the building would be partially obscured by built form. While the proposed extension would have a lower ridge height than the timber framed part of the building, given its forward projection it would fail to appear subservient to it.
10. I appreciate that the front of the building is already enclosed to some extent by the existing brick built projection, detached garage and boundary treatment. I also acknowledge that a gap would remain between the proposal and the garage. However, in combination with the other brick built projection, the proposal would harmfully enclose and dominate the front elevation of the timber framed section of the building. Consequently, the proposal would harm the special interest and erode the legibility of the listed building.
11. The appellants advise that there was a flat roof stable building attached to the eastern side of the building at the time it was listed, which was removed prior to its conversion to residential use. It appears from the evidence before me, that the previous stable building was a later addition that was not part of the historic layout. The evidence also suggest that it only projected slightly forward of the front building line of the timber framed part of the building. I find that the fact that there was a stable building on this side of the building in the past,

- does not justify a new residential extension in this location because it was a later addition of little architectural or historic interest.
12. The proposal would close up an existing external door. This door was inserted at the time the building was converted to residential use in the early 21st century. As a result, the proposal would not affect any historic fabric in this area, neither would it affect the timber frame.
 13. The Council raises no objections to the extension of the existing hall/porch. Based on the evidence before me and my site visit, I find no reason to reach a different view to the Council on this matter and consider that this part of the scheme would preserve the special interest of the listed building.
 14. However, other elements of the scheme, for the reasons given above, would fail to preserve the special interest of the listed building. I give this harm considerable importance and weight in the planning balance of these appeals.
 15. Paragraph 205 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (the Framework) advises that when considering the impact of development on the significance of designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Paragraph 206 advises that significance can be harmed or lost through the alteration or destruction of those assets and that any such harm should have a clear and convincing justification. I find the harm to be less than substantial in this instance but nevertheless of considerable importance and weight.
 16. Where a proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, paragraph 208 of the Framework advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including, where appropriate, securing the asset's optimal viable use.
 17. The appellants state that the extension is required to improve the quality and layout of the residential accommodation and meet the needs of their growing family, which are private benefits. The appellants contend that the proposal would secure the preservation and use of the listed building for future occupants and generations and would improve the optimum viable use of the listed building. However, I have no evidence to suggest that the use of the building as a residential dwelling would cease in the absence of the proposed changes and I do not find them necessary to secure the viability and long-term conservation of the building as a result.
 18. Turning to the public benefits, the appellants argue that the proposal would enhance the layout of the listed building and views around the courtyard area, which in turn would enhance the significance of the heritage asset. For the reasons given above, I find that the proposal would harm the special interest of the listed building and as a result find no public benefit in this regard. Nevertheless, the proposal would result in investment into the property, which would have a small economic benefit, which carries limited weight in favour of the proposal as a public benefit.
 19. Overall, there would be limited public benefits from the proposal, with the majority of the benefits being private benefits. Consequently, in attributing great weight to the harm that would be caused to the significance of the designated heritage asset, I find that there would be insufficient public benefits arising from the proposal to outweigh this harm.

20. Given the above, I conclude that, on balance, the proposal would fail to preserve the special historic interest and significance of the listed building. The proposal would fail to satisfy the requirements of the Act and paragraph 203 of the Framework. The proposal would also conflict with Policy C6 of the South Bucks District Local Plan March 1999. This policy among other things requires that alterations or extensions do not harm the character or appearance of a listed building or its features of special architectural or historic interest. As a result, in respect of the section 78 appeal, the proposal would not be in accordance with the development plan.

Other Matters

21. The neighbour support for the proposal and the lack of objection from the Parish Council for a previous larger extension that was refused, has a neutral effect on my decision and does not outweigh the harm identified above.
22. The appellants have drawn my attention to approvals for extensions to listed barns within the area. The other schemes¹ included the removal of existing structures and/or other modern additions, which helped to better reveal the special interest of the listed building. While some of these schemes changed a previously linear barn to an L-shape, none of the other schemes resulted in the same level of enclosure to the front of a listed barn as the appeals before me. The other schemes are therefore materially different and I therefore give them limited weight in my decision.
23. The appellants have submitted details of a revised scheme, which was approved for a two storey extension at Bagmoor, Hambledon². However, full details of the circumstances behind the original approved scheme are not before me. The appellants have also cited numerous examples of barn conversions, including listed barns that have been approved in Buckinghamshire, but full details of these schemes are not before me. I therefore give these other schemes limited weight in my decision.
24. The appellants have also drawn my attention to an appeal, which was allowed at Old Barn, Bishop's Stortford³. This appeal related to a single storey, flat roof extension to the rear of a Grade II listed barn, which had been converted to residential use. Its design, siting and context are materially different to the scheme before me and I therefore give it limited weight in my decision. In any event, I am required to determine the appeals before me on their own merits.

Conclusion

25. For the above reasons and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that both Appeal A and Appeal B should be dismissed.

A James

INSPECTOR

¹ Bell House, Risborough (03/06529/LBC); One Day Farm, Ley Hill (Ref: CH/2012/1746/HB); Bagmoor , Hambledon (09/05624/LBC); and Watbridge Farm, Ashendon (20/00479/ALB)

² Application Ref: 09/06559/LBC.

³ Appeal Refs: APP/C1570/A/13/2191907 and APP/C1570/E/13/2191897