



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 11 June 2024

by **L Fleming BSc (Hons) MRTPI IHBC**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24 July 2024

Appeal A Ref: APP/C1570/W/24/3337863

Hall Farm, Langley Upper Green, Saffron Walden CB11 4RZ

- 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 Ms Mel George against the decision of Uttlesford District Council.
 - The application Ref is UTT/23/0915/FUL.
 - The development proposed is change of use of 2 no. barns to create 1 no. 2 bed holiday let, and 1 no. 4 bed residential dwelling with internal and external alterations, a replacement extension to barn 1 and cart lodge, car parking and landscaping.
Demolition of utilitarian building and silos and change of use of land to residential.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/C1570/Y/24/3337864

Hall Farm, Langley Upper Green, Saffron Walden CB11 4RZ

- 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 Ms Mel George against the decision of Uttlesford District Council.
 - The application Ref is UTT/23/0916/LB.
 - The works proposed are change of use of 2 no. barns to create 1 no. 2 bed holiday let, and 1 no. 4 bed residential dwelling with internal and external alterations, a replacement extension to barn 1 and cart lodge, car parking and landscaping.
Demolition of utilitarian building and silos and change of use of land to residential.
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Decisions

Appeal A - APP/C1570/W/24/3337863

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal B - APP/C1570/Y/24/3337864

2. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

3. Both appeals relate to the same scheme under different but complimentary legislation, I have therefore dealt with them together in my reasoning except where indicated otherwise.

Main Issue

4. The main issue in both appeals is whether the proposed development / works would preserve the grade II listed Langley Hall, Upper Green or its setting and any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses and whether the scheme would harm the settings of the grade II listed Farmbuilding 55 metres to South East of Langley Hall, Upper Green and the grade II* listed Church of St John the Evangelist, Upper Green.

Reasons

Context and background

5. The grade II listed Langley Hall, Upper Green (Langley Hall) is a farmhouse which sits in a complex of farm buildings at the head of a farmyard. To its west is the grade II* listed Church of St John the Evangelist, Upper Green (the Church). The grade II listed Farmbuilding 55 metres to South East of Langley Hall, Upper Green, is located to the south of Langley Hall, with the listing description noting it was possibly used as a granary (the Granary). Enclosing the farmyard and separating it from the Church is a large timber framed barn which has been granted listed building consent and planning permission for its conversion to three holiday lets¹.
6. The two appeal barns (Barn 1 and Barn 2) are on the east side of the farmyard in front of Langley Hall forming part of a loose cluster of agricultural structures and equipment. It is not disputed that both Barn 1 and Barn 2 are listed by virtue of their association with Langley Hall and all other structures² which would be removed would not involve the loss or damage to historic fabric or cause any harm to the settings of any designated heritage assets. I agree with these findings and have determined the appeals on this basis.

Significance of Langley Hall, the Granary and the Church

7. Langley Hall is a large detached timber framed and plastered two storey farmhouse. It is C17 with C18 additions. It has a plain tiled roof with a central brick chimney stack. It faces a narrow lane (The Causeway) and yard and is the focal point of the cluster of farming related buildings as part of a post medieval moated farmstead. Insofar as is relevant to these appeals, I find the significance of the appeal property derives from its traditional architectural detailing and its character as part of a traditional farmstead in a rural area.
8. Historical maps suggest Barn 1 is of a similar origin to Langley Hall whereas Barn 2 is suggested to be later towards the end of C19. Both are timber-framed and weatherboarded. Barn 1 has a red brick plinth, five aisled bays and two midstreys. Its principal beams appear original and largely in-tact although the roof structure is a mix of corrugated steel and weatherboarding supported by modern machined timbers. It also has a partly collapsed modern lean-to in poor condition on its west elevation and a modern open sided lean-to on its north elevation.
9. Barn 2 has a slate roof and is partitioned into three bays, with a taller central bay which has a large opening. Barn 2 also has stable doors and a hayloft. Insofar as is relevant to these appeals, both Barn 1 and Barn 2 draw their significance from their relationship with Langley Hall and the wider farmstead and their architectural detailing as traditional farm buildings.
10. The Granary is a simple and modest English bonded brick, cubed building with a pyramid clay peg-tiled roof. Insofar as is relevant to these appeals, I find its significance derives from its simple traditional architectural detailing and its positioning and association with the wider traditional farmstead.

¹ Council reference UTT/16/0667/FUL referenced as Barn H in the Heritage Statement

² Referenced as Barn C, D, E, F and G. in Heritage Statement

11. The Church was significantly restored in 1885, but is C12 origin, with C14, C15, and C16 additions and alterations. It is of modest scale, constructed mainly from flint rubble with a variety of ecclesiastical architectural details of varying age. Positioned next to Langley Hall in a small church yard it is partly screened from The Causeway by a large barn but is widely visible from the countryside to the north and west. Insofar as is relevant to these appeals, I find the significance of the grade II* listed Church is founded on the quality of its architectural detailing which narrates the evolution of the building from the 12th century. Its significance also derives from its value and use as a place of worship and its positioning in relation to the farmstead and the surrounding rural landscape.

Effect of the proposed development on significance

12. Barn 1 would be converted into a 3 /4 bed dwelling. This would involve the part demolition of the northern external wall which would also mean the timber frame would be exposed. A new first floor would be added which would be supported by an independent steel frame. The modern lean-to would be removed and replaced with a new extension to the building to provide a living room with a large bi-fold door which would open out on to the proposed private outdoor space.
13. I accept due to the juxtaposition with the surrounding buildings, opportunities to locate the private outdoor space other than as proposed are limited. I also accept the relationship between the proposed internal and external spaces is a factor which influences the quality of the living accommodation proposed.
14. However, drawing 221167 PL 104 rev A shows a section of the timber frame and part of the brick plinth would need to be removed to create a walkway between the retained timber frame, plinth and the new extension. These are both significant architectural features of Barn 1 and the details of exactly how those works would be achieved, particularly, how the section of timber would be removed, how the timber framing would be exposed, made good and preserved and how the section of plinth would be removed and the remaining plinth made good are limited.
15. In my view the works proposed to Barn 1's timber frame and plinth affect architectural features, which are clearly of some age if not original and involves the loss and damage to historic fabric associated with the listed building. It would also harm the heritage assets significance which is partly founded on its agricultural heritage. Without full details of those associated works, I am unable to assess the magnitude of the harm to the designated heritage asset. For that reason, a condition requiring details for such to be submitted is not appropriate as I cannot form a clear view on whether this element of the proposal is acceptable.
16. Barn 2 would be converted into a 2 bed holiday let. This would involve the creation of a new opening in its eastern elevation through the removal of a section of timber cladding and a small section of timber framing. However, the majority of the timber cladding would be retained and restored and the timbers to be removed are attached to a concrete trough and comprise roughly 1.3 metre lengths of machine cut timber. The timbers proposed for removal are clearly not of the same age or significance as those affected by the works proposed to Barn 1. Thus, on the basis of the details before me, particularly, drawing 221167 PL 105, I am satisfied the removal of the timbers necessary to

create the opening in the eastern elevation of Barn 2 would not involve the loss of or damage to historic fabric associated with the listed building.

17. A new cart shed would be built in place of a much larger building between Langley Hall and Barns 1 and 2. This would be finished in timber cladding in the style of a traditional farm building and provide space for two cars and a store. It would be significantly smaller in scale and more sympathetic to the traditional agricultural character of the relevant heritage assets than the building it would replace such that I find no harm to their significance or settings arising from this element of the scheme.
18. Thus, based on the details before me I am led to the conclusion that the development / works proposed to Barn 1 would result in the loss and damage to historic fabric and would fail to preserve and harm the significance of Langley Hall. However, it would have a neutral impact on the settings and significance of the Granary and the Church. I am satisfied all other elements of the proposal, subject to necessary conditions, would preserve the grade II listed Langley Hall and the settings of the grade II listed Granary and the grade II* listed Church.
19. However, I find the harm I have identified to the listed building would be less than substantial and towards the lower end of any range, but, still of considerable importance and weight. In these circumstances, the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme, which includes securing the asset's optimum viable use.

Heritage Balance

20. There is no substantive evidence to suggest the optimum viable use of the appeal property, particularly the use of Barn 1 and 2 for agricultural related purposes would be prejudiced without the development / works. I accept the internal and external layout proposed associated with Barn 1 would optimise its use as a dwelling.
21. As such, the proposal would provide a new high quality dwelling and a holiday let with consequent economic and social benefits. The dwelling would be provided in an area where the Council is unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. For the avoidance of any doubt, I confirm I have determined the appeal on the basis of the appellant's best case (supply and shortfall) as detailed in the appellant's final comments, attaching additional weight to the benefit of housing accordingly.
22. The demolition of the utilitarian building and silos would allow an improved intervisibility between Langley Hall (including Barns 1 and 2), the Church and the Granary and for the group of heritage assets to be more easily appreciated as a group in their rural landscape setting, which, in my view is also a public benefit. The general restoration of the farmstead and avoidance of further deterioration of Barns 1 and 2 is also a public benefit.
23. However, in this case, with the absence of full details of the works proposed to Barn 1, I must take a precautionary approach and find all the public benefits combined are insufficient to outweigh the great weight I attach to the harm I have identified to Langley Hall.

24. The application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance therefore provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed. The scheme would therefore fail to accord with the statutory provisions and the Framework and would be in conflict with Policy ENV2 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (2005) which seeks to ensure good design generally and that proposals involving listed buildings preserve special characteristics.

Conclusion

25. For the reasons given and taking into account all other matters raised, I conclude that both appeals should be dismissed.

L Fleming

INSPECTOR