



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 October 2024

by A Tucker BA (Hons) IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 October 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/U1105/Y/24/3343238

Combehayes Farm, Buckerell, Devon EX14 3ET

- 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 & Mrs Halse against the decision of East Devon District Council.
 - The application Ref is 23/1317/LBC.
 - The works proposed are demolition of existing extension and proposed replacement single storey extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal upon the significance of the grade II listed building known as Combehayes Farmhouse¹.

Reasons

3. Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (LBCA) requires the decision maker to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.
4. The house dates from the late 16th or early 17th century, with a prominent early 19th century extension at its eastern end. Its oldest part is an L-shaped arrangement of four rooms, with a baffle entry that opens onto the side of a pair of back-to-back fireplaces and include a large bread oven that extends into one of the rooms; for these reasons considerable interest is derived from its floor plan. Further interest is derived from significant historic fabric such as the chamfered beams and plank and muntin screen.
5. Externally the original scale and form of the building is readily appreciated from the south side which has seen limited change. The low scale of the original range can be seen alongside the higher east extension, with its more regular fenestration and higher floor to ceiling heights. Various ancillary extensions have been added to the north, which are rather complex and detracting; however, they serve to illustrate the vernacular and working character of the building, which was formerly the hub of a busy farmstead.
6. At the western end a lean-to extension was recently added to extend the kitchen and provide a utility room. It is of no historic significance and

¹ List Entry Number: 1204652

therefore its removal would not cause harm. It does however adopt a modest and additive form that allows it to sit quietly at the end of the main historic range, without drawing the eye or asserting itself.

7. The proposal would see this replaced with a much larger extension that would utilise a contemporary design language, with large areas of full height glazing and an oversailing flat roof with zinc fascia. The extension would sit further forward than the existing lean-to, and the fascia would be almost flush with the south elevation of the original building.
8. There is considerable merit in extending an historic building in a contemporary manner, and this is a well-established conservation approach. However, for it to be successful it is usually best for the addition to not dominate so that the original historic asset remains the primary built form.
9. Other single storey additions to the building are simple and not prominent. Although they extend out from what is technically the original front of the building, they are nestled in against the rising land to the north. In contrast, the extension would appear drawn out a considerable distance from the side of the building in a manner that would appear prominent and assertive from the more open areas of garden to the south. Its large areas of glazing and the projecting edge of its flat roof would draw the eye and appear at odds with the building's simple vernacular form. Its adverse impact would be experienced across a large area of the grounds, where its prominence would be increased by the falling level of the garden.
10. Details of several contemporary extensions that the Council has consented are before me. Some of these are substantially sized, however none appear to closely compare with the appeal building or proposal. Details of the significance of each of these buildings and the circumstances that surrounded the decision making process are not before me, including whether any identified harm was outweighed by public benefits in any of these cases. They do not cause me to come to a different view on the proposal's impact.
11. For these reasons the proposal would harm the significance of the building as a result of its prominent and assertive form, and the way it would detract from the simple vernacular appearance of its front elevation. In terms of the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) the harm would be less than substantial but would nevertheless be of considerable importance and weight. Paragraph 208 of the Framework establishes that any harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
12. The existing extension is not large. However, it provides for a well laid out kitchen, with space for a family sized dining table. The low level of the west facing window suits its position alongside the dining table, giving pleasant views to the fields beyond. Furthermore, the ground floor is otherwise large and includes several well sized rooms that could be utilised in various ways. There are no inherent deficiencies with the layout that mean that the extension is essential for the building to continue to function as a dwelling. The proposal can therefore only be considered a private benefit.
13. In summary, the harm would not be outweighed by any public benefits. The proposal would fail to meet the requirements of the LBCA as it would harm the special interest of the listed building. Although development plan policies do

not strictly apply to applications for listed building consent, the proposal would also conflict with the policies set out in the Council's decision.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

A Tucker

INSPECTOR