



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 June 2025

by Jonathan Price BA(Hons) DipTP DMS MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 June 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/Z1510/W/25/3360557

Old Applecroft Farm, Great Henny, Essex CO10 7NP

- 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 Mark Gallagher against the decision of Braintree District Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/02475/HH.
 - The development proposed is the construction of a one and a half storey garage block with ancillary accommodation to the main house, along with all associated site works.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. Whether the proposal would preserve the setting of the Grade II listed Old Applecroft Farmhouse.

Reasons

3. The proposed garage block will form part of a group of buildings originating from a former farmstead and containing the Grade II listed main house. This is in the process of being remodelled and extended in accordance with an approved scheme, with these works reaching quite an advanced stage. This proposal is also based on an approved scheme, the only difference being the replacement of rooflights on the rear roof slope with a box dormer on the front. This continuous box dormer would run directly above the three garage doors fronting onto the site entrance, at the same width and containing nine casement windows. The timber frame of this one and a half storey building is already in place and abuts existing outbuildings forming the eastern side of a courtyard arrangement. These buildings face a curtilage listed cottage to the other side of the entrance into the courtyard complex. This cottage has been the subject of unsympathetic twentieth century changes, like those previously affecting the main house and resolved in the current remodelling works.
4. Entering the site from the narrow country road, the listed farmhouse is set back and to the rear of the smaller, lower height cottage. A visual backstop is provided by the north range barn which is linked to and forms part of the extended main house. This defines the northern side of the courtyard arrangement. The historic and architectural significance of the listed farmhouse relates to its evolution from an original sixteenth century timber framed dwelling, later clad with nineteenth century flintwork with gault brick quoins and dressings. This significance also derives from the setting of the main house as part of a courtyard of agricultural buildings and

where, along with the cottage, the residential architecture stands out within a wider group of farm buildings of a plainer, less domestic appearance.

5. With reference to the appellant's Heritage Statement¹, the originally approved one and a half storey garage block would comprise a sympathetically designed structure, with black weatherboarding and pantiles, which will be on the site of a previous outbuilding and neatly frame the approach to the listed building from the south without dominating it. However, the box dormer facing into the farmyard would comprise a somewhat discordant element, detracting from the otherwise, simple, agricultural character of the building.
6. Like the north range to the main farmhouse, the original approval for a building here preserves a barn-like appearance, with rooflights positioned unobtrusively on the rear elevation. The additional of the box dormer feature would be a retrograde step in this regard, adding a rather incongruous, domesticating feature. This would be at odds with the setting of the farmhouse, whereby its association with plainer, farm buildings forms an aspect of its historic significance as part of a small farmstead.
7. Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 applies a statutory duty to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of this listed building. The scheme with the box dormer, prominent at the front of one of the buildings framing the entrance to the farmstead, would detract from this setting. Paragraph 212 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) requires great weight be given to the conservation of a designated heritage asset when considering the impact of a development on its significance. This is irrespective of the harm being less than substantial. In such instances, Framework paragraph 215 advises that this be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use. Furthermore, the Courts have held that considerable importance and weight needs to be attached to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings when carrying out such a balancing exercise.
8. Such less than substantial harm would not be justified in the interests of realising the optimum viable use of Old Applecroft Farmhouse, which does not depend on this. There are no public benefits associated with the proposal. Therefore, the balance would weigh against allowing the harm from this proposal to the significance of this listed main house.

Conclusion

9. For the reasons explained, the proposal would fail to preserve the setting of the Grade II listed Old Applecroft Farmhouse. It would thus be contrary to the Framework, as well as policies SP7, LPP36, LPP47, LPP52 and LPP57 of the Braintree District Local Plan 2013-2033. Therefore, I conclude that the appeal should not succeed.

Jonathan Price

INSPECTOR

¹ By Andrew Derrick BA AA Dipl Cons IHBC, Director of the Architectural History Practice.