
Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 13 August 2025

by **Samuel Watson BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 September 2025

Appeal A Ref: APP/W1145/W/25/3365778

Halsbury Barton, Buckland Brewer, Bideford EX39 5EL

- 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 Ashley Slee against the decision of Torridge District Council.
 - The application Ref is 1/0805/2024/FUL.
 - The development proposed is the conversion of traditional stone barn into a single dwelling, with conversion of another barn into ancillary accommodation to main dwelling, and associated works.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/W1145/Y/25/3365780

Halsbury Barton, Buckland Brewer, Bideford EX39 5EL

- 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 Ashley Slee against the decision of Torridge District Council.
 - The application Ref is 1/0806/2024/LBC.
 - The works proposed are the conversion of traditional stone barn into a single dwelling, with conversion of another barn into ancillary accommodation to main dwelling, and associated works.
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Decision

Appeal A

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal B

2. The appeal is dismissed and listed building consent is refused for the conversion of traditional stone barn into a single dwelling, with conversion of another barn into ancillary accommodation to main dwelling, and associated works.

Preliminary Matters

3. As the appeal relates to a listed building consent, I have taken sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) into account.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposals on the special architectural and historic interest of the grade II listed building¹.

¹ Halsbury Farmhouse and attached outbuilding (List entry Number: 1105130)

Reasons

5. Halsbury Farmhouse is an L-shaped building that comprises the farmhouse and the connected barn wing that forms the appeal element. The building is constructed in stone and is served by slate rooves. The two elements are of comparable scale and prominence to each other. There is some disagreement between the parties as to the age of the property, with a date stone of 1659 but also evidence of earlier mediaeval origins. Irrespective of a definitive date, the appeal element of the building shows, through internal and external features, its evolution through time initially as accommodation and then as a barn. Of particular note is the internal layout, the presence of blocked windows and its relationship to the wider farm. I find that the building's significance stems from its age, and the extent to which the legibility of its former uses is still possible through the fabric of the building and its relationship to the surrounding buildings. Whilst there are a significant number of alterations from the 17th and 18th centuries, these are, in themselves of historic interest.

6. At the time of my visit the barn element of the building on the ground and first floors was clearly unused and had been for some time. However, this part, and the building as a whole, appeared to be in a generally good condition although I note the issues raised within the structural report.

7. Opposite the east elevation of the appeal building is a further Grade II listed building, barn approx 15m NE of Halsbury Farmhouse (ref 1305644). This is of mid-17th Century origins with additional 19th century additions. It is built in coursed rubble and is served by a slate roof. It is closely related to the farmhouse and the more modern agricultural buildings that form the farm. I find part of this building's significance stems from its legibility as an historic farm building that demonstrates, much like the farmhouse, the changing needs of the farm owners over time.

8. I have been provided with only limited details of the joinery for the proposed windows and doors. Therefore, whilst the proportions on the whole may appear sympathetic, I cannot be certain that they would be appropriate and in keeping with the age and nature of the building. Moreover, the proposal would re-open and resize a number of windows across the elevations and create three new windows, including a rooflight. This element of the listed building is characterised by a limited number of, primarily small, windows. The large areas of glazing, supplemented by additional glazing on the Juliet balconies, would therefore be incongruous features on the listed building. I note that it appears the building was previously served by larger windows, but these have been blocked up. Reopening the windows would take the building back to an earlier appearance, but in doing so it would remove the elements that convey its conversion from a, potentially mediaeval, hall into a barn. The erosion of this legibility would harm the significance of this building.

9. Although the proposed mock doors and shutter may go some way to retain the legibility of its current agricultural use, without sufficient details I cannot be certain that they would be of a construction and appearance appropriate to the building.

10. Internally, it is likely that new floors, ceiling, insulation and wall finishes would be sought to accommodate for modern living standards. I have not been provided with any details as to whether or how these would be carried out. There are a number of features within this element of the appeal building that are of interest and particularly contribute towards the significance of the building. Of particular note are the timber joinery forming joists, lintels and door frames, a blocked stone mullion window and a

blocked fireplace on the first floor. Unless any internal works are carried out sympathetically, these fragmentary features could be lost or hidden. Additionally, the appellant submits that some of these features, such as the stone mullioned window and the blocked fireplace are not fully understood. There is an additional risk that covering other features may prevent the full understanding of these.

11. Furthermore, the subdivision of the large upper floor room to create Bedroom 1, the Dressing Room and the Ensuite would result in the mullioned window being split between two rooms. This would prevent it from being fully appreciated and any relationship with the wider room and fireplace being severed.

12. Although the appellant intends to carry out a full recording of the building prior to works, this would not mitigate the harms outlined above. Similarly, while some of the losses may, on their own, be small they are nevertheless losses. Moreover, they must be considered cumulatively as the proposal provides them in one scheme. Whilst some features of the proposal may appear temporary or easy to remove they would nonetheless be permanent, and their removal cannot be relied upon.

13. The proposed demolition of a small section of the linhay barn would only affect a more modern extension and would not adversely affect its overall character and appearance or its contribution to the setting of the adjacent listed buildings. The conversion of the courtyard between the two buildings for use as a garden and parking would also not significantly affect its relationship or the appreciation of the surrounding heritage asset. While its appearance would change significantly with the introduction of planting it would still be legible as a former farmyard and it would still provide a visual and physical link between the two barn buildings.

14. The proposed change of use would require internally and externally returning some domestic features to the building and removing some agricultural features. Such changes do not necessarily need to be damaging to the building and its historic interest. However, against the background of my findings above, the proposal would result in harm to the listed building's significance and interest. Given the scale of the development, I find this harm to be a moderate degree of less than substantial harm. Although less than substantial, the Framework is clear that great weight should be given to any asset's conservation. Paragraph 215 of the Framework advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

15. The Government's objective is to significantly boost the supply of housing, and the proposal would provide one new dwelling. It would also lead to a small and time-limited economic benefit during the construction phase, as well as some limited social and economic benefits resulting from future occupiers. Given the small scale of the proposal these matters would, at most, attract moderate weight.

16. As noted above the barn had been, at the time of my visit, clearly unused for some time. It is clear that by way of the barn's internal layout, the nature of its existing openings and its close relationship to the dwelling element of the building, that it would not likely be suitable for use as a barn. This is further exacerbated by the needs and requirements of modern farming enterprises. No alternative uses have been proposed for the building, and I note the Council are supportive of a conversion for residential use. Such a conversion would secure the long-term use of the building and its maintenance. In this way I find the conversion would secure its optimum viable use. However, it has not been demonstrated that the proposal before me is the only way in which this optimum viable use could be secured. Although this proposal would result in

harm, securing this use would nevertheless result in a public benefit and I therefore afford this moderate weight.

17. Collectively these matters form a moderate public benefit which, in the circumstances of this appeal, do not outweigh the great weight attributed to the harm identified to the designated heritage asset.

18. The proposal does not preserve Halsbury Farmhouse, a Grade II listed building, or its features of special architectural or historic interest, including those identified above. The proposal therefore conflicts with Policies DM04, DM07, DM27, ST04 and ST15 of the North Devon & Torridge Local Plan. The policies, amongst other matters, requires proposals to be of a high quality design that responds appropriately and sympathetically to the site and historic environment. They also seek sufficient information and to support proposals affecting heritage assets and require any harm to be weighed against public benefits. The proposal also conflicts with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) with regards to Section 16, including Paragraph 215.

Conclusion

19. For the reasons given above, both appeals A and B should be dismissed.

Samuel Watson

INSPECTOR

Appendix 1

List of those who have appealed

Reference	Case Reference	Appellant
Appeal A	APP/W1145/W/25/3365778	Mr and Mrs Ashley Slee
Appeal B	APP/W1145/Y/25/3365780	Mr and Mrs Ashley Slee