



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 January 2026

by **Neil Pope BA(HONS) MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9 January 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/U1105/Y/25/3370721

Stafford Barton House, Swan Hill Road, Colyford, Devon, EX24 6HE.

- 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 Mrs Martha Loak against the decision of East Devon District Council (the LPA).
 - The application reference is 25/0287/LBC.
 - The works proposed are the creation of a new external doorway connecting the kitchen-diner to the patio and garden and the erection of a small internal wall to partition the utility from the boot room.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, in so far as it relates to the proposed internal partition but is otherwise dismissed. Listed building consent is granted for the erection of a small internal wall to partition the utility from the boot room at Stafford Barton House, Swan Hill Road, Colyford, Devon, EX24 6HE. Consent is granted in accordance with the terms of application reference 25/0287/LBC, the approved 1:100 scale proposed ground floor plan, in so far as it relates to the proposed internal partition only, and subject to the following condition:

the works hereby permitted shall commence within three years of the date of this decision.

Preliminary Matter

2. Stafford Barton House is a grade II listed building¹ (listed as Stafford Farmhouse) within the Colyford Conservation Area² (CA).

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the proposed works would preserve the features of special architectural or historic interest of Stafford Barton House and preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA.

Reasons

4. The heritage interest (significance) of Stafford Barton House is primarily derived from its special architectural and historic qualities. These include its rendered stone rubble walls, slate roof, central two storeyed gable porch with finial and moulded Tudor arched doorway, stone mullion and transom windows, moulded stringcourses, rendered stacks at the gable ends and the building's original plan form. Over time, some alterations have been undertaken, including a lean-to

¹ The provisions of section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) are engaged.

² The provisions of section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) are engaged.

extension at the rear. This listed building is a well preserved and pleasing example of a 17th century former farmhouse.

5. The significance of the CA is also primarily derived from its special architectural and historic qualities. These include the contribution made by the various listed buildings, including Stafford Barton House.
6. The proposed internal partition on the rear lean-to extension would not harm the heritage interest of Stafford Barton House or the CA. I agree with the LPA's assessment, that this new partition would preserve the significance of these designated heritage assets. In so doing, it would accord with the objectives of the East Devon Local Plan 2013-2030 (LP) and emerging East Devon Local Plan 2020 to 2042 (eLP) that are aimed at protecting important heritage assets. As this work is capable of being 'severed' from the remainder of the proposals and could be undertaken without prejudicing the interests of any party, this element of the appeal should succeed and listed building consent should be granted.
7. The proposed doorway would be introduced into the south west facing gable end. It would include a painted hardwood door and frame, set in stone reveals, with a reclaimed limestone lintel and stone quoins. It would afford easier access onto the patio. The glazed upper section of the door would provide a sightline down the garden from inside the house, enabling supervision of this amenity space³. Buildings evolve and adapt over time and Stafford Barton House no longer functions as a farmhouse. This new doorway would improve the living conditions / amenity for the appellant and her family.
8. However, the proposed doorway would detract from the largely unaltered and pleasing solid appearance of the gable end wall of this designated heritage asset. I also agree with the LPA's officer that this wall contributes to an appreciation and understanding of the building's historic planform and internal arrangement. Whilst the planform would still be discernible, the proposal would, to a limited extent, erode part of the historic character of the building. These works would also be very likely to result in the loss of some important / original building fabric.
9. In the context of the National Planning Policy Framework, the proposed doorway would amount to less than substantial harm to the significance of Stafford Barton House and the contribution this building makes to the character and appearance of the CA. If there is a sliding scale within this category of harm, the proposal would be towards the lower end in respect of the listed building and almost at the very end in respect of the CA. However, this does not amount to a less than substantial planning objection. Great weight should be given to an asset's conservation. When this less than substantial harm is weighed with the claimed public benefits⁴ of the proposed doorway, the balance tips against granting consent.
10. I conclude on the main issue that the proposed doorway would fail to preserve the features of special architectural or historic interest of Stafford Barton House and would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA. There would be conflict with the objectives of LP policy EN9 and eLP policy HE02.

³ Part of which is currently used as an area for play by the appellant's children.

⁴ I afford these very limited weight. Moreover, given the attractive location of Stafford Barton House, the seemingly well-kept condition of the house, its alluring architectural qualities and historic interest, I consider it very unlikely that future prospective purchasers would be deterred from purchasing it and continue using it for residential purposes without the proposed doorway.

Overall Conclusion

11. Given my findings above, I conclude that a split decision should be issued, granting consent for the proposed internal partition and withholding consent for the proposed external doorway. The appeal therefore succeeds in part and is otherwise dismissed.

Neil Pope

Inspector