

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 March 2017

by Tom Gilbert-Wooldridge BA (Hons) MTP MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 25th April 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/W3520/W/16/3165473 75-77 High Street, Debenham IP14 6QS

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr D Shulver against the decision of Mid Suffolk District Council.
 - The application Ref 2169/16, dated 28 April 2016, was refused by notice dated 11 November 2016.
 - The development proposed is alterations and extensions to existing house; construction of new garage and piping of ditch.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of development on the character and appearance of Debenham Conservation Area and the setting of the listed building known as Cherry Tree Inn.

Reasons

3. Debenham Conservation Area covers the historic core of the village of Debenham. Its significance is informed by the quality and number of historic buildings, but also from the proximity of the countryside which forms part of its setting. To the east and south-east of the southern end of the conservation area are open fields with clear views into the conservation area from roads and footpaths.
 4. The appeal site is situated at the southern end of the conservation area and contains a 19th century property that is the first building one sees on this side of the High Street after crossing a branch of the River Deben. Although it is modest in scale and appearance, it forms part of a number of historic buildings of similar size and age that help to mark the entrance into the High Street and the conservation area. It can also be seen in views across fields to the east from Kenton Road as part of a composition of historic buildings along this part of the High Street. The appeal property has been subject to some minor unsympathetic alterations such as replacement windows and a single storey lean-to extension at the rear, but retains much of its original proportions, symmetry and detailing. Thus, the property makes a positive contribution to the significance of the conservation area.
 5. The listed building of Cherry Tree Inn lies just outside of the conservation area to the south-west of the appeal site. It is currently undergoing refurbishment with a number of new buildings to its south, but it retains its significance as a
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building of architectural and historic interest. Like the southern end of the conservation area, there are clear views between the listed building and the fields to the east, as well as intervisibility with the property at the appeal site. These views form part of the setting of the listed building and contribute positively to its significance due to their visual quality.

6. The proposed extension to the existing property would seek to utilise a more sympathetic design of windows and external doors. The proposal has been amended during the application process to remove some incongruous features and partly reduce the bulk of the two storey side extension and its external chimney. However, the scale and form of the extension would still be very large compared to the original property and would be prominently located on the building's south-east corner. The property would be considerably elongated and would lose much of its original proportions and symmetry. The detailing on the east elevation, particularly the modern balconies and veranda, would sit awkwardly with the detailing of the original property.
7. The extension would have a dominant presence in the approach into the conservation area from the south and diminish the grouping of modest historic properties along this end of the High Street. Recent development on the opposite side of the High Street is substantial in scale, but reads as high quality new development in keeping with the conservation area. It does not justify the scale and design of the proposed extension.
8. The distance across the fields from Kenton Road would lessen the overall effect of the extension when seen against the composition of other buildings. However, it would still be noticeable as an overly large and modern addition to the original property and would not be effectively screened by the proposed garage. Based on the above considerations, there would be adverse effects on the character and appearance of Debenham Conservation Area and harm to its significance.
9. The extension would intrude into views from Cherry Tree Inn as a very large addition to the original property, and would also affect views of the listed building from Kenton Road. The distances involved in these views lessen the overall impact, but there would still be adverse effects on the setting of the listed building and harm to its significance.
10. The harm to the significance of the conservation area and the listed building would be less than substantial, but still important given the effects on the original property itself and on different viewpoints. In line with paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), such harm needs to be weighed against the public benefits of the development.
11. The development presents the opportunity to restore and enhance elements of the current building and its grounds that are either unsympathetic or in a poor condition. The extension would also help to obscure the modern additions to the rear of 73 High Street in certain viewpoints. While these would be public benefits to the character and appearance of the conservation area and the setting of the listed building, they are modest and do not outweigh the harm that would be caused by the overall effect of the extension.
12. The proposed garage to the rear of the appeal site would be clearly subservient in height and siting to the main property and would have less effect on views into the conservation area and views to and from the listed building. Likewise,

the proposed piping of the ditch along the rear boundary of the appeal site would have little effect on the conservation area or listed building. However, this does not diminish the harm caused by the proposed extension.

13. In conclusion, the proposed development would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of Debenham Conservation Area or preserve the setting of the listed building known as Cherry Tree Inn. Therefore, it would not accord with Policy CS5 of the Mid Suffolk Core Strategy 2008 or Policies GP1, HB1 and HB8 of the Mid Suffolk Local Plan 1998. Amongst other things, these policies require development to maintain and enhance the historic environment, including the setting of listed buildings, and address the character and appearance of their surroundings in terms matters such as form, scale, design and materials. The development would also conflict with the NPPF in terms of not sustaining the significance of the conservation area or the listed building, where the public benefits would not outweigh the harm.

Conclusion

14. For the above reasons, and having had regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Tom Gilbert-Wooldridge

INSPECTOR