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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 May 2020

**by S A Schinaia MSc EngD FGS**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 7<sup>th</sup> July 2020**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/E9505/D/20/3246341**

**Macoubrey, Borrow Road, Lowestoft NR32 3PW**

- 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 & Mrs Sherwood against the decision of The Broads Planning Authority.
  - The application Ref BA/2019/0331/HOUSEH, dated 23 September 2019, was refused by notice dated 14 November 2019.
  - The development proposed is described as 'Part 1: Roofline, existing timber fascia, soffit and guttering to be removed. Fit new upvc fascia and soffit in anthracite Grey colour. Black guttering and down pipes.  
Part 2. Windows. Remove existing timber stained windows. Fit new upvc windows, colour anthracite grey on white.  
Part 3. Conservatory. Remove existing conservatory to wall height. Construct new corner brick piers. Brick up existing opening on side elevation. Create new opening on front elevation. Fit new conservatory. Construct flat roof incorporating raised sky lantern. EDPM flat roof. Remove internal french door set (barrier)'.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Oulton Broad Conservation Area.

### Reasons

3. The appeal property is a detached bungalow close to the northwest end of Borrow Road close to the junctions with Boathouse Lane and Waveney Hill, which are private roads that lead to the western area of the north bank of Oulton Broad. The appeal site is within The Broads, an area with the equivalent status of a national park and recognised for its landscape and cultural heritage that are protected by national policies, including the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) (the Framework).
4. The appeal site is within a less developed area of the Oulton Broad Conservation Area (CA), which includes the northern perimeter of the Broad and locally includes only the southern side of Borrow Road. The surrounding area has a pleasant rural character and is characterised by substantial houses in large plots, with landscaping and mature trees. The buildings in the surrounding area and in general in the CA have a variety of design and architectural styles but most are built in traditional red bricks with pitch roofs

and red or brown pantiles. Wood is a traditional material for joinery and boarding in the Broads and is widely used for windows and doors in the CA. I consider that the significance of the CA includes the use of traditional materials and styles for the built environment that, although closer to a rural setting in several parts of the CA, reflects the residential development and the economy that followed the building of the railway at the end of the C19 and the subsequent growth of the water related industry in the first decades of the C20, which is still thriving nowadays.

5. The appeal property is part of three dwellings built in mid 1980s with similar design and construction materials but different in size. The dwellings are built in red bricks with pitch roofs and brown pantiles. As in the other two dwellings, the windows and doors of the appeal property, including the conservatory, have brown painted wooden frames. The conservatory is blended with the dwelling and has a harmonious relation with the wooded surroundings to the east of the property. The design and materials of the three dwellings are therefore closer to the traditional style of the original built form in the CA and as such contribute positively to its significance and distinctiveness.
6. The proposal is for replacing the fascia boards, soffit boards, guttering and windows with anthracite coloured uPVC and for replacing the conservatory with one of a different design with aluminium sliding doors, an aluminium roof lantern and anthracite coloured uPVC windows. According to the Council, the appellant intends to replace also the front door with a uPVC one. The appellant's statement and the drawings submitted for the proposed development would confirm that both front and side doors would be replaced, presumably with uPVC doors. However, from the drawings the appearance of the new conservatory, doors and windows is not evident and, therefore, it is not clear how they would differ from the current ones.
7. According to the supporting text to Policy DM43 of the Local Plan for the Broads (LP), materials should aim to conserve and enhance the local identity and distinctiveness of the built environment and landscape character. Non-traditional unsustainable materials will be resisted if they are not considered to be of a high quality and appropriate to context or able to contribute to local distinctiveness. Brown painted wooden materials are common for windows, doors and other finishing parts of the buildings in the CA as they are in the dwellings surrounding the appeal property and, although combined with the more modern styles of buildings, are nevertheless blended in the built form of the CA and contribute positively to its local distinctiveness.
8. Many modern materials have a uniform texture and a prominent appearance that contrast with the more traditional styles of the dwellings in the CA, as it is evident where PVC frame windows and doors have been used in the neighbourhood. Following the appellant's comments on the presence of uPVC in other properties, I found a few examples of use of white PVC materials in the buildings surrounding the appeal property, but most of them are in the north side of Borrow Road and, therefore, not in the CA. One neighbour dwelling with white PVC windows appears to be within the CA. The use of anthracite coloured materials would suit buildings of more modern design. I found a few examples in recent modern buildings in Borrow Road, but they were outside the CA and combined with white plastered walls.

9. I acknowledge that the appeal property is not itself a designated heritage asset and is of modern design. I also acknowledge that the appellant considers other elements of the street scene, such as landscaping, more important in shaping the character and appearance of an area. However, the significance of the CA in part lies in the local distinctiveness including the traditional elements of the built form. Although the property is partly screened with vegetation from street views, the appeal site is part of the local landscape in a prominent area of the CA. I consider that the use of the proposed uPVC and anthracite colour would be out of keeping with the appearance of the appeal dwelling as well as harmful to the character and appearance of the surrounding area and therefore detrimental to the distinctiveness of the CA.
10. Furthermore, the proposed development would not be sustainable even taking into account the insulation value of uPVC. Although the wood of the current windows shows signs of deterioration, they are double glazed and in general seem to be still in good condition; therefore, there is the potential for them to be retained and reconditioned where necessary, minimising construction waste. If replacement is inevitable, other more sustainable options could be explored in accordance with the aims of Policy DM43.
11. The use of bricks to replace part of the current windows of the conservatory would make the appearance of the structure heavy compared the current one. However, I acknowledge that the harm would be limited to the appearance of the house and, being on the rear garden, the proposed conservatory would not affect the street scene and would not be detrimental to the character of the CA. Therefore, the proposed replacement of the conservatory would be acceptable if the materials proposed were all sustainable.
12. For the above reasons, the proposed development would conflict with Policy DM43 (b) and (f) of the LP, which require new developments to respond to surrounding buildings and the distinctive features and qualities that contribute to the streetscape quality of the local area; reinforce the distinctiveness of the wider Broads setting; use high-quality and sustainable materials, appropriate to the local context; and minimise construction waste. The proposal would also conflict with Policy DM11 of the LP, which require all development to protect, preserve, or enhance the significance and setting of the heritage assets and of the wider historic environment that contribute to the distinctive character of the Broads.
13. The proposed development would not preserve or enhance the character of the Oulton Broad CA. Since the proposed development would be small in scale and affect a small area of the CA, the harm to the significance of the CA would be less than substantial and, in accordance with paragraph 196 of the Framework, it should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The public benefit of the proposal would consist in a better insulation that would result in a more energy efficient building. However, the appellant has not provided any evidence that suggests that the proposed uPVC elements would perform significantly better or provide significantly better insulation than well maintained wooden elements. The public benefits of the proposed development would therefore be limited and would not outweigh the harm that I identified above.

### **Other Matters**

14. I acknowledge that the Oulton Broad Parish Council and a neighbour support the proposal without providing explanations. However, the harm identified in this decision cannot be ignored and it is not outweighed by any benefit.

### **Conclusion**

15. For the above reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

*S A Schinaia*

INSPECTOR