



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 26 June 2024

by **S M Holden BSc (Hons) MSc CEng MICE CTPP FCIHT MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16th July 2024

Appeal A Ref: APP/W3520/W/23/3333345

Grove Farm, Queen Street, Stradbroke, Suffolk IP21 5HH

- 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 Ms Kate Axon against the decision of Mid Suffolk District Council.
- The application Ref is DC/23/00444.
- The development proposed is conversion and reconstruction of barn outbuildings to form independent dwelling-house comprising demolition of blockwork south building, conversion of west coachhouse building and reconstruction of north and east ranges. Erection of garden wall features to sever curtilage and vehicle access. Amended vehicle access to highway. Installation of air source heat pump. Associated landscaping.

Appeal B Ref: APP/W3520/Y/23/3333344

Grove Farm, Queen Street, Stradbroke, Suffolk IP21 5HH

- 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 Ms Kate Axon against the decision of Mid Suffolk District Council.
- The application Ref is DC/23/00445.
- The works proposed are conversion and reconstruction of barn outbuildings to form independent dwelling-house comprising demolition of blockwork south building, conversion of west coachhouse building and reconstruction of north and east ranges. Erection of garden wall features to sever curtilage and vehicle access. Amended vehicle access to highway. Installation of air source heat pump. Associated landscaping.

Decisions

1. **Appeal A** is allowed and planning permission is granted for conversion and reconstruction of barn outbuildings to form independent dwelling-house comprising demolition of blockwork south building, conversion of west coachhouse building and reconstruction of north and east ranges; erection of garden wall features to sever curtilage and vehicle access; amended vehicle access to highway; installation of air source heat pump and associated landscaping. at Grove Farm, Queen Street, Stradbroke, Suffolk IP21 5HH in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref DC/23/00444, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.
2. **Appeal B** is allowed and listed building consent is granted for conversion and reconstruction of barn outbuildings to form independent dwelling-house comprising demolition of blockwork south building, conversion of west coachhouse building and reconstruction of north and east ranges; erection of garden wall features to sever curtilage and vehicle access; amended vehicle access to highway; installation of air source heat pump and associated landscaping. at Grove Farm Queen Street, Stradbroke, Suffolk IP21 5HH in accordance with the terms of the application Ref DC/23/00445 and the plans submitted with it subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

Preliminary Matters

3. In November 2023, after these applications were determined, the Council adopted the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan (B&MSJLP). Consequently, Policies H9, HB01, HB03 and HB09 of the Mid Suffolk Local Plan 1998 have been superseded and the policies relevant to the determination of these appeals are LPO4 and LP19 of the B&MSJLP. I have had regard to the comments the appellant has made on the implications of the changed policies during the appeal process in reaching my decisions.
4. The two appeals concern the same scheme under different, complimentary legislation. I have dealt with them together in my reasoning.

Main Issues

5. The main issues in relation to both appeals are:
 - a) The effect of the proposed development and works on the special architectural and historic interest of Grove Farm, a Grade II listed building, its curtilage listed buildings, and its setting;
 - b) Whether the proposal would conserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Stradbroke Conservation Area.

Reasons

Significance of Grove Farm

6. Grove Farm is a 16th and early 17th century timber-framed and plastered building thought to have been constructed in 2 or 3 phases. It has retained many original features, both inside and out, including moulded mullion and transom windows at first floor level. It was significantly altered in the 19th century with insertion of red brick gable ends. The windows are mainly mid-20th century casements. It is therefore a building with considerable historic and architectural interest which has been altered and adapted over several centuries.
7. The farmhouse lies on the eastern side of Queen Street on the northern edge of the village of Stradbroke. To the north of the house are a series of farm buildings, including an early 17th century threshing barn (not listed). In 1841 the house and buildings were part of a modest 67-acre tenanted arable farm. Historic maps suggest that a series of single storey outbuildings were added to the east of the farmhouse in the mid-19th century. These are thought to have been constructed to meet the needs of the yard-based system of mixed animal husbandry known today as Victorian High Farming. However, Grove Farm is no longer a working farmhouse; other formerly related land and agricultural buildings have been split from the ownership of the listed building. Notwithstanding this fragmentation, the outbuildings which are the subject of these appeals were retained within the curtilage of the original farmhouse.
8. The small outbuilding that faces the farmhouse was originally a domestic coach house, comprising a trap or cart shed to the north and a stable to the south. It is brick built with a surviving internal partition of clay-lump. The coach house is a reasonably well-preserved example of a building form that was once common. In 2013 listed building consent was given for the removal of the protruding roof and double wooden doors of the cart shed. These were replaced

by brickwork which reduced the building to a simple rectangular form. Nevertheless, as the equivalent of a garage for a horse and trap, coach houses from this era are increasingly rare, and few examples of this modest scale survive. It is therefore a building of some historic interest. Its relationship with the main dwelling is evidence of the importance of providing for horses when this would have been essential for the operation of the house and the farm.

9. The buildings on the eastern side of the coach house formed an L-shape facing a yard to provide an enclosed area for animals. The coach house's rear elevation was the western side of the yard but did not open on to it. On the north side was an open sided shelter shed, whilst that on the eastern side was an enclosed cattle shed. Walls that were visible from the yard were constructed of brick. By contrast, the eastern shed's rear wall was only visible from a paddock and consisted of timber-framing rendered externally with clay daub. These features are typical of the changes in agricultural buildings during the mid-19th century which combined the use of more expensive brick with inexpensive vernacular materials. Photographic evidence from 2012 shows that both the northern and eastern sheds were open. However, their use appears to have ceased when the farm operations moved elsewhere. Since then, they have fallen into disrepair, and it is acknowledged that what remains of their historic fabric is not considered to be worthy of preservation.
10. The setting of the farmhouse would originally have included surrounding agricultural land. However, the sale of the farmhouse and separation of it from its land and other associated buildings have significantly reduced the rural setting of the principal listed building. Its orientation, at right angles to Queen Street, means it is not a prominent feature of the street scene and its setting is now focused on the spacious garden on its southern side, the driveway on the north side of the building, and to a lesser extent the collection of outbuildings to the east. Together they contribute evidential value of the historic origins of the house as a focus for the agricultural activities in the surrounding area, which were important to the local economy.
11. The significance of the principal listed building, Grove Farm, is derived from its size, age and the architectural features which reflected changing styles over time. Its location also contributes to its significance and status as a well-proportioned and substantial farmhouse with strong links to the surrounding land on which the farm operated and developed over several centuries. Its outbuildings, including the coach house, were subservient to the main dwelling and were not visible from its principal elevations. Nevertheless, they provide evidence of important physical and functional connections to the operation of the farm, particularly during the 19th century.
12. The significance of the coach house and the former shelter sheds derives from their simple form and the use of vernacular materials in their construction. Their historic functional relationships with the main dwelling and the agricultural land beyond their immediate setting also speaks of farming practices in the past. However, the functional connections have now ceased, the shelter sheds have been lost and only the coach house remains. Consequently, this part of the setting of Grove Farm has become degraded. Whilst this has not detracted from the architectural and historic interest of the main dwelling as a prominent and important farmhouse, this has adversely affected its residual setting on the edge of Stradbroke.

Assessment of proposal

a) Conversion and extension of the coach house

13. The coach house is a modest building which currently serves no useful purpose other than as ancillary storage to the main dwelling. In any event there is another historic outbuilding which performs that function and is closer to the house. The coach house is too small to be a garage. Significant investment would be required to bring the building up to an appropriate standard to become either a workspace or a modern office. There is nothing before me to indicate that this would be a viable option for either the existing or any future occupants. Furthermore, Policy LP04 does not set out a requirement to undertake any marketing or viability assessment prior to conversion to of an existing building into residential use being considered.
14. The coach house is also too small to be converted into a dwelling without an extension. However, as a rare survival of a mid-19th century building of its type it is considered worthy of preservation. Historically it was not a stand-alone building, as the evidence suggests that the shelter sheds were built at a similar time, although constructed with less expensive materials, forming a cluster of buildings around a small courtyard. The proposal would integrate the coach house into a larger building, thereby ensuring that most of its historic fabric including its internal clay-lump wall, would be retained. However, there would be some loss of historic significance to the coach house through the change of use and the severing of the relationship with the former farmhouse.
15. The extension would replicate the form of the original shelter sheds by introducing single storey elements on an identical footprint to the buildings which have been lost. The coach house would become a small element of a significantly larger building. Nevertheless, I consider that the proposed dwelling would be of an appropriate scale and respond positively to its context by replicating the form of the mid-19th century yard. It would reuse all elements of the existing buildings that are capable of re-use. The removal of the existing unsightly block building and the creation of a small courtyard garden would improve the appearance of this part of the wider site and enhance the setting of the coach house.
16. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposal for extending and converting the coach house would accord with the requirements of Policy LP04 of the B&MSJLP. This policy supports the conversion of existing buildings subject to a series of criteria, including being appropriate in scale and responding to the context. However, there would be limited harm to the significance of this curtilage listed building arising from the sub-division of the plot and the change of use.

b) Grove Farm and its setting

17. The creation of a new dwelling would result in permanent, but separate residential occupation of an area of the site that has previously been ancillary to the former farmhouse. It would sever the physical relationship between the historic farm and some of its remaining ancillary buildings and would fragment the existing grounds of the main dwelling. However, these changes would be small scale when compared with the sale and loss of the majority of land and buildings that were historically connected with Grove Farm.

18. Furthermore, planning permission for a development of 42 dwellings and conversion of 2 barns was approved on this land in 2016. Although not progressed, the site is allocated for development in the Neighbourhood Plan and there is currently a similar proposal under consideration, Ref: DC/21/04377. If this proceeds the area immediately to the north and east of the appeal site will become part of a residential estate. In my view severing the coach house from Grove Farm by the introduction of an additional dwelling, which uses and conserves one of its remaining curtilage listed buildings with historic value, should be viewed in this context.
19. Nevertheless I conclude that the proposal would result in a small loss of significance to both the coach house and the setting of Grove Farm, a Grade II listed building. This would be contrary to the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1900, which requires me to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. There would also be conflict with Policy LP19 of the B&MSJLP which requires all designated heritage assets to be preserved, enhanced or conserved in accordance with the statutory tests.

Stradbroke Conservation Area

20. The Stradbroke Conservation Area (SCA) is predominantly characterised by timber framed buildings dating from medieval times. Although some have exposed timbers, most are rendered and have black glazed pantile roofs. The SCA is centred on a staggered crossroads around which there are a number of shops and a church, the tall tower of which presents a dominant feature from all approaches. The buildings on the west side of Queens Street display a variety of ages and styles. The eastern side has fewer buildings and Stradbroke Hall, a medieval moated manor, is largely hidden from public view. Grove Farm, located towards the northern end of Queens Street, makes a positive contribution to the significance of the SCA as part of this historic village.
21. From the street the front elevation of the coach house can be glimpsed at the end of the long entrance driveway. The existing state of dilapidation of the former sheds around the historic yard cannot be seen. Similarly, the proposed extension would not be seen. In the context of the current proposal for housing on the allocated site immediately to the north but outside the SCA, changes to the access and driveway at Grove Farm would be seen but would be very minor in scale.
22. This leads me to conclude that there would be no harm to the character or appearance of the SCA, which would be preserved in accordance with the statutory test and Policies LP19 of the B&MSJLP and STRAD11 of the Stradbroke Neighbourhood Plan.

Public benefits

23. The harm I have identified to the curtilage listed building and the setting of Grove Farm would, in terms of the Framework, be less than substantial. Although the Council considered them to be at the low to medium end of that definition, my assessment would indicate that they are at the low end. Nevertheless, any harm is a matter to which I am required to give considerable importance and weight. It is therefore necessary for me to weigh this harm against the public benefits of the proposal, as required by paragraph 208 of the Framework.

24. Stradbroke is categorised as a Key Service Centre in the Council's spatial strategy and where development outside the towns is considered acceptable in principle. Although technically outside the settlement boundary the site is without doubt physically well related to the village. Future residents would have access to a range of services within easy walking distance, including the primary school. The provision of a single dwelling in this location would be a modest public benefit which is a significant factor in the scheme's favour.
25. Even though some of the historic understanding of the role of the coach house and its direct connection with Grove Farm would be eroded with the development, much of the historic fabric of the building would be preserved, including its internal clay-lump wall. In my view a residential use of the building would be the optimum means of ensuring that this small coach house would be retained and cared for in the future as an element of a modest dwelling whose footprint would replicate other historic buildings which have been lost. This would accord with Historic England's advice¹ that the best way to conserve a building is to keep it in use, or to find it an appropriate new use if it has passed out of the use for which it was designed. I consider this amounts to a significant factor in the scheme's favour.
26. The removal of the incongruous concrete outbuilding from the grounds of Grove Farm would marginally increase appreciation of the original farmhouse and its setting. However, in the context of the site's enclosure, any public benefit from this would be minimal.
27. Taking all the above into consideration, I conclude that the combination of public benefits would outweigh the less than substantial harm which I have found to the significance of the coach house, a curtilage listed building, and the setting of Grove Farm a Grade II listed building. I therefore consider the scheme is acceptable.

Conditions

28. The Council has provided a list of suggested conditions in respect of the applications for planning permission and listed building consent. I have considered these having regard to the tests set out in paragraph 56 of the Framework and the advice of the Planning Practice Guidance.

Appeal A

29. In addition to the standard time limit, a condition specifying the plans is required in the interests of certainty. However, I have amended it for the sake of clarity and precision. An additional condition is required to secure the retention of the clay-lump wall in the coach house which, according to the officer's report, was offered as an amendment to the submitted plans.
30. In the absence of a landscaping plan, a requirement to submit a landscaping scheme and implement it in accordance with approved details and timing is justified in the interests of the appearance of the development.
31. Before the development takes place the existing access onto Queen Street must be improved in the interests of highway safety. Similarly, a scheme to address surface water drainage needs to be agreed at the outset and

¹ Historic England Advice Note 2 – Making Changes to Heritage Assets

implemented before the dwelling is occupied. I have sought and obtained the appellant's consent to the wording of these conditions.

32. Provision needs to be made for the storage of refuse and recycling facilities, to ensure the site and the main dwelling can be adequately serviced. An electric vehicle charging point is needed in the interests of promoting the de-carbonisation of transport.
33. In order to safeguard wildlife, protect species, and promote biodiversity conditions are required to follow the recommendations of the submitted ecological survey both during the construction period and prior to occupation of the new dwelling.
34. Materials and construction details for the new garden walls should be agreed to ensure that the development is implemented in a timely manner and respects the character and appearance of the listed building. A requirement to demolish the block work outbuilding is justified to protect the designated heritage assets.
35. Conditions limiting hours of work during construction and the prohibition of burning of material on site are necessary in the interests of the living conditions of adjoining occupants and the environment.
36. The removal of permitted development rights in relation to the new dwelling is justified in the interests of preserving the significance of the principal and curtilage listed buildings and the appearance of the site.

Appeal B

37. In respect of Appeal B, the listed building consent is approved in accordance with the plans submitted as part of the formal decision in respect of Appeal A. Unlike planning permissions, there is no provision for an application for a minor material amendment, so a plans condition would be unnecessary.
38. Conditions to agree detailed schedules of works and materials to retain and re-use existing roof tiles and repair the coach house are reasonable and necessary to ensure satisfactory implementation and the conservation of the curtilage listed building.
39. In respect of the extension, it is necessary to agree details of the bricks and brickwork, windows, doors and rooflights to preserve the character, setting and historic significance of the coach house and the setting of Grove Farm.

Conclusion

40. I have found that the development and works would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of the coach house (curtilage listed) and the setting of Grove Farm, a Grade II listed building, contrary to the 1990 Act and the development plan. However, this harm would be outweighed by the public benefits of its conservation through its conversion and extension to provide a new dwelling close to the centre of the village of Stradbroke.
41. For this reason, I conclude that both appeals should be allowed.

S M Holden

INSPECTOR

SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS

Appeal A: APP/W3520/W/23/3333345

1. The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with Drawing Nos:

Location plan:	666_01 B
Existing site plan:	666_02
Existing floor plan:	666_03
Existing elevations:	666_04
Proposed ground floor plan:	666_07 G
Proposed site plan:	666_08 G
Proposed elevations/section:	666_09 E
Block plan – proposed:	666_10 C
Schedule of works key/demolitions plan:	666_11 A
Garden wall details:	666_12 A
3. Notwithstanding the details shown on the Proposed Site Plan 666_08 G, other than to provide a doorway the clay-lump wall between the proposed kitchen and utility rooms shall not be removed.
4. No development shall commence until a scheme of landscaping to include all changes in levels and hard landscaping has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall include details of existing trees and hedgerows on the land, identify those to be retained and set out measures for their protection throughout the course of development.
5. All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of the buildings or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner; and any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species.
6. No development shall commence until the existing vehicular access has been widened and provided with a bound surface at the entrance to the site in accordance with details show on Drawing No 666_08 G. The access shall be retained thereafter as approved.
7. No development shall take place until details showing the means to prevent the discharge of surface water from the development onto the highway, including any system to dispose of the water, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented in its entirety prior to first occupation of the dwelling hereby approved and retained thereafter as approved.
8. The dwelling hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the space for manoeuvring and parking vehicles, infrastructure for charging at least one electric vehicle, secure parking for a bicycle and bin storage have been provided in accordance with Drawing No 666_08 G. The area and facilities so provided shall be retained thereafter for their identified purpose.

9. Mitigation measures to conserve protected and priority species shall be carried out in accordance with the details set out in Section 5.2-5.4 of the Protected Species and Habitats Scoping Survey (JP Ecology, dated January 2023) and shall include the appointment of a competent person to provide on-site ecological expertise during construction.
10. A biodiversity enhancement layout providing final details and locations of the enhancement measures contained in Section 5.5 of Protected Species and Habitats Scoping Survey (JP Ecology, dated January 2023) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The dwelling hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the enhancement measures have been implemented in accordance with the approved details.
11. No construction of the brickwork associated with the new dwelling or the garden walls shall take place until details of the proposed bricks to be used, including photographs and a sample panel of brickwork of at least 1 metre square has been constructed on site, showing the proposed bricks, bond, mortar and jointing, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The new dwelling and garden walls shall be constructed in accordance with the approved details and retained thereafter as approved.
12. The dwelling hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the concrete outbuilding has been demolished in its entirety.
13. Demolition and/or construction works shall take place only between:
0800 - 1800 hours Mondays to Fridays
0900 - 1300 hours on Saturdays and
At no time on Sundays or Public Holidays.
14. No burning shall take place on site at any stage during site clearance, demolition or construction of the development hereby permitted.
15. Notwithstanding Section 55(2)(a)(ii) of the Town and Country Planning Act as amended and the provisions of Article 3, Schedule 2 Part 1 Classes A to E and H and Part 2 Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no enlargement, improvement, insertion of new openings or other alteration of the dwelling shall be undertaken.

Appeal B: APP/W3520/Y/23/3333344

1. The works authorised by this consent shall commence not later than 3 years from the date of this consent.
2. No development shall take place until a method statement for re-use of roof tiles from the coach house and former outbuildings has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The method statement shall include the agreement to the timing of removal of the tiles and measures to be taken to secure and protect them from accidental loss or damage. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved method statement. Any shortfall of roof tiles required for the

coach house and new roof tiles required for the extension shall match the existing ones in material, form, colour and finish.

3. No works to the existing coach house shall take place until a detailed schedule of repair works to this building has been submitted to approved in writing by the local planning authority. The method statement shall include details of all materials to be used supported by annotated photographs and/or measured survey drawings showing the extent of and justification for the repairs and rebuilding. The works shall be implemented as approved.
4. No construction of the brickwork associated with the new dwelling shall take place until details of the proposed bricks to be used, including photographs and a sample panel of brickwork of at least 1 metre square has been constructed on site, showing the proposed bricks, bond, mortar and jointing, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The walls shall be constructed in accordance with the approved details and retained thereafter as approved.
5. Prior to its installation details of all insulation to be used within the coach house shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The insulation shall be installed as approved.
6. Prior to the installation of all external windows and doors, detailed elevation and section drawings at a scale of 1:20 showing design, materials, and finish of each of them shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
7. Prior to the installation of all rooflights detailed drawings at a scale of 1:20 shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The rooflights shall be installed in accordance with the approved details.

END OF SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS