



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 April 2025

by David Reed BSc DipTP DMS MRTPI

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

Decision date: 23 April 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/E9505/W/25/3359289

Manor Gates Garden, Staithe Road, Ludham, Norfolk NR29 5AB

- 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 Mrs Kate Gabriel against the decision of The Broads Planning Authority.
 - The application Ref BA/2024/0212/FUL, dated 28 May 2024, was refused by notice dated 23 July 2024.
 - The development proposed is a boat cover over existing mooring cut for single 8 metre vessel.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the boat cover on the character and appearance of the Ludham Conservation Area (CA) and the natural beauty of the Broads.

Reasons

3. The proposal seeks approval for the boat cover which has already been erected over a single boat mooring which has been cut within a private dyke running west of Womack Water up to Staithe Road in Ludham. The mooring itself was granted planning permission in November 2020¹.
4. The appeal site lies within an area of wet woodland alongside the dyke that forms part of the extensive detached grounds of Manor Gates, a property located on the other side of Staithe Road. It previously formed part of the wider wooded grounds of Ludham Manor to the north-east and occupies a central position in the Ludham CA which covers the built-up core of the village together with Womack Water and its environs to the south-east. The mooring is accessed by a pathway laid out within the woodland.
5. The boat cover consists of a tubular steel frame covered with heavy duty drab olive brown vinyl and is about 8m long, 3m wide and 1.7m high at the apex. Whilst a relatively modest structure, the boat cover comprises a rudimentary, utilitarian design constructed of poor-quality materials. Typically, boatsheds in the Broads are vernacular in style and constructed in soft materials such as timber with pitched roofs and overhanging eaves. By contrast, the boat cover is reminiscent of a scout tent or temporary shelter and appears out of place

¹ Reference BA/2020/0309/FUL

opposite Staithe House with its timber decking and Barn Owl Cottage with its lawns and timber outbuildings.

6. The boat cover is located in a relatively secluded position on private land. Whilst its size and colour make it reasonably unobtrusive in its woodland setting, particularly in summer, it is visible to passers-by along Staithe Road where it appears as an unexpected and odd feature within the otherwise unspoilt natural woodland. However, even if it were completely unseen from public land, the boat cover would detract from the special qualities of the Ludham CA and the Broads.
7. There are two large modern boat houses nearby in the grounds of Holm Mere and The Mowle, but these are closely associated with residential plots unlike the waterside woodland in this case which is physically detached from the host property Manor Gates.

Conclusion

8. For these reasons the boat cover significantly harms the character and appearance of the Ludham CA and the natural beauty of the Broads in conflict with Policies DM50, SP5, DM11 and DM43 of the Local Plan for the Broads 2019. These seek to keep mooring plots free of buildings and above ground structures, seek to protect the historic environment, require the highest standard of design and materials in CAs and seek to ensure all development integrates effectively with its surroundings, reinforcing local distinctiveness and the qualities that contribute to the landscape and waterscape. The proposal also conflicts with the legislative duties to have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA and to seek to further the statutory purposes of the Broads.
9. The appellant seeks the boat cover to protect the mahogany decks of their launch from damage due to exposure to the weather; the costs of necessary repairs have been considerable, and a full-length deck cover would be heavy and cumbersome. These undoubted benefits of the boat cover for the appellant are appreciated but do not outweigh the harm that is caused to the character and appearance of the Ludham CA and the associated conflict with the development plan.
10. Having regard to the above the appeal should be dismissed.

David Reed

INSPECTOR