



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 May 2025

by **O S Woodward MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23rd May 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/D3505/Y/24/3356393

11 High Street, Nayland, Colchester, Suffolk CO6 4JF

- 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 Caroline Altug against the decision of Babergh District Council.
 - The application Ref is DC/24/04395.
 - The works proposed are retention of pub sign bracket (without sign).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. Because the appeals relate to works to a listed building including a refusal to grant listed building consent, and the appeal site lies in the Nayland with Wissington Conservation Area (the CA), I have had special regard to Sections 16(2) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act).

Main Issues

3. The main issues are whether or not the proposal:
 - preserves the Grade II listed building, 'White Hart Hotel, High Street'¹ or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses; and,
 - would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA.

Reasons

Listed building

Significance

4. The property is a former public house and hotel which has been converted into a house. It was originally built in the 15th-Century and extended to the rear in the 16th-Century. The front elevation was remodelled in the mid to late 18th-Century, removing some medieval elements such as a projecting upper floor. A large part of the significance of the building derives from its historic fabric and architectural significance.
5. Of most relevance to the appeal proposal, it was at the time of the 18th-Century alterations that a prominent and large wrought iron bracket was erected. The bracket includes three connecting spokes from between the ground floor and first floor windows and a further horizontal connection to the eaves. There is some

¹ List entry number **1033574**

wrought iron detailing above where the sign should hang. The bracket is particularly prominent, protruding significantly outwards from the building façade and hanging over the footway and the road. It is an unusual, arresting and impressive feature of the building that positively contributes to its architectural significance. The bracket is also of historic significance by being a prominent feature that forms part of the evolution of the building.

6. As existing, there is no sign, although the most recent sign is still retained on site in storage. The limited remaining painting reveals that this sign is not the same as the most recent one shown in the photographs from the 1960s, so must be more recent, and likely dates from the 1990s. The sign has been repainted at least, and potentially replaced entirely, multiple times. The current sign is also in generally poor condition. Because the original fabric has already been lost and the current sign's poor condition, the fabric is of relatively limited intrinsic significance. However, the bracket was designed to hold a hanging sign to advertise the pub. Photographic evidence has been provided of signs being hung from the bracket as of 1911, the 1930s, the 1940s and the 1960s.
7. A sign and the bracket work together, reinforcing the significance of each element, and in tandem positively contribute to the architectural and historic significance of the building. The bracket alone only partially provides this because it feels rather naked without a sign and it is not immediately obvious what its purpose is or was meant to be without a sign in place. A sign can only be displayed in an historically accurate manner if hung from the bracket. Each element individually, therefore, whilst having some significance, is less than the sum of its parts.
8. The importance of the bracket and sign together has been reinforced by the relatively recent conversion of the building into a home. This is because they are one of the most prominent and important remaining features that provide legibility of the building's former use.

Assessment

9. It is proposed to permanently remove the sign from the bracket. This would harm the architectural and historic significance of the building by divorcing the sign and bracket arrangement that works together in tandem to positively contribute to the significance of the building, as set out above. This important marker of the historic use of the building would be significantly eroded. There would remain some signifiers of the former use of the building, mostly the former stables arched entry to the rear courtyard. However, on its own and without any remaining signage, this would be insufficient to meaningfully maintain an architectural link to the building's past.
10. The building previously provided three different signs on the façade and a further protruding sign or clock, the evidence is unclear, above the arched entry to the rear. These were all lost as part of the conversion to residential, although the bracket for the other protruding sign remains. That the majority of the other commercial signage has been lost reinforces the importance of the retention of the bracket and sign subject of the appeal, otherwise the majority of the indicators of the former use of the building would be lost.
11. The sign is in relatively poor condition. However, no substantiated evidence has been provided that it could not be repaired and repainted whilst retaining much of the existing fabric. There is therefore no reason why after refurbishment it would

be a danger to the public. Even if the existing sign could not be suitably repaired, then an alternative strategy would be for a new, but historically accurate, sign to be produced and hung from the bracket, so as to maintain the positive relationship between the bracket and sign. Given the several changes of sign that have already occurred since it was originally erected, this would have limited harmful effect on significance. Either of these options could be controlled by condition.

12. That the list description does not specifically mention the bracket and sign does not lessen their importance. The list description is just the starting point for assessment of a building's significance. A better indicator of the importance of the bracket and sign is that a recent listed building consent for the building² contains a condition³ specifically requesting that the sign and bracket together be retained.

Overall

13. Therefore, the proposal to remove the sign from the bracket would fail to preserve the special architectural or historic interest of the Grade II listed building, thus failing to satisfy the requirements of the Act. Policy LP19 of the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan – Part 1, dated November 2023 (the LP) refers to the statutory tests and also to the significance of heritage assets. This is consistent with the Framework, as set out at Paragraph 210, which sets out the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets. The proposal would also fail to comply with this requirement. I assess the level of harm to be less than substantial.

Conservation area

14. The CA includes the central area of Nayland village and the surrounding fields. It derives much of its significance from the historic architecture of the village, which includes a variety of buildings from the medieval period to the present day which are frequently of high quality and well maintained. High Street is one of the two main roads in the village and the road in general and the appeal building in particular are prominent. This road is not entirely residential and contains, intermittently, commercial and retail buildings. This positively contributes to the significance of the CA, both as a village with a functioning commercial core and also by providing legibility of where former commercial uses have since been lost. That there are other buildings of similar age and character in the village do not diminish the contribution that it makes, because it is by considering the buildings as a whole provides an understanding of the evolution of the village.
15. The appeal building positively contributes to the character and appearance of the village by being a high quality example of historic architecture and also by its retained legibility as a former public house. Overall, therefore, the building positively contributes to the significance of the CA as a whole.
16. Therefore, the proposed harm to the commercial character of the building that the proposed removal of the sign would cause would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the CA, thus failing to satisfy the requirements of the Act, Paragraph 210 of the Framework and Policy LP19 of the LP.

² Ref DC/21/03616

³ Condition 16

Planning Balance

17. In accordance with Paragraph 212 of the Framework, I place great weight on the conservation of designated heritage assets. Although less than substantial, I place considerable importance and weight on the harm that I have identified to the listed building and the CA. As set out at Paragraph 215 of the Framework, where there is less than substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing their optimum viable use.
18. There is potential that when the sign and bracket are in place it could result in disturbance to the occupiers of the building from people calling at the premises unaware that the property is now a private dwelling. I have also been provided with evidence from the occupiers of the adjoining No 13 High Street that they also sometimes are disturbed for the same reason.
19. However, the entrance to the appeal property is clearly residential in character. It has a prominent No 11 on the doorframe. The door itself is domestic in character. There is an electronic doorbell of a type now common to houses. There is also a lack of features that might be expected directly by the entrance to a pub, such as cigarette bins or signage for deliveries or other secondary signage. I therefore view this harm as very limited. In addition, there are other ways to mitigate such risks, for example by the placing of a small sign by the door to make it clear that the property is now a home.
20. The house is a relatively large home in very good condition. There is no evidence before me, and no reason to believe, that the works are required to secure the optimum viable use of the building.
21. Therefore, the harm to the significance of the designated heritage assets that I have identified outweigh the very limited public benefits set out above.

Conclusion

22. For the reasons given above, the appeal should be dismissed.

O S Woodward
INSPECTOR