



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 10 February 2026

by **R Sabu BA(Hons), MA, BArch, PgDip, RIBA, ARB**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 6th March 2026

Appeal A Ref: APP/D3505/W/25/3373635

The Old Rectory, Church Street, Lavenham, Suffolk CO10 9SA

- 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 Mr Nicholas Storey against the decision of Babergh District Council.
 - The application Ref is DC/25/03022.
 - The development proposed is described as, 'Addition of painted timber, pedimented doorcase surrounding the existing front door, architrave and cushion mould which are retained'.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/D3505/Y/25/3373634

The Old Rectory, Church Street, Lavenham, Suffolk CO10 9SA

- 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 Mr Nicholas Storey against the decision of Babergh District Council.
 - The application Ref is DC/25/03023.
 - The works proposed are described as, 'Addition of a painted timber, pedimented doorcase surrounding the existing front door, architrave and cushion mould which are retained'.
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Decision

1. The Appeal A is dismissed and Appeal B is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. As the proposal is in a conservation area and relates to a listed building I have had special regard to sections 16(2), 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act).

Main Issue

3. The main issues are:
 - whether the proposal would preserve a Grade II listed building, The Rectory, and any of the features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses; and
 - the extent to which it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Lavenham Conservation Area.

Reasons

Listed building

4. The Rectory is a late 18th century red brick building with 19th century alterations by Joseph Stannard which include a rear extension and the window feature to the southeast corner of the side elevation of the building.

5. The two storey front elevation of the main part of the house dates from the late 18th century and comprises two storeys with five window range of double hung sashes. The front door is referred to in the listing and is described as a central 6 panel door with fanlight having a wood doorcase with panelled reveals, architrave, pulvinated frieze and pediment. From the evidence, it appears that the original 'floating' pediment above the front door was in poor condition and fell off the brickwork. The windows were replaced with larger panes, and the dormer windows are 21st century additions.
6. The 19th century extensions are set back from the front elevation and sited primarily to the rear and side of the building such that the 18th century front elevation retains prominence when viewed from the front and from the street. In addition, while the dormer windows indicate an additional level of accommodation, they are modestly sized such that the overall scale of the original front elevation does not appear significantly enlarged.
7. Therefore, notwithstanding the extensions and alterations to the building, the front elevation retains an attractive polite character that results from the pleasing proportions typical of a neo-classical building of this age. Moreover, the building retains its original front door and fan light, as well as the panelled linings and architraves.
8. As such, the special interest and significance of the listed building, insofar as is relevant to these appeals, lies in the appearance and legibility of the front elevation as a late Georgian dwelling.
9. The proposed pedimented doorcase would consist of an outer order of flat pilasters and a reinstated pediment. The proposed triangular pediment would be significantly larger than the original pediment, with a pinnacle that would almost be at the level of the bottom of the window above. The proposed pilasters together with the pediment would result in a portico that would have a sense of grandeur which would detract from the attractive understated character of the front elevation.
10. The style of the scheme would appear in keeping with the classical style of the host building. However, given its overall height and width, the portico would appear disproportionately large against the 18th century front elevation which, despite the extensions and alterations, remain the prominent elevation of the building when viewed from the front.
11. The projection of the doorcase from the front façade would be modest. However, the height and width of the portico would draw the eye away from the original front door, panelled reveals and architrave, detracting from the significance of the listed building.
12. Accordingly, the proposal would erode the significance and special interest of the listed building. Given the scale of the proposal, the harm would lie at the low end of the less than substantial spectrum.

Conservation area

13. The site lies within the Lavenham Conservation Area. Lavenham has medieval origins and gained wealth through the manufacture of wool in the 16th century. Following the decline of the wool trade, the town's timber framed buildings were not rebuilt and therefore a number remain in the town's medieval core. The site lies

opposite to the Grade I listed Church Of Saint Peter And Saint Paul (Church) which dates from the 15th and 16th century and attests to the wealth of the town at this time. Accordingly, the significance of the LCA, insofar as it relates to these appeals, lies in the evidence of historic buildings of a range of types and ages that illustrate the evolution of the town from its medieval origins and wealth from the wool trade.

14. The Rectory lies within substantial grounds and is significantly set back from the street. The neo-classical character of the existing building can be seen from the street and provides a positive contribution to the traditional character of the LCA.
15. The proposed portico would be seen from the street near the gate to the site. However, views of the proposal from other areas along Church Street would be very limited given the set back of the building from the road. Moreover, the proposal would not override the overall scale of the building within its plot when viewed from the street. Accordingly, the scheme would preserve the character and appearance of the LCA.
16. The Rectory lies opposite the Church and there is intervisibility between the buildings as well as historical association such that the building lies within the setting of the Church. The significance of the Church lies in the evidence of grand ecclesiastical architecture. Given my findings above, the proposal would preserve the setting of this listed building.

Heritage balance

17. Paragraph 212 of the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) advises that when considering the impact of development on the significance of designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to their conservation. Given the scale of the proposal, the harm to the Grade II listed The Rectory would lie at the low end of the less than substantial end of the spectrum in this instance but nevertheless of considerable importance and weight.
18. Under such circumstances, paragraph 215 of the Framework advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, which includes the securing of optimal viable use of listed buildings. Given my findings above, the proposal would not constitute a general improvement to the building's façade such that there is no public benefit in this respect.
19. The proposal may address issues of weathering that led to a deterioration of materials. However, alternative methods of protecting the building are not before me. Accordingly, it has not been demonstrated that the proposal would be best way to achieve this objective and secure the optimum viable use of the heritage asset. Therefore, this matter does not override the harm identified. In any event, the continued viable use of the appeal property as a residential dwelling is not dependent on the proposal as the building has an ongoing residential use that would not cease in its absence.
20. Consequently, the proposal would not preserve the significance or special interest of The Rectory. Therefore, it would conflict with Policies LP19 and LP24 of the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan – Part 1 November 2023, and Policy D1 of the Lavenham Neighbourhood Development Plan (2016) and with the provisions of the Act, which together seek, among other things, proposals that preserve the special architectural or historic interest of a heritage asset, safeguard historic assets, and reinforce Lavenham's architectural heritage.

Other Matters

21. I note the comments of the Inspector for a previous appeal relating to the site. The proposal may be a more modest scheme than that subject of the previous appeal. However, for the foregoing reasons, this matter has not altered my overall decision.

Conclusion

22. For the reasons given above, the proposal would conflict with the development plan as a whole and in the absence of material considerations to indicate otherwise, the appeals are dismissed.

R Sabu

INSPECTOR