LAKE DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE – WEDNESDAY 2 SEPTEMBER 2009

REPORT BY THE HEAD OF DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

ALLERDALE BOROUGH COUNCIL (YELLOW SHEETS)
Application no: 7/2009/2152
Applicant: Mr K Graham, Treeby & Bolton
Date of Application: 16 May 2009
Type of Application: Full
Location: Treeby & Bolton, 12, Lake Road, Keswick, CA12 5BX
Grid Reference: 326637 523333 See Plan
Proposal: Extension to enclose existing external sitting area to create orangery (resubmission)
District Council: 
Parish Council: Object. Any more building in this small courtyard will have a negative impact on the feeling of openness, which is important to all users.
Highway Authority: Grant/approve

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE with conditions

REPORT:

1 BACKGROUND

1.1 I am reporting this application to Committee because my recommendation for approval is contrary to the views of the Keswick Town Council.

1.2 Treeby and Bolton is a café and art shop within a prominent three storey Victorian building in a central location in the town centre of Keswick. The site lies within the conservation area. The principle elevation faces onto Lake Road but the property also has a publicly visible frontage onto the narrow lane which flanks the side of the building. This lane forms an important and well used pedestrian link from the town centre to central car park. Residential properties occupy the opposite side of the lane.

1.3 A long two storey extension has been built to the rear of the property following the grant of planning permission in 2006 (7/2006/2107). The ground floor area was approved as storage space on the original application. Planning permission was subsequently granted for the change of use of the ground floor to a café use (7/2007/2097) with independent access and this scheme included minor alterations to the exterior of the approved extension.

1.4 Planning permission was granted under permission ref 7/2007/2197 for the change of use of an area immediately to the rear of the extension for an outside seating area connected to the café. This seating area is contained within low stone wall and is overlooked by surrounding commercial and residential properties.
1.5 A planning application for a single storey extension, which would have occupied the outside seating area, was refused permission under delegated powers in April 2009 (7/2009/2049). The reason for refusal was based on my concerns about the extension’s form, horizontal emphasis and the disruptive impact of the extension on the existing architectural components of the existing building. The agent has attempted to address the design issues with a revised design which is the subject of the current application.

1.6 The agent has reduced the width of the extension so that it no longer projects out beyond the face of the elevation fronting the lane and the horizontal proportions of the windows have been altered to give a vertical emphasis. The partially flat roofed form of the proposed extension, which features a lantern roof, is the same as the previous extension. This form is dictated by the presence of an existing first floor bay window on the end wall of the existing extension which would be obstructed by a further extension with a pitched roof.

2 REPRESENTATIONS

2.1 A letter has been received from Derwent and Solway Housing Association which owns a number of the properties on Whickham Court, which lies on the opposite side of the lane to the development site. The Housing Association comments that there have been some concerns raised by a number of residents in the past when previous applications have been considered. The Housing Association is concerned that the quality of life of residents should not be adversely affected by the proposed development. No representations have been received from the occupants of Whickham Court.

3 POLICY AND ASSESSMENT

3.1 Policy DP7 of the Regional Spatial Strategy advises that environmental quality should be protected especially by promoting good quality design in new development and ensuring that development respects its setting.

3.2 Local Plan Policy BE11 (Conservation Areas) advises that proposals in or near conservation areas must pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area.

3.3 The property is within the Central Shopping Area of Keswick, as defined in the Local Plan. No change of use is proposed; the use of the land is already given over to consumption of food and the proposed development would simply house this use within a building. The issues are site specific.

Is the design of the proposed extension satisfactory?

3.4 The original part of the property which fronts the main street is an end terrace four storey hipped roof building. The design of the recently completed rear extension harmonises with the original building by
adopting a form which is characterised by its verticality and at the same time is clearly subservient to the original building. Although the extension is only two storeys high this verticality is emphasised by the projecting gabled bay windows which, on the elevation facing the lane, are a full two storey in height and have a pitched slate roof. These windows are complemented by the window on the rear elevation, which is corbelled out at first storey height and, when viewed from the approach from the public car park, is read in conjunction the windows facing the lane. The blue and white colour scheme which has been adopted for the existing extension tones in with the blue/green stone walls and green slate roof and helps to marry the extension into the parent building.

3.5 As a result of reducing the width of the proposed extension, and through the introduction of well proportioned windows, I consider that the appearance of the proposed orangery is an improvement on the original (refused) scheme. The stone faced plinth wall of the proposed orangery, which appears as a continuation of the base wall of the existing extension, helps to tie it visually into the existing extension. The substantial timber corner posts and cornicing, which reflect the timberwork of the bays on the existing building, add strength and substance to the form of the proposed extension. A matching paint scheme would help to blend it in with the existing building.

3.6 There is a harmonious balance between the various components of the orangery and I am satisfied that it would have an attractive appearance in its own right. The more difficult question is whether a flat roofed building, albeit well designed in itself, would be a concordant addition to the existing building. It remains the case that the cramped relationship between the first floor projecting bay window and the proposed extension is a less satisfactory aspect of the proposal.

3.7 Notwithstanding this shortcoming, I consider that the proposal would adequately blend with the parent building. Taking into account that the main public view of the building is of the end elevation it helps that the single storey orangery would form one of a series of steps down from the principal building and that the cornicing would assist in lifting the eye. The lantern roof would also help in this regard but given the fall in land I am doubtful that it would be fully visible.

Does the proposal pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the conservation area?

3.8 In terms of its wider impact on the conservation area the extension would be principally viewed against the backs of Victorian buildings and more recent development, including flat roofed extensions. The Victorian elevations would not be obscured by the extension. The adjacent yard is mainly used for car parking and does not have the character and appearance of a traditional town yard. I do not consider that in this context the extension would fail to preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area.
3.9 The Town Council feels that any more building in this rear yard would have a negative impact on the feeling of openness which they feel is important to all users. Because of its small scale the building would not be overbearing on surrounding properties. It does not afford an important aspect towards other buildings in streetscape terms and I do not consider that this yard, which is principally used for parking, is a particularly important open space or that any small loss of space around the buildings resulting from this proposal would be detrimental in some way.

Would the proposed development have a harmful impact on the amenities of neighbours?

3.10 Numbers 9 and 10 Whickham Court lie on the opposite side of the lane to the development site and have windows facing the proposed extension. The aspect from the ground floor windows, which is currently towards a yard, would be altered by a sense of enclosure but not to the extent that significant harm would result in terms of loss of light or overbearing. The windows face directly onto a well used public right of way and as such do not afford a high level of privacy. While there would be some additional activity around these dwellings due to the side door of the orangery facing the lane I do not consider that this is likely to result in a materially increase disturbance over and above that which already occurs from people using the lane.

3.11 There is an adequate degree of separation between the orangery and other neighbour’s properties surrounding the rear yard, both residential and commercial, and I do not consider that those neighbours would be unduly affected by the proposal.

4 CONCLUSION

4.1 The designer has paid regard to the architectural detailing and materials of the present building in his design of the proposed extension and within the constraints imposed by the first floor bay window on the existing building I am satisfied that the standard of design is satisfactory. In consequence of its design and small scale the proposed development would not be harmful to the appearance of the building or its setting and it would preserve the character of the conservation area. In the context of a busy pedestrian thoroughfare this extension is unlikely to have a significant impact on the amenities or neighbours. This revised design overcomes the previous reasons for refusal.

Committee is recommended to:

APPROVE with conditions

1. The development hereby permitted shall be commenced before the expiration of THREE years from the date hereof.

REASON: Imposed in accordance with the provisions of Section 91 of

2. Unless otherwise first agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority the base wall of the extension hereby permitted shall be faced in natural stone to match the stone of the existing rear extension of 12 Lake Road in terms of size, method of laying, pointing and jointing details.

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the proposed extension harmonises with the parent building to present a satisfactory standard of appearance in compliance with Policies BE1 and BE11 of the Lake District National Park Local Plan.

3. The external door, window joinery and framework of the lantern roof of the extension hereby permitted shall be constructed in timber and unless otherwise first agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority all the external timberwork of the extension shall be painted to match the colour scheme of the parent building and shall maintained thereafter in that colour.

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and to integrate the development with the existing building thereby providing a satisfactory standard of appearance and preserving the character of the conservation area in accordance with Policy BE11 of the Lake District National Park Local Plan and Policy DP7 of the North West of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021.

Development Plan Policies relevant to the Decision

The detailing and design of the proposed extension takes adequate account of the existing building and the character of the conservation area and because it is located in an area which experiences a high level of public activity it would not be harmful to the amenities of neighbours.

Lake District National Park Local Plan Policies BE1 and BE11
North West of England Plan Regional Spatial Stategy to 2021- Policy DP7

BACKGROUND PAPERS: Background papers are available for inspection on the planning application file unless otherwise specified on that file as confidential by reasons of financial/personal circumstances in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985.