



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 4 November 2025

by R E Jones BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 November 2025

Appeal A Ref: APP/M2840/W/25/3371107

The Kings Arms, 59 High Street, Thrapston, North Northamptonshire NN14 4JJ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a failure to give notice within the prescribed period of a decision on an application for planning permission
- The appeal is made by Mr and Mrs - Baker against North Northamptonshire Council.
- The application Ref is NE/24/00900/FUL.
- The development proposed is proposed demolition of curtilage warehouse structure and formation of parking area, proposed change of use of attached courtyard dwellings to form part of public house, proposed demolition of single storey lean-to extensions, extension to existing bar area and extension to form café/restaurant.

Appeal A Ref: APP/M2840/W/25/3371109

The Kings Arms, 59 High Street, Thrapston, North Northamptonshire NN14 4JJ

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) against a failure to give notice within the prescribed period of a decision on an application for listed building consent.
- The appeal is made by Mr and Mrs - Baker against North Northamptonshire Council.
- The application Ref is NE/24/00901/LBC.
- The works proposed are proposed demolition of curtilage warehouse structure and formation of parking area, proposed change of use of attached courtyard dwellings to form part of public house, proposed demolition of single storey lean-to extensions, extension to existing bar area and extension to form café/restaurant.

Decision

1. Appeal A: The appeal is dismissed and planning permission is refused.
2. Appeal B: The appeal is dismissed and listed building consent is refused.

Procedural Matters

3. 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 (as amended) (the Act).
4. The two appeals concern the same scheme under different, complementary legislation. I have dealt with both appeals together in my reasoning.

Background and Main Issues

5. This appeal has been lodged following the Council's failure to determine the applications within the relevant timescale. The Council have not provided any putative reasons for refusal or a statement of case with the appeal. Therefore, I have relied upon the consultation responses they received during the application stage. These include concerns from their heritage and transportation advisers

regarding the proposal's harmful effects on the listed building and the setting of nearby heritage assets, as well as traffic volumes and a lack of parking. I have also considered the relevant development plan policies, as well as the guidance provided by the appellant, given the absence of that information from the Council.

6. Therefore, based on the above background, the main issues in this appeal are:
- the effect of the proposal on: the special interest of a Grade II listed building – the Kings Arms Public House¹; the setting of a Grade II* listed building, the Church of St James²; the setting of the Grade II listed buildings, Nos 47, 49 and 51 High Street³ and Nos 53 and 55 High Street⁴; and the character and appearance of the Thrapston Conservation Area (CA); and
 - the effect of the proposal on highway safety in the locality with particular reference to parking arrangements and traffic volumes on the local road network.

Reasons

Heritage

Special interest and significance

7. The Kings Arms Public House is within a frontage of historic buildings in the centre of Thrapston. According to the official list entry the building dates from the mid-18th century with later additions added during the 19th century. The heritage statement indicates that the building was likely a purpose-built coaching inn. The pub element of the building comprises a limestone and brick stucco facade and a slate roof.
8. The adjoining outbuilding and former stables (now in residential use) comprises a long and narrow 2-storey stone built structure. Features of interest include sash windows, a large set of doors likely to be the former stable opening, ornate stone lintels and an “1839” inscribed date stone; all of which are observed from the adjacent courtyard.
9. Within the appeal site is a large single span warehouse, likely built during the mid-20th century. Although positioned close to the pub and the adjoining former stables it is not clear whether this forms part of the listed curtilage. With its industrial and utilitarian form, it appears somewhat jarring when seen in context with the more historic pub and outbuildings.
10. The listed pub and its attached outbuilding hold significant architectural and historic value as a former coaching inn with stables to the rear. Its historic interest lies in its original function and the clear, legible arrangement of the pub, stables, and courtyard, which together illustrate its past role in serving travellers and those attending the town's market. Architecturally, the building retains important historic fabric and character, contributing to the understanding of local vernacular design. As one of several surviving structures within the historic core of Thrapston, it forms an integral part of the town's heritage, reflecting both its social history and architectural evolution.

¹ List Entry Number 1265649 - Kings Arms Public House and Attached Outbuildings to Rear, 57 and 59 High Street

² List Entry Number 1265715 – Church of St James

³ List Entry Number 1226805 – Numbers 47 (Corn Exchange) 49 and 51

⁴ List Entry Number 1226806 – Number 53 and 55 and Attached Outbuildings

11. To the immediate north of the appeal site and adjoining its curtilage is the Grade II* listed Church of St James and its associated grounds. According to the official listing the Church dates from around the 13th and 14th centuries with later alterations during the 19th. Its principal features include a limestone ashlar nave, aisles and tower and a squared coursed limestone chancel. The church's tower has an imposing presence within the town centre and can be seen from the surrounding streets, rising above roofs and through gaps and breaks between buildings. Given its siting close to some of many of the town centre's older buildings, there is a charm associated with its setting. The Kings Arms pub makes a positive contribution towards this setting; however, it is sullied somewhat by the presence of the warehouse which is seen in the Church's foreground when viewed from High Street through the gap created by the pub's access.
12. The Church's significance and special interest stem from its surviving historic fabric and its continuous role as a place of worship since medieval times. It also serves as a visual and social landmark within Thrapston, with its prominent tower acting as a focal point, especially when travelling through the town centre. Notwithstanding the presence of the warehouse at the appeal site, the historic buildings surrounding the church, which include the Kings Arms and its attached outbuildings, form part of its setting, further enhancing its historic and cultural value as a place of worship. The access to the side of the public house also provides a break in the street frontage from where its special interest can be experienced and appreciated.
13. Adjoining the appeal building is the Grade II listed, 53 and 55 High Street. A further Grade II listed building, Nos 47, 49 and 51, is located a short distance from that building and within the same frontage. The historic interest and significance of these buildings lie in their long-standing commercial use, uniform scale and historic detailing which include traditional shop fronts and evenly arranged timber sash windows. Both buildings include later phases at the rear, that inform their evolution and function. The setting of the listed buildings includes the properties that adjoin them in the frontage. These reinforce the commercial function of the street, are of comparable architectural merit, while sited along a consistent building line that presents itself onto High Street.
14. The site is located within the CA. This area includes a high concentration of listed buildings that line High Street and Chancery Lane which are grouped primarily around the town's historic Church of St James. I saw during my site visit that the buildings have an aesthetically pleasing quality derived from their consistent scale, arrangement and architectural detail. Many of the buildings are positioned within burgage plots as evidenced by their long and narrow form and the presence of secondary additions and/or ranges emanating from the primary frontage buildings.
15. Insofar as it relates to the CA, the Kings Arms is an integral element of a large group of listed buildings that make a positive contribution to the historic charm of Thrapston's townscape, while its evidential value as a historic coaching inn with attached stables informs, to some extent, the historic settlement pattern of the CA.

Appeal proposal and effects

16. The proposed extension to the former stables would occupy most of the courtyard-facing elevation. Its scale, projection, and flat roof form are excessive and incongruous with the building's shallow roof span and narrow profile. Although the

intention to retain historic fabric is acknowledged, the extension would obscure key architectural features - including stone lintels, corbels, the stable door, and date stone - from both courtyard views and glimpsed views from High Street. These changes would undermine the building's historic integrity, diminish its legibility, and weaken the historical understanding of its former role in association with the public house. Overall, the proposal represents an unsympathetic addition that disrupts the established layout and narrative of the listed building.

17. I am unconvinced that the large areas of glazing facing the courtyard would positively reveal the historic ground floor wall. Furniture, decoration, and everyday activity inside would obscure views from the courtyard and High Street, and hinder the understanding of the building's initial form, details, and use.
18. Insofar as it relates to the effect on the setting of nearby heritage assets, the proposed extension would extend into combined views with the adjacent Church of St James, particularly from the courtyard and High Street. The proposed extension's modern design, bulky profile and unsympathetic amalgamation with the former stables would appear jarring in those combined views such that they would harm the historic setting of the church.
19. From within the CA, I observed that the proposed extension to the former stables and pub courtyard would be visible from High Street through the access to the pub and warehouse. From this perspective the legibility of the appeal site can be appreciated. Although views would be somewhat angled and fleeting, the excessive projection, shape and contemporary design, of the proposed extension would be discordant when seen from the thoroughfare and thus capable of harming both the wider character and appearance of the CA.
20. Regarding the nearby listed buildings at Nos 47, 49 and 51 High Street and Nos 53 and 55 High Street, the proposed extension to the former stables would not be clearly seen in relation to their principal facades facing High Street. The extension would also be set down below the eaves of the outbuilding and would not be clearly seen to interfere with vistas of the historic rear ranges emanating from those listed buildings. I am therefore satisfied that the proposed extension would preserve their setting.
21. It is acknowledged that extensions incorporating a contemporary design can be effective and preserve the significance of listed buildings. However, in this case and given its scale and design the proposed extension would fail to integrate sympathetically into the historic fabric of the building harming its initial plan form and narrative.
22. The proposal also includes a rear extension to the existing bar area. Although this would significantly extend the length of the existing rear addition it would align with its roof and outer side walls. Its form and length and subordinate relationship with the principal pub building would not be unlike rear additions nearby. However, this addition would result in the loss of a bay window. The heritage statement provides evidence that the bay window has undergone alterations to its construction and external appearance that have altered its initial late 19th century form. This includes a concrete beam, brickwork and a felt roof covering, which collectively offer minimal heritage value in terms of historic fabric. A decorative internal wooden archway that marks the entrance into the bay window would be retained. There are limited details on the submitted drawings showing how the archway

would be integrated into the new addition. Nonetheless, such details could be secured through condition in the event I allow the appeal. Therefore, providing the internal archway is protected during construction and retained thereafter, the loss of the external bay window would not harm the building's historic fabric. This part of the proposal would therefore preserve the special interest of the listed building.

23. Notwithstanding my concerns, the removal of the warehouse building would undoubtedly have a positive effect on the setting of the pub and outbuildings, and more importantly, in my view, the adjacent Church of St James. Its removal would better reveal the prominence, form and architectural detailing of the church and create an attractive vista, through the existing gap in the High Street frontage that would enhance its setting and the significance it derives from it. Outward views from within the church yard towards the appeal site and the historic town centre would also be improved by the removal of the warehouse's sizeable rear elevation; the absence of which would also enhance the setting of the churchyard. The setting of a group of listed chest tombs within the graveyard would also be enhanced.
24. I'm mindful that parked cars from the proposed car park replacing the warehouse would partially interfere with views of the church. However, this impact would be far less damaging than the current situation. Moreover, the appearance of the parked cars could be screened to some degree by landscaping and modest enclosures, agreed through condition. The loss of the warehouse would, of itself, enhance the setting of the appeal building and the church, and the character and appearance of the CA in which it sits.
25. The proposal would also require the removal of some modern single-story additions at the rear of the pub. These lack architectural merit and have an irregular arrangement. Accordingly, their removal would, when viewed in isolation from the other elements of the scheme, enhance the appearance of the listed building.
26. Further consideration will be given to these benefits in the final balance section below.
27. Drawing all the above together, the proposed extension to the former stables would fail to preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the Grade II listed building, the King's Arms Public House. The extension would also harm the significance of the Grade II* listed building, the Church of St James, through development affecting its setting, as well as causing harm to the character and appearance of the CA. This would be contrary to the requirements of sections 16(2), 66(1) and 72(1) of the Act.

Parking and Traffic

28. Currently, there are no dedicated parking spaces on-site for pub customers. At present, patrons likely rely on nearby public car parks at Chancery Lane and Sackville Street or on unrestricted street parking. The proposal, following the removal of the warehouse, seeks to provide 17 on-site parking spaces for pub customers.

29. The Council's Highway advisers have indicated that, in line with county parking standards⁵, approximately 39 off-street spaces would be required based on the pub's total floorspace after the proposed expansion. However, in my view, it is unreasonable to include the pub's existing floorspace in this calculation, as the site currently offers no off-street customer parking and would continue to do so if the current proposals were not submitted. Furthermore, I have not been presented with any evidence suggesting that patrons of the pub create specific parking pressures in the locality. Accordingly, I consider the provision of 17 new spaces to be acceptable in this context and likely to deliver a public benefit by reducing parking pressure and improving availability elsewhere in the town centre. Provision for bicycle parking could also be secured through a condition should the appeal be allowed.
30. The appeal site comprises the pub, three residential dwellings, and a warehouse currently in general industrial use. Submitted TRICS data indicates that comparable sites typically generate six vehicle movements during the AM peak hour and 32 during the PM peak. The proposal would remove the warehouse and residential uses while adding floorspace to the pub. Following these changes, predicted movements would be zero during the AM peak and 37 during the PM peak—representing a decrease in the morning and a modest increase of five movements in the evening. This limited increase is unlikely to result in severe impacts on the local highway network or cause harm to highway safety, over and above the current situation.
31. Therefore, I am satisfied that the proposal will result in acceptable traffic volumes to and from the site and provide satisfactory on-site parking arrangements. The proposal would accord with Policy 8 of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2034, adopted July 2016 (the JCS) where it requires proposals to protect highway safety and to provide satisfactory parking provision. The proposal would technically breach the standards for parking provision outlined in the Northamptonshire Parking Standards guidance, September 2016. However, it would meet the broad aims of the guidance which is to support the provision of sufficient, usable parking within development without compromising highway safety whilst supporting good design and sustainable travel.

Heritage and Planning Balance

32. Paragraph 212 of the National Planning Policy Framework, (the Framework) advises that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to their conservation. Paragraph 213 goes on to advise that significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting and that this should have clear and convincing justification.
33. With reference to Paragraphs 214 and 215 of the Framework, in finding harm to the significance of designated heritage assets, the magnitude of that harm should be assessed. The extent of the development and works, where I have found harm, would be relatively localised and at the rear, less public elevation, of the building. However, there would be an appreciable loss of interpretation of the former stable element of the building, and to a lesser extent the setting of the church. Therefore, I find the harm to the heritage assets to be 'less than substantial' and at the mid-

⁵ North Northamptonshire Parking Standards, September 2016

point of that spectrum but, nevertheless, of considerable importance and weight. Under such circumstances, Paragraph 215 advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, which includes securing the asset's optimum viable use.

34. Heritage benefits would accrue from the removal of modern lean-to additions at the pub's rear as well as the existing warehouse building. The latter, would result in more wide-ranging enhancements to the setting of the appeal site, the listed church and the CA. Given the intentions of the Act to preserve and enhance listed assets in the national interest, these would in my view equate to appreciable public benefits.
35. There would be some minor economic benefits brought about through the investment into the property and the construction phase, as well as an increase in local spending from future customers. Also, minor social benefits would be gained through improvements and expansion of the pub as a community meeting place within a sustainable town centre location. The off-street parking facilities proposed at the site would provide betterment given the existing situation and potentially relieve parking pressure elsewhere in the town. Accordingly, this attracts moderate weight in the scheme's favour. These public benefits are in line with the objectives of the Framework and cumulatively carry significant weight in favour of the appeal.
36. The appellant considers that the scheme would secure the optimum viable use of the listed building. However, there is limited evidence to indicate that without the scheme the listed building would cease to operate as a public house. Moreover, the pub's expansion could be achieved through a more sympathetic proposal which would preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the building.
37. Overall, the significant weight that I ascribe to the public benefits which would accrue from the proposal is not sufficient to outweigh the considerable importance and weight that I attach to the harm I have found.
38. Therefore, there would be insufficient public benefit to offset the identified harm and the development and works indicated do not accord with the Framework. I therefore conclude that the proposal fails to preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the Grade II listed building, the Kings Arms Public House, the significance of the Grade II* listed building, the Church of St James, through development affecting its setting, and would harm the wider character and appearance of the CA, which I am required to have special regard and pay special attention to by the Act. The proposal would also conflict with Policies 2 and 8 of the JCS and Policy EN12 of the East Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2, adopted December 2023. Together these require, amongst other things, that proposals conserve the significance of heritage assets, respond to local context and compliment the surrounding historic environment through form, scale, design and materials.

Conclusion

39. **Appeal A:** The proposed development would conflict with the development plan. There are no material considerations which indicate that the decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, for the reasons given, I conclude that Appeal A should be dismissed and planning permission refused.

40. **Appeal B:** For the reasons given, I conclude that Appeal B should be dismissed and listed building consent refused.

RE Jones

INSPECTOR