



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 November 2025

by A Knight BA PG Dip MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/W3520/D/25/3372024

Sunnyview, Dandy Corner, Cotton, Stowmarket, Suffolk IP14 4QX

- 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 William Johnson against the decision of Mid Suffolk District Council.
 - The application Ref is DC/24/03870.
 - The development proposed is to replace existing garages with 1 number 3 bay garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) requires the decision maker, in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. I proceed accordingly.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - whether the appeal site (the site) would be a suitable location for the proposed development, having regard to the development plan; and
 - the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area, including the Grade II listed building known as Sunnyview¹.

Reasons

Location

4. The site is a detached dwelling in the countryside, outside of any settlement boundary. In such locations Policy SP03 of the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan (2023) (the Local Plan) resists development unless it is in accordance with one of a list of exception policies. These address a range of development types, including residential annexes, extensions to dwellings, and the conversion of existing outbuildings, but none of them evidently support detached residential garages, as proposed in the appeal, whether they are new or replacement buildings.

¹ List Entry Number: 1180395

5. In its delegated report, having found that the appeal proposal does not fall within the scope of any of the exception policies, the Council nevertheless then proceeds to assess it against Policy LP03 (residential extensions and conversions). Specifically, it considers whether the proposed garage would replace existing outbuildings, and the separation between it and the Sunnyview dwelling. Given the wording of the operative policies, the purpose of this exercise is not clear to me. However, I proceed on the basis that these factors may be capable of supporting the proposal, as the Council's approach suggests as much.
6. The appellant has drawn my attention to outbuildings that used to exist on the site, including an old garage in much the same place as he proposes to erect the new one. Whilst I appreciate that the appellant felt compelled to remove the old outbuildings due to concerns over safety and access, they have nevertheless been removed. This occurred some seven years ago.
7. In addition, whilst I note that planning permission was granted for an outbuilding at the site some 26 years ago², I have no other details of that permission and no clear reason to think that the old garage, or any of the old outbuildings, were ever approved. What is more, even the largest of the old outbuildings was much shorter and less visually prominent than the proposed garage. Overall, even if Policy LP03 can support replacement outbuildings I see little reason to find that, in this instance, the appeal proposal benefits from that support.
8. Whilst it is generally pertinent to cases in the Green Belt, there are circumstances in which a detached outbuilding can be viewed as an extension to a dwelling if it is a normal domestic adjunct³. The proposed garage would be large and stationed a considerable distance from the dwelling Sunnyview. I have been provided with little reason to think it could be deemed an extension to the dwelling and see none for myself. As such, even if Policy LP03 is taken to support outbuildings which may be considered extensions to an existing dwelling, I see little reason to find that the appeal proposal benefits from that support.
9. The supporting text to Policy SP03 explains its purpose; to guide development to sustainable locations, and to limit development in the countryside. The proposed development does not benefit from one of the exceptions to this approach, and as such would undermine the spatial strategy and plan-led approach to the location of development. The appeal site would not be a suitable location for the proposed development, having regard to the development plan.

Character and appearance; Heritage

10. Though sparsely developed, the easternmost corner of Brook House Road nevertheless includes an architecturally diverse range of buildings. Insofar as outbuildings are concerned, amongst the most prominent are a somewhat utilitarian one near the roadside entrance to Stackyard House, which is made of brick with a corrugated sheet roof; a more modest structure at Poplar Farm near the roadside, which has a red tiled roof and black timber boarded walls; and a large garage building to the front of Kirby Cottage, immediately south of the appeal site, which is made with a slate roof, timber board walls, brick skirt, and an exposed timber frame. The first two have dual-pitched roofs over gable ends, the latter has a part hipped roof presented to the road. It also has roller shutters.

² Application Ref 0589/99

³ Sevenoaks DC v SSE & Dawe (QBD 13.11.97 CO1322-97)

11. The dwelling Sunnyview is a former farmhouse dating back to the 17th Century. It has seen a range of alterations over time; Indeed, its episodic regeneration is visible to such an extent that it, along with the remaining indications of its original form and features, comprise the significance of Sunnyview for the purposes of the appeal. This significance is readily visible from the roadside, as the appeal site has a relatively open frontage. In this way, the listed building enjoys visual primacy over the appeal site, and in turn makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. As the garage would be in the front garden of the dwelling and the absence of intervening features, it would be in the setting of the listed building.
12. Given the presence of other roadside outbuildings nearby, particularly at Kirby Cottage, the erection of one at the appeal site would not be unusual or out of place in the local area. The proposed garage would have a steeper roof pitch than the other local outbuildings I have mentioned, but not as steep as the dwellings at Sunnyview or Poplar Farm. In light of this, and of the general architectural variation in the area, both the proposed shape of the garage, including its roof pitch, and the proposed external materials, including the roller shutter doors, would not appear out of place locally.
13. That said, the garage would be substantial in size at some 7m wide and 11.6m deep with a ridge around 5.5m from the ground. Both the gable end facing the road and the long elevations visible from it at an angle would be highly prominent, particularly given its location relative to the road and the open nature of the site frontage. The garage would visually dominate the appeal site frontage and compete for attention with the dwelling Sunnyview. It would thereby undermine the listed buildings primacy and the way in which, at present, the story of its alterations over time takes centre stage at the site. As a result, it would also undermine the contribution the site makes to the local area.
14. The proposed garage would harm the setting of the Grade II listed building known as Sunnyview and, as a result, the character and appearance of the area. The development conflicts with Section 66(1) of the Act, and with Policies SP09, LP19, and LP24 of the Local Plan where they require development to support and contribute to the historic environment and be compatible/harmonious with its location in terms of scale and mass.
15. Overall, and in the terms of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) the appeal scheme would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset.

Other Matters

16. The Council contends that the plans are inconsistent, though it has nevertheless opted to validate and decide the application. In the absence of a scale bar on the pertinent plans, I cannot form a firm view as to the extent of any inconsistency. In this instance, and should the appeal be allowed, I find that whether the plans are capable of implementation is a matter for the main parties to address.
17. I recognise that the appellant is dissatisfied with what they describe as advice from the Council on where a garage building may be better placed. I have assessed the merits of the proposal as put forward.

Heritage and Planning Balance

18. Paragraph 212 of the Framework states that when considering the impact of the 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 the alteration or destruction of those assets or from development within their setting and that this should have a clear and convincing justification. I have found the harm in this instance to be less than substantial. Under such circumstances paragraph 215 of the Framework advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
19. Whilst the appellant has described their own need for the proposed garage, the public benefits associated with it would be minimal, related largely to very low level economic activity. I find the benefits of the proposal would not outweigh the great weight that should be given to the asset's conservation. The proposed development thus conflicts with the historic environment conservation and enhancement policies contained within the Framework and fails to satisfy the requirements of the Act.

Conclusion

20. The proposal conflicts with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. The appeal is dismissed.

A Knight

INSPECTOR