



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 September 2025

by Jennifer Wallace BA(Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 December 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/D3505/D/25/3367290

7 Lime Tree Close, Hessett, Suffolk IP30 9AY

- 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 and Mrs A Martin against the decision of Mid Suffolk District Council.
 - The application Ref is DC/25/00238.
 - The development proposed is erection of detached cartlodge.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - whether the proposal would preserve the settings of nearby listed buildings; and
 - the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. Hessett is a linear settlement. The built form, particularly of older properties, tends to be in proximity to the highway. Community buildings are typically set in more spacious plots, set further back from the highway. More modern development tends to be set slightly further back from the highway. Lime Tree Close is a modern development, with a separate access road running parallel with The Street and clearly visible due to the open space to the front of the close. There is a considerable planting along The Street and the settlement has a verdant, rural character.

Special Interest and Significance

4. The Council's reason for refusal focuses on the effect of the proposal on the setting of the Church of St Ethelbert¹ (the Church) and Five Bells Cottage². As required by section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act), I have had special regard to the desirability of preserving the buildings or their settings or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.
5. The Church is a Grade I listed building dating from mainly the 15th century, with some areas dating from the mid-14th century. It is constructed from flint rubble with

¹ List Entry Number: 1352400 Date first listed: 15 November 1954

² List Entry Number: 1182325 Date first listed: 15 November 1954

a tower and the listing description notes initials on the frieze which may be those of an occupier of Five Bells Cottage. It is well set back from the road within a considerable graveyard. The managed hedge planting to the front allows views of the Church across the graveyard. The scale of the land around the Church emphasises its importance to the village. There are only limited views of it within the settlement, mainly due to the extent of landscaping. However, the Church is readily visible and prominent in the view across the open space to the front of, and along Lime Tree Close. At the time of my site visit, the trees were in full leaf, which obscured views of the Church. However, when the trees are not in leaf, it would still be a prominent feature, commensurate with its importance in the community.

6. From the evidence before me, the Church's special interest and significance are mainly derived from its historic and architectural interest. Its traditional construction, materials and ongoing ecclesiastical use are important contributors to this. Pertinent to the appeal, its special interest and significance are also positively enhanced by its setting. Its immediate surrounds consist of the graveyard, along with its wider setting, which includes the appeal site, allow the building to be experienced and its significance appreciated, such as in views along Lime Tree Close.
7. Five Bells Cottage is a Grade II listed building dating from the early 16th century. It is timber framed and plastered, with a tiled roof and a variety of roof forms. Its special interest and significance lie primarily in its architectural and historic interest as a vernacular dwelling with a historic connection to the church. Relevant to the appeal, the building's special interest and significance also stem, in part, from its setting. Its domestic garden, along with its wider setting, which includes the appeal site, permit the building to be experienced and its significance appreciated, particularly its proximity to the Church, better revealing their historic connection.

Proposal and Effects

8. The proposal is for a cartlodge which would be sited to the front of 7 Lime Tree Close, adjacent to the boundary of the site with Five Bells Cottage. The site boundary is formed of substantial conifer hedging. It would be a single storey structure, of modest dimensions with a flat roof, and would be finished in vertical cladding. The plans indicate this would be colour treated to match the dwelling, the cladding on which was a pale colour at the time of my site visit.
9. No.7 occupies a prominent position in the street scene, forward of the other dwellings along Lime Tree Close. The proposed cartlodge would be sited forward of this. Despite its modest proportions, it would intrude into the longer view available of both listed buildings along Lime Tree Close. This harm would be exacerbated by the proposed use of light coloured cladding, which would increase the visual prominence of the proposed cartlodge. This intrusion into the view along Lime Tree Close would disrupt the authenticity of how the assets are experienced and diminish the ability to appreciate the importance of the Church and its relationship with Five Bells Cottage. Any changes to the extent of landscaping would be likely to further enhance the ability to appreciate the relationship between the listed buildings and so further emphasise the intrusion of the proposal.
10. I therefore find that the proposal would not preserve the settings of the nearby listed buildings. It would therefore harm the significance of both designated heritage assets, one of which is an asset of the highest significance.

Public Benefits

11. Paragraph 212 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) sets out that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation, irrespective of whether this would amount to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to significance. It also states that the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Paragraph 213 further advises that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification, including from development within its setting.
12. Given the scale of the proposal, this harm in relation to both assets would be less than substantial and at the very low end of the scale. Nevertheless, this harm carries considerable importance and weight. In such circumstances, paragraph 215 of the Framework confirms that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, which includes securing the optimum viable use.
13. There would be economic benefits during the construction stage of the proposal, however these would be of very limited weight given its small scale. The appellant has put forward that there are limited opportunities for storage in the existing property. However provision of additional storage space would be a purely private benefit to the appellant. It is to be expected that cars will park in proximity to residential properties where the layout allow. It is within the control of people to park their vehicles in an orderly fashion.
14. There is no substantive evidence before me that the proposal is required to secure the optimum viable use of the dwelling. Nor is there a clear and convincing justification for the proposal where I have found harm. Overall, in giving considerable importance and weight to the identified harm to the significance of the designated heritage assets, I find that this would not be outweighed by the public benefits arising from the proposal.
15. The proposal would not preserve the settings of the nearby listed buildings. This would be contrary to the requirements of section 66(1) of the Act, and the provisions within the Framework which seek to conserve and enhance the historic environment. It would also be in conflict with Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan 2023 (LP) Policies SP09(1) and LP19 which require development to support and contribute to the historic environment and respect the built form of heritage assets through the use of appropriate design.

Character and Appearance

16. Lime Tree Close is somewhat atypical of development within Hesselton with its open frontages and the expanse of open space to the front of the properties. No7 sits forward of the other properties in the close. Consequently, there is not a uniformity to the layout of Lime Tree Close.
17. The proposed cartlodge would be of a scale and design typical of that found in domestic properties and its mass would not be unduly large. It would be positioned forward of the dwelling and proposed to be finished in a colour that would make it more prominent than a more muted colour would appear. Furthermore, there is little development in Hesselton where outbuildings sit forward of the main dwelling.
18. However, the proposed cartlodge would nonetheless be typical of a domestic outbuilding. Its effect on the street scene would be mitigated by it being set back

from the main road through the village by the landscaped open space, and from the cul-de-sac layout making Lime Tree Close clearly separate to the otherwise broadly linear nature of the settlement. Consequently, the proposed cartlodge would not be overly prominent in the street and would not be unduly incongruent.

19. The proposal would have an acceptable effect on the character and appearance of the area. It would be in accordance with LP Policy LP24 which requires development to be compatible with the surrounding area.
20. Although the Council has referred to LP Policy SP09(01) in its reason for refusal, this relates to the natural and historic environment. It is not of direct relevance to this reason for refusal.

Other Matters

21. Planning permission has been granted³ for development at 7 Lime Tree Close which included a garage set behind the property. This would not have the adverse effect on the settings of the listed buildings I have identified above. It would be a choice of the appellant to use this for domestic storage rather than for their vehicle. It therefore would not be a reason for me to reach a different conclusion on the development proposed.
22. Potential changes to the boundary treatments in the area would not alter my assessment of the proposal.
23. The submitted evidence and representations reference the presence of Five Bells Inn (the Inn) which is also Grade II listed and sits approximately opposite the Church and Five Bells Cottage. From the evidence before me and my observations at my site visit, the special interest and significance of the Inn largely stem from its historic and architectural interest as an example of a vernacular commercial building evidencing the historic role of Hessest; but also from its rural village setting. Given the off-set position and extent of the proposed development in relation to the Inn, I consider the proposal would have a neutral effect on, and so would preserve, its setting and not harm its significance.

Conclusion

24. The appeal proposal would conflict with the development plan when read as a whole and the requirements of the Act. There are no material considerations of sufficient weight to indicate the decision should be taken otherwise. For the reasons given, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Jennifer Wallace

INSPECTOR

³ DC/21/04402