

12.10.2023

Ms Sarah Scott
Planning Officer
Babergh/Mid Suffolk District Councils
Endeavour House
Ipswich IP1 2BX

Dear Ms Scott

DC/23/04274 Full Planning Application - Erection of 2no. dwellings (Resubmission following refusal of planning application DC/22/02949) Land South of Bell House, The Row, Hartest, Sudbury

I am writing on behalf of the Suffolk Preservation Society (the SPS) to object to the application for planning permission for 2 dwellings outside the built-up boundary of Hartest.

We note that the previous 2022 application for 3 dwellings was refused on a number of grounds including the design and layout of the scheme; highway safety; and harmful landscape and heritage impact. The current application has attempted to address the design issues by replacing the 3no. detached single storey dwellings with a single 'u' shaped barn like structure containing two dwellings, removing the backland development element of the scheme. SPS considers that this design approach is an improvement and we understand that this is an attempt to emulate an agricultural building more appropriate to this edge of village site.

However, the heritage and landscape issues remain. We continue to have serious concerns regarding the impact of developing this site on the landscape, the adjacent Hartest Conservation Area and nearby listed buildings and urge that this application is refused.

Impact on setting of designated heritage assets

The site adjoins the south west edge of Hartest Conservation Area. This is characterised by an important assemblage of fine period buildings from the post medieval and later periods within unspoilt landscapes, and is arguably one of the district's finest conservation areas. The site is open countryside, elevated from the highway on a fairly tight bend, prominent on entering the village and provides an important part of the setting of the conservation area. The site falls outside of the village and forms part of the gateway to Hartest.

Furthermore, the site forms part of the wider setting of a group of grade II listed buildings to the NE of the site: Thatched Cottage, Whitecroft, Windfall Cottage and Buttercup Cottage, and The Old

Stores, as well as Bell House, a former Inn which was originally isolated from the historic village but now marks the built-up edge of Hartest and is considered a non-designated heritage asset. This concentration of vernacular buildings derives its significance, in part, from its rural context, which would be seriously undermined by the development of this site.

Impact on landscape quality

SPS considers that the proposed development would erode the agrarian setting of this unspoilt, deeply rural village. This would be exacerbated by the topography of the site which is described in the LVIA as sloping down to the East where it is edged by a hedgerow bordering the sunken lane. The elevated nature of the site will result in a prominent development on the approach to the village.

Moreover, the proposed deep verge, with a highly engineered access road cut into it, is uncharacteristic of the area and will appear as alien features on this important approach to the village. This will detract from the character and appearance of the area which is currently of a country lane with informal hedging and wild verges. The proposals are therefore considered to be contrary to national and local policy, together with the emerging Hartest Neighbourhood Plan.

For all of the above sound planning reasons the application should be resisted. We trust that you will find these comments helpful in the assessment of this case and request that we are consulted on any amendments to the application.

Yours sincerely,

**Bethany Philbedge BSc (Hons) MSc (Town Planning) MRTPI
Planning Officer**

CC: Hartest Parish Council