
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 September 2025

by **J D Clark BA (Hons) DpTRP MCD DMS MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26 September 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/R0660/W/25/3366918

Wrenbury House, Nantwich Road, Wrenbury CW5 8EW

- 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 Paul and Gillian Sweeney against the decision of Cheshire East Council.
 - The application Ref is 23/3979N.
 - The development proposed is erection of one three bed house.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. There are two reasons for refusal on the decision notice. The second relates to insufficient information regarding a Yew tree which is protected by virtue of the site being within a Conservation Area. The position of the tree has now been clarified and the Council agree that any concerns about it can be overcome by suitably worded conditions. I agree with this and therefore my main issue is based on the first reason for refusal only.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Wrenbury Conservation Area.

Reasons

Conservation Area

4. The appeal site is within the Wrenbury Conservation Area but little information has been submitted to explain the historical development of the area. Therefore, my assessment is made on the basis of my observations and the comments made in the appeal documents. The Conservation Area includes properties of varying styles and ages and although no particular characteristic prevails, the scale, materials and form of the village reflect its rural heritage. Principal features include the village green and the parish church, St Margaret's. Access to the appeal site is from Nantwich Road, opposite the green and to the east of the church. These features, the traditional village setting and the designation of the Conservation Area and the appeal site's position within it, help define the significance of this heritage asset.
5. The access to Wrenbury House and the appeal site is shared with a number of other residential properties. These are quite closely spaced both in terms of their positions to the access road and to each other. Wrenbury House is a much larger

property set apart from the buildings around it and separated from them by open land, including the appeal site. The open fields beyond Wrenbury House to the north, extend outside the Conservation Area and contribute towards the rural setting of the village.

6. The agrarian heritage of the area is apparent from the scale of the nearby properties which appear to include converted agricultural buildings and various domestic properties that generally are smaller than Wrenbury House. The appeal site comprises a substantial L shaped area of land, part of which is close to the boundaries with the other buildings sharing this access but also running northwards close to Wrenbury House itself. A modest area of lawn to the south of Wrenbury House would remain outside the area proposed for development.
7. The appeal site includes an orchard and lawned area. It is a substantial area of land but in the context of Wrenbury House, this together with the land around it is not disproportionately large. However, the appeal proposal would leave the house with only a small area of domestic land around it including part of the lawn at the front.
8. The resulting segregation of the appeal site from Wrenbury House would erode the space and thereby the setting of Wrenbury House. Creating a separate domestic curtilage, a substantial driveway and the proposed two-storey house would diminish the setting. Given the scale of Wrenbury House and its location in relation to the buildings and space around it together with the proximity of the green and the church, the effects of the proposal would have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of this part of the Conservation Area.
9. Wrenbury House carries no specific designation and no particular architectural or historical importance has been attributed to it. Its setting is not especially protected by legislation. However, it is a substantial building within the Conservation Area which contributes to the significance of the heritage asset.
10. In reaching my decision, I have had regard to Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) which requires that special attention be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area. This is reflected in Local Plan Strategy¹ Policy SE 7, SADPD² Policy HER 3, Neighbourhood Plan³ Policy HER1 and the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).
11. For the reasons stated, the proposal would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Wrenbury Conservation Area. This would conflict with the policies referred to above and the related aims of the Framework.

Heritage Balance

12. Paragraph 212 of the Framework advises that when considering the impact of development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to their conservation. Paragraph 213 goes on to advise that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification. Given the scale of the development, I find the

¹ Cheshire East Council – Cheshire East Local Plan – Local Plan Strategy 2010 – 2030 July 2017.

² Cheshire East Council – Cheshire East Local Plan – Site Allocations and Development Policies Document, Adopted December 2022.

³ Wrenbury Cum Frith (known as Wrenbury Parish) Neighbourhood Plan 2010 to 2030.

harm to be less than substantial in this instance but nevertheless of considerable importance and weight.

13. In such circumstances, paragraph 215 of the Framework requires such harm to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The Council acknowledge that it cannot demonstrate a five year supply of housing land as required by the Framework. The proposal would result in a new dwelling which would contribute to addressing this shortfall and whilst the proposal is for just one dwelling, it would still make a contribution.
14. There would be economic benefits during the construction phase of the development. I appreciate that small developments have an important role to play in meeting housing targets and the contribution they can make to local economies. I am also mindful of the ongoing economic and social contribution that future occupiers would make to the area. The appellants also point out that as well as providing a home for them and the corresponding social and community contributions they would continue to make during their lifetime, future occupiers would also continue to contribute in the longer term.
15. I consider that the benefits of providing a new home carries significant weight insofar as a single dwelling would be capable of. However, the benefits arising from one dwelling would be limited by the scale of such a development and for the reasons highlighted above, this would not outweigh the great weight afforded to preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area. I consider that this harm is not simply notional as indicated by the appellants but would be demonstrably tangible in terms of the physical impact of a dwelling where there is currently none.

Other Matters and Planning Balance

16. As stated above, the Council has confirmed that it does not have a five year supply of housing land as required by the Framework. It states it can demonstrate a 3.8 year supply. This is a significant shortfall. Therefore, in accordance with the Framework, paragraph 11 d) is engaged. However, given the harm I have found in relation to a designated heritage asset, in accordance with footnote 7 and paragraph 11d)(i), there is a strong reason for refusing the development proposed. The lack of a Conservation Area appraisal does not lessen the statutory protection the Conservation Area's designation carries as suggested by the appellants. The proposal conflicts with the development plan policies referred to above together with the Framework taken as a whole. Therefore, this matter does not outweigh the harm I have identified.

Conclusion

17. 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. For the reasons stated, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

J D Clark

INSPECTOR