



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 10 September 2025

by **R E Jones BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 October 2025

Appeal A Ref: APP/J1535/W/25/3365061

North Wilmore Barn, Workers Road, High Laver, Ongar CM5 0DZ

- 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 Oliver English c/o Rivington Street Studio Architects against the decision of Epping Forest District Council.
 - The application Ref is EPF/2567/24.
 - The development proposed is described as: permission for already constructed lobby which has been built with an eaves level higher than that of the originally consented scheme.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/J1535/Y/25/3365067

North Wilmore Barn, Workers Road, High Laver, Ongar CM5 0DZ

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Oliver English c/o Rivington Street Studio Architects against the decision of Epping Forest District Council.
 - The application Ref is EPF/2568/24.
 - The works proposed are described as: permission for already constructed lobby which has been built with an eaves level higher than that of the originally consented scheme.
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Decision

1. Appeal A: The appeal is dismissed.
2. Appeal B: The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

3. As the proposal relates to a listed building, I have had special regard to sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) (the Act).
4. Planning permission and listed building consent¹ were granted for a lobby extension in broadly the same location as the appeal scheme in 2020. The proposal seek to amend the design of that consented scheme.
5. During my site inspection it was noted that development and works relating to the appeal are substantially complete. These largely accord with the submitted drawings, upon which I have based my assessment.

Main Issue

6. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the special interest and significance of a Grade II listed building, Great Wilmores Farmhouse.

¹ EPF/1931/19 and EPF2059/19LB, granted 18 May 2020

Reasons

7. Great Wilmores Farmhouse is a two-storey detached dwelling dating from the 16th century. Despite some later alterations to its appearance, that include brick and render cladding, the building largely retains the form and structure of a typical 16th century farmhouse, within a rural setting.
8. To its east are a series of large former agricultural barns, now in residential use. North Wilmore Barn is within this group and comprises an L shaped layout, incorporating adjoining single and double height bays. The former barns that make up the appeal building, along with the adjacent barns at South Wilmore Barn have a coherent appearance, while incorporating a courtyard layout. Despite changes in uses and its surroundings, to this day, the listed farmhouse and the former barns retain an authentic agricultural character.
9. For the purposes of the Act, a listed building includes any structure fixed to the building and any free-standing structure erected before 1 July 1948 within the curtilage of the listed building. This applies irrespective of whether or not it has been explicitly identified in the list description. The appeal barn had a principal and accessory relationship to the main farmhouse at the time of the listing. As a result, North Wilmore Barn has to be treated as part of the listed building. There is no dispute between the main parties on this matter.
10. From the evidence before me and my inspection of the site, the listed building's special interest and significance, insofar as relevant to these appeals, is derived from its agricultural heritage, the traditional layout and architecture of the farmhouse and former barns, and their historic fabric.
11. The previously approved scheme comprised a lobby extension positioned between the brick barn and the taller timber boarded barn. The proposed extension incorporates a higher eaves line and a shallower roof pitch resulting in an extension with a more 'boxlike' profile. This effect is magnified by the greater distance between the top of the glazed entrance and the eaves of the lobby, while also giving the cladding a thicker appearance. The altered eaves line of the extension is also marginally higher than the corresponding level of the adjoining brick barn.
12. The changes to the approved design result in an extension that is inconsistent with the shape and angle of the brick and timber barn roofs, while the position of the eaves line relative to that of the brick barn, which it adjoins, creates an awkward integration between the two buildings, as well as the taller timber boarded barn. As a consequence, the lobby extension's overtly modern form has a jarring appearance that unsettles the traditional design and composition of the former barns.
13. The appellant considers that the proposed changes to the design of the lobby involve a relatively minor change to the height of the eaves and the roof pitch, which would preserve the appearance of the listed building. Even though the change is considered minor, the modifications to both the eaves line and roof pitch fundamentally alter the shape of the lobby and its alignment with the existing barns, such that they would result in an incompatible alliance.
14. It is acknowledged that the lobby extension is subordinate in scale to the larger brick and timber boarded barns, while being set in from their outer walls.

Nonetheless, this does not overcome its discordant profile and integration with the existing barns. I also accept that views of the lobby extension and the listed farmhouse together would be limited, particularly if the further consented additions granted in 2020 are built, whereas views of the lobby from neighbouring properties and the adjacent highway are partially screened and largely glimpsed. The works nevertheless relate to part of the listed building and listed buildings are safeguarded by the Act irrespective of whether or not public views of the building can be gained.

15. The proposed changes to the lobby design have been necessary, according to the appellant, in response to Building Control requirements for further structural works above the door. Timber rafters were also made deeper to provide a more discreet recessed gutter. The changes were also made to respond to varying levels within the property. Whilst that might be the case, there are no details from the relevant Building Control authority confirming that the consented design cannot be built. Accordingly, given the lack of justification for the changes, I am not convinced that there is not an alternative design to the lobby that would better integrate with the existing barns and be more in keeping with their appearance.
16. For these reasons, the proposal would fail to preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the grade II listed, Great Wilmores Farmhouse. This would be contrary to the requirements of sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Act.
17. 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.
18. 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 largely obscured from public vantage points by existing boundary enclosures and built form. Therefore, I find the harm to the heritage assets to be 'less than substantial' and at the lower end of that spectrum in this instance 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.
19. The proposal has resulted in investment into the property, which would have a small economic benefit, which carries limited weight in favour of the proposal as a public benefit.
20. There is no convincing evidence to suggest that the use of the building as a dwelling would cease in the absence of the proposed change to the lobby's design, and it is not necessary to secure the optimum viability and long-term conservation of the building as a result.
21. Overall, the limited 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.

22. 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 interest and significance of the grade II listed building, Great Wilmores Farmhouse which I am required to have special regard to by the Act. The proposal would also conflict with Policy DM7 of the Epping Forest District Local Plan 2011-2033 (adopted March 2023), which requires, amongst other things, that proposals preserve or enhance heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.

Conclusion

23. **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.
24. **Appeal B:** For the reasons given, I conclude that Appeal B should be dismissed.

RE Jones

INSPECTOR