



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 October 2025

by **C Walker BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16 October 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/C1570/W/25/3369782

Warren Farm, Stortford Road, Little Canfield, Essex CM6 1SR

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Robert Beard against the decision of Uttlesford District Council.
 - The application Ref is UTT/24/2592/OP.
 - The development proposed is described as 'erection of one and a half storey dwelling'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The appeal scheme relates to an outline proposal, with all matters, other than the means of access, reserved for future consideration. I have dealt with the appeal on that basis.
3. Drawing no. Warren-Plan-001 Rev A submitted as part of the application includes a layout of how residential development could be accommodated on the site. Whilst not marked as such, I have taken this as being illustrative and I have taken it into account for those purposes only.
4. The appeal site lies adjacent to a listed building. Accordingly, I have had special regard to section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act).

Main Issues

5. The main issues are whether the proposal:
 - is an appropriate development for its countryside location, with particular regard to the character and appearance of the area; and
 - would preserve a Grade II listed building 'Warren Farmhouse' (List Ref: 1097450) (the LB), and any of the features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses.

Reasons

Appropriate development/character and appearance

6. The appeal site lies outside of any defined settlement boundary, in the countryside and within a defined Countryside Protection Zone (CPZ). Policy S7 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (2005) (ULP) states that the countryside will be protected for its own

sake. It goes on to state that planning permission will only be given for development that needs to take place there, or is appropriate to a rural area, which is also a requirement of ULP Policy S8. No substantive evidence is before me to demonstrate that this dwelling needs to be in a countryside location.

7. Thornton Road, which lies adjacent to the appeal site, provides a clear visual boundary between the more built-up part of Little Canfield and the countryside beyond. To the east of this road, development is sporadic and dispersed within the rural landscape.
8. A new dwelling on the appeal site, would infill a protected open gap between the edge of the built form and the existing dwelling at Warren Farm. Its presence would erode the open characteristic of the area and diminish the important visual gap that the site offers in signifying the transition between the settlement and countryside. This would be in direct conflict with ULP Policy S8. The development would also be contrary to paragraph 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) as it would cause harm to the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.
9. For the reasons set out above, I find that the proposal is not an appropriate development for its countryside location, with particular regard to the character and appearance of the area. The scheme conflicts with policies SP7 and SP8 of the ULP.

Listed building

10. Warren Farmhouse is described as a one storey dwelling with attic accommodation, dating from the mid-17th century. It is timber framed and plastered with a steeply pitched thatched roof, red brick chimney stacks and some externally exposed frame. Notwithstanding some later additions, including modern casement windows, its simple linear form and modest scale remains. Evidence indicates the listed building was previously two cottages, set in a small garden plot within a field and was historically one of only a few rural dwellings and agricultural buildings located along this part of Stortford Road. The 1920 OS map shows the building as a single dwelling, and buildings had been erected to the east on the land between it and the Lion and Lamb Public House.
11. The appeal site, which lies adjacent to the farmhouse and intervenes it and the junction with Thornton Road, comprises part of its open and verdant setting. The significance of the LB derives from its age and architectural interest as a fine rural vernacular building of traditional construction and materials.
12. The LB is set amongst an open, verdant and undeveloped landscape context. The spacing around it enables the building, which fronts Stortford Road, to take prominence in this part of the street scene, allowing for it to be appreciated in an agrarian landscape character. This setting of the LB makes an important contribution to its significance.
13. Whilst scale is a reserved matter, the description of development is clear that the proposal is for a one and a half storey dwelling. Introducing a modern building of the scale described, within such close proximity of the LB, would alter the way in which it would be experienced. It would compete with the LB and its presence would erode the sense of spaciousness that is important to its setting. Furthermore, the development of the appeal site would further diminish the physical and visual

separation between the modern housing development off Thornton Road and the LB, introducing a harmful urbanising effect that would erode the primacy of the LB.

14. The appellant has asserted that the proposal would not harm the listed building because it is partly screened and only a small property is sought. The screening to the LB and the appeal site is seasonal and is likely to vary at different times of the year and is subject to its maintenance regime. Moreover, listed buildings are safeguarded for their inherent architectural and historic interest, irrespective of whether or not public views of the building can be gained.
15. Given the above, I find that the proposal would harm the setting and thereby fail to preserve the special interest of the listed building. Consequently, I give this harm considerable importance and weight in the planning balance of these appeals.
16. 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 the asset's 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 a clear and convincing justification. Given the scale and nature of the proposal, I find the harm to be at the lower end of less than substantial in this instance but nevertheless of considerable importance and weight. Under such circumstances, paragraph 215 of the Framework advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
17. The development would deliver a contribution to housing stock generally for the district, which is a public benefit along with the social and economic benefits that come alongside that. However, as a scheme for just one dwelling, the benefits would be limited. These are not sufficient to outweigh the harm I have identified.
18. Given the above and in the absence of any significant public benefit, I conclude that the proposal would fail to preserve the special historic interest setting of the Grade II listed building. This would fail to satisfy the requirements of the Act, paragraph 210 of the Framework and conflict with Policy ENV2 of the ULP that seeks, among other things, to ensure that the setting of listed buildings, are not impaired. As a result, the proposal would not be in accordance with the development plan.

Other Matters

19. The appellant refers to another listed building opposite the appeal site in their evidence. Neither party has suggested that the development would be within the setting of that listed building and I see no reason to take a different view.
20. Whilst it is asserted that the listed building opposite has developed in their garden a similar dwelling to the one sought here, limited details have been provided. Each case must be considered on its merits, and this does not lead me to find differently on this appeal.
21. I have carefully considered the appellants personal need for the planning permission. However, I have been provided with limited evidence to demonstrate how the development would improve accessibility, is specific to their needs, or could not be met by a less harmful scheme. Therefore, having regard to this matter, I attach limited weight in favour of the appeal scheme to the personal circumstances of the appellant.

22. The appellant points to development planned behind Warren Farm, comprising of schools and houses. A map (Appendix 3A – Takeley Indicative Framework) has been provided. The status of this hand annotated map is not clear and the key is not legible given it is provided in black and white. In any event, I have no evidence before me on the progress of the plan, whether there are any unresolved objections and I cannot be certain that the plan and policies will not change. As such I give this limited weight. Likewise, the newspaper article provided, reports a possible future land sale option. However, even if accurate, it does not follow that this will translate to a gain of planning permission, such that I attribute it very limited weight.
23. While new residential development has taken place to the west of Warren Farm, unlike the appeal site this development was located within the settlement boundary and not within the immediate setting of the LB, such that it does not set a precedent. Other development within the CPZ has been mentioned but very limited specific details have been provided to allow direct comparisons. The call for development sites in 2015 as part of the Strategic Land Availability Assessment resulted in the site not being allocated for residential development of any scale.
24. Although the appellant is critical of Essex County Council's subdivision of land associated with Warren Farm, it is not for me to comment on the historical handling of land sales, which is outside of the scope of the planning regime.
25. The Council is currently unable to demonstrate a deliverable five year supply of housing sites, with only 3.46 years being demonstrable. In these circumstance paragraph 11(d)(i) of the Framework is clear that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the application of policies in the Framework that protect assets of particular importance, including heritage assets, provides a clear reason for refusing development.

Conclusion

26. I have found the proposal would not be an appropriate for its countryside location having regard to the character and appearance of the area and that it would demonstrably harm a heritage asset. I conclude that the development fails to satisfy the requirements of the Act, the Framework, and is not in accordance with the development plan, when read as a whole. There are no material considerations that indicate a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan.
27. For the reasons given above, and having considered all matters raised, the appeal should be dismissed.

C Walker

INSPECTOR