



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 July 2026

by N Bowden BA(Hons) Dip TP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 July 2026

Appeal Ref: 6007832

Land Adjacent to 1 Caldecote Road, Newnham, Baldock SG7 5JZ

- 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 Alex Farr against the decision of North Herts Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/02627/FP.
 - The development proposed is one dwelling and associated external works.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposed dwelling would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Newnham Conservation Area (NCA).

Reasons

3. The appeal site comprises a narrow strip of land set to the south of 1 Caldecote Road and tapering slightly towards The Green. The proposal seeks to construct a part single, part two storey detached house together with driveway access onto Caldecote Road. The house would be laid out with its principal elevation addressing number 1 with the garden set adjacent to 12 The Green, facing south.
4. The appeal site is set within the NCA which is a designated heritage asset where s72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets out that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. Paragraph 212 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) explains that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.
5. The NCA is characterised by a variety of buildings with strong references to the village's agricultural heritage. Buildings are formed along a gentle curve following the line of Caldecote Road and Ashwell Road with The Green forming the broad centre point of the village. Buildings around The Green are typically smaller and more closely clustered together. This is most notable in the form of the rows of terraces that address The Green and this includes the relatively recent additions of number 9-12 The Green.
6. Moving away from The Green along both Caldecote and Ashwell Roads, buildings typically become larger and more separated as they lead to Newnham Manor and Newnham Hall at opposite ends of the village. This generally spacious and verdant

layout and arrangement, together with the individual interest of many of its component buildings, is what gives the NCA its significance. Indeed, many of the historic features of the NCA remain intact and this contributes to its rural character and appearance.

7. This proposal would insert a dwelling into a notable gap that exists between 9-12 The Green and 1 Caldecote Road. Historic records indicate that this site was once built upon, at least in part. However, by the 1960s, the former post office shown on OS mapping was gone – most likely due to fire.
8. A recent planning application was made in 2022. This was refused permission and subsequently dismissed in 2023¹ for a single detached dwelling. This scheme was considered by the Council to, in summary, consolidate development on the east side of Caldecote Road and erode the settlement's loose-knit, verdant character to the detriment of the NCA. This view was supported by the Inspector who commented that the spacious side plot makes a positive contribution to the verdant character of the road. Additional concerns were raised by both the Council and Inspector regarding the design ethos of the dwelling that was proposed at that time.
9. By comparison, this proposal has much improved the design detail, scale and appearance of the proposed dwelling. This is not assisted, however, by the orientation of the dwelling that appears to shun both The Green to the south and Caldecote Road to the west by addressing the driveway to the north. This results in a somewhat insular form of development which does not reflect the general arrangement of buildings in the area. Despite their varying arrangements and relationships with the road, most dwellings in the village show some form of regard to the roads that serve them and this includes the gable features to 1 and 2 Caldecote Road.
10. Even so, both the Council's previous decision and the views of the Inspector were concerned about a dwelling in this location. As noted above, this was due to the spacious nature of this parcel of land making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the NCA. Therefore, even though the design of the dwelling proposed here, and despite its arrangement facing north, is an improvement on the one previously explored; there was concern about the principle of locating a dwelling in this location. This is due to the removal of the open and sylvan setting in this part of the NCA.
11. Accordingly, I am unable to reach a differing conclusion here. This part of the village does not have the much greater and more spacious arrangements that exist to the more easterly and northern parts, nor is it within one of the important views highlighted in the NCA appraisal. It does, however, remain part of the evolution from the tightly knit parts at The Green to the even more spacious layouts at the village fringes. This is a defining feature of the NCA and siting a dwelling in this location would undermine this to the detriment of both the character and appearance of the NCA. I recognise that the relatively recent construction of four new dwellings addressing The Green has already altered this area. However, despite the sites very close proximity to each other, these are still viewed in differing contexts. The new dwellings along The Green have successfully enclosed the small area of open green space in a logical manner. Whereas this proposal

¹ Council ref: 22/00606/FP Inspectorate ref: APP/X1925/W/22/3307499

would infill an area where the character of the village changes from this comparatively intimate arrangement to a more open and spacious one.

12. As such, I conclude that the proposal would result in less than substantial harm, at a moderate level, to the character and appearance of the NCA. It would fail to preserve or enhance the NCA and therefore conflicts with policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan and Framework insofar as it would result in development that would cause a loss of significance of the designated heritage asset.

Other Matters

13. In reaching my conclusions here, I am mindful of the proximity of the site to a number of listed buildings where I must have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. The Council has not expressed any objections in relation to the impact of the proposal on the setting of these listed buildings and I have no reason to disagree here.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

14. Paragraph 215 of the Framework explains that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
15. In this regard, I recognise that the proposal would result in the provision of a new dwelling that would be located on previously developed land. Moreover, there are no other substantive objections to the proposal although this is a neutral consideration. I am, however, unable to conclude that the benefits of providing a new dwelling on previously developed land outweigh the harm to the NCA.
16. The Council accepts that it cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites and estimates this figure to be 3.3 years. In accordance with paragraph 11 d) of the Framework, this means granting permission unless the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed. Footnote 7 sets out that designated heritage assets are assets of particular importance and therefore the provisions of paragraph 11 d) i. are engaged as the adverse effect of the proposal on the NCA is a strong reason for refusal. In this instance, I have already found that the harm to the NCA means that the application of the heritage related policies within the Framework provides a strong reason to refuse the proposal and this is despite the benefits.
17. Therefore, the other considerations before me, including the Framework, do not indicate that a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, for the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

N Bowden

INSPECTOR