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Planning Inspectorate
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Direct Dial: [REDACTED]

Our ref: P01563998

23 August 2023

Dear Sir/Madam Planning Inspectorate

**T&CP (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015
& Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990**

**LAND TO THE NORTH OF ROSEACRES, BETWEEN PARSONAGE ROAD AND
SMITHS GREEN , LANE, TAKELEY, ESSEX, CM22 6NZ (LAND KNOWN AS BULL
FIELD, WARISH HALL FARM, TAKELEY, ESSEX
Application No. S62A/2023/0019**

Thank you for your letter of 3 August 2023 regarding the above application for planning permission. On the basis of the information available to date, we offer the following advice to assist your authority in determining the application.

Historic England Advice

Significance

Warish Hall is an important remnant encompassing a former moated site and the remains of a priory founded by William the Conqueror, converted to secular use in the 14th century. Its significance is reflected on its designation as a scheduled monument. Warish Hall also contains a grade I listed building, a late 13th century aisled hall house on the site of the former priory of St Valery, Takeley.

Warish Hall is an important referent on the historic pattern of settlement on this area, which consisted of a network of interconnected greens - Smith's Green, Bamber's Green, Jack's Green, large moated sites - Warish Hall or Sheering Hall - alongside smaller ones on Smith's Green and Jack's lane, together with important wooded areas, such as Prior's Wood, Fann's Wood or Runnel's Hey, and agricultural fields. All these are constituent elements of this historic configuration, and important to our understanding of the setting of the scheduled monument.

The suburban expansion of the settlements along Dunmow Road have encroached on former agricultural land, eroding this historic layout to the south, while the opening of the A120 has severed its continuity to the north. However, Smith's Green has remained relatively unaltered, amidst the urban sprawl of the adjacent settlements.



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Smith's Green Lane itself is designated as a protected lane, and Prior's Wood an ancient woodland, which makes them non-designated heritage assets in their own right. The open, rural and tranquil character of this lane and the wider area makes an important contribution to the assets accessed by this lane, importantly, to Warish Hall scheduled monument and grade I listed building, as well as the cluster of historic buildings to the south along the green, which encompasses nine grade II listed and a grade II* listed dwelling. The interrelationships between these assets are also of importance and contribute to group value.

Impact of the proposals

The submitted scheme seeks to develop Bull Field for residential use, including associated parking, landscaping, public open space as well as land for expansion of the primary school, pedestrian and cycle routes to Smiths Green and associated infrastructure.

The proposals would extend the suburban encroachment further north on to historic agricultural fields up to Prior's Wood; this would affect the rural character of the area that contributes positively to the setting of the surrounding designated and non-designated heritage assets.

Historic England objected to a previous, larger application for residential development on 2021 (application ref: UTT/21/1987/FUL). We considered the proposals would result in an erosion of the rural character that contributes importantly to the setting of highly graded heritage assets. Our concerns centred on the impacts on Warish Hall scheduled monument and grade I listed building. These were mostly as a result of the development proposed immediately to the west of Smith's Green Lane, which would be disruptive on views south from the scheduled monument towards Prior's Wood and Smith's Green. That application was refused on appeal.

By virtue of the extent of development proposed, the current proposals would still represent an important change in character of this rural area. However, we acknowledge that the amendments introduced to the scheme have considerably reduced the impact this would have on the setting of the scheduled monument and grade I listed building.

The revised scheme no longer considers the development for residential of the area immediately to the west of Smith's Green Lane; a gradation of open spaces (informal play space and hay meadow are proposed instead. Relatedly, no vehicular access is proposed via Smith's Green Lane. These aspects have reduced the impact on the



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setting of the monument and on the character of Smith's Green Lane.

The intensity has also been reduced, from the 126 dwellings formerly proposed to 96. Small refinements have also been introduced, which better relate the development to its rural context.

Planning Policy Considerations

The statutory requirement to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building, its setting and any features of special interest (s. 16, Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990) apply in determination of this application.

Paragraph 199 of the National Planning Policy Framework requires to place great weight on the conservation of designated heritage assets, the more important the asset, the greater the weight; this irrespective of the level of harm. Paragraph 200 goes on to require a clear and convincing justification for any harm.

Paragraph 203 asks to consider the effect of an application on the significance of non-designated heritage assets, requiring a balanced judgement having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the asset.

Historic England Position

The amendments introduced to the proposals have reduced the harm to highly graded heritage assets. There would still be some impact on the setting of the non-designated Prior's Wood as a result of the loss of open space to the south which contributes to its prominence; and on the setting of the listed buildings on Smith's Green, particularly Goar Lodge and Beech Cottage, as a result of the proximity of the development. These impacts should be first mitigated and then balanced against the public benefits of the scheme.

Small refinements could help further reduce impact. For example, reducing the number of dwellings on the southern edge and removing the vehicular access on this front would help strengthen the rural feel and transition from suburban development to this rural area. We encourage these are pursued and discussed to the satisfaction of the local authority conservation advisors.

Subject to the above issues and safeguards, we consider our previous concerns have been largely addressed, and consequently, Historic England no longer objects to this application.



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Historic England

Recommendation

Historic England does not object to this application, subject to our above issues and safeguards to be addressed in order for the application to meet the requirements of paragraphs 199, 200 and 203.

In determining this application you should bear in mind the statutory duty of section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

Your authority should take these representations into account and seek amendments, safeguards or further information as set out in our advice. If there are any material changes to the proposals, or you would like further advice, please contact us.

Yours sincerely

Rosa Teira Paz

Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas
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