

CONSERVATION TEAM CONSULTATION APPLICATION RESPONSE

APPLICATION REF:	25/01420/FP
CASE OFFICER:	SK
APPLICATION SITE:	Highover Farm, Highover Way, Hitchin Hertfordshire SG4 0RQ
DESCRIPTION OF WORKS:	Change of use and external alterations to former agricultural buildings comprising grade II listed threshing barn and non-listed courtyard buildings. Partial demolition of courtyard building between proposed Units 1 and 2 to facilitate access. Single-storey rear extension to facilitate Unit 10. Subdivision and two-storey rear extension to farmhouse to form Units 11 and 12. Erection of new building for two dwellings (Units 13 and 14). Partial demolition and modify building for cycle storage to Units 2 to 8 inclusive. Erection of building to accommodate 2 car port spaces for Unit 5 and refuse storage for Units 2-8 inclusive. Detached bin enclosure / cycle store buildings for Units 9 - 14 inclusive. Hard and soft landscaping in association with the provision of private and communal space. Boundary treatment, installation of 14no. EV charging points, installation of solar PV array on south facing roof slopes of Unit 14 and both the cycle and refuse storage buildings serving Units 2 -8 including provision of BNG area.

RECOMMENDATION:

Await feedback to matters raised but I will be looking to support this proposal. I am unlikely to raise an objection on the basis that the proposal will (subject to amendments) hopefully satisfy the provisions of Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the aims of Section 16 of the NPPF and Policies HE1 & HE2 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031.

SHORT SUMMARY:

Impact on listed building's special character and its setting

The proposal will have a moderate impact upon the Threshing Barn's special character and upon its setting which includes several Buildings of Local Interest Although the Threshing Barn is not identified on the national register, or the Council's 'At Risk' register maintained by the Council, the building is considered to be at risk. As such Policy HE2 is applicable.

Harm, preserve or enhance.

The proposal would occasion a degree of harm to the building's special character such but will, by way of this conversion not only result in a viable long-term use for this building but

will bring forward a viable use for this agrarian grouping as a whole which includes several non-designated heritage assets.

Policy HE2: Heritage at risk

Planning permission will be granted for proposals that seek to conserve or provide new uses for designated heritage assets identified on the national register, or the Council's 'At Risk' register maintained by the Council, that are justified and appropriate to the significance of the asset to return a heritage asset to beneficial use.

Proposals that harm the significance of heritage assets included on national and local registers will be resisted unless the need for, and the benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh that harm, taking account of the asset's significance and importance, and all feasible solutions to avoid and mitigate that harm have been fully assessed.

SITE CONTEXT:

The Threshing Barn at Highover Farm is grade II listed and is therefore a Designated Heritage Asset for the purpose of applying the aims of Section 16 of the NPPF. Other agrarian buildings within the group and the farmhouse are considered to be Non-designated heritage assets. The Threshing Barn was added to the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest on 2 May 2018, and the list entry is at the following link:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1452743?section=official-list-entry>

DETAILED ANALYSIS AND CONSIDERATIONS:

My detailed comments regarding the Threshing Barn are found under ref: 25/01383/LBC. Considerable work went into the pre-app discussions, and it is pleasing to note the scheme has not changed significantly from that previous, but I do have questions / observations.



Plots 1 & 2

I have two comments to make regarding Plot 2:

- The height of the barn doors on Elevation 8. Can these be raised in height to respond to the full height of the adjacent glazed opening?

- I have a significant concern regarding the triple gable forms on Elevation 6 (the outer facing elevation of the barn at Plot 2). These forms fail to respect the simple unaltered roofscape of the existing building. A single, midstrete feature would at least have been more sympathetic to the build type.



Description – Front elevation of proposed unit 1



Description – Front elevation of proposed unit 2



Description – Rear elevation of proposed unit 1



Description – Rear elevation of proposed unit 2

Turning to the barn in the second bullet point above, this is described as a store (Building e) in the Initial Built Heritage Appraisal (Sept 2024) prepared by Bidwells for appn ref: 24/02201/PRE. At 5.21 on page 32 of this document, the following is noted:

A mid-to-late 19th-century store (Building e) occupies the southwestern corner of the site, positioned between the Threshing Barn to the north and the hayloft and stables to the west. This store is primarily constructed of timber on a brick masonry base, with a concrete floor and clad in timber weatherboarding. Internally, the exposed timber frame reveals evidence of brick infilling in the gable adjacent to the stable block. The timber roof indicates that later alterations have occurred.

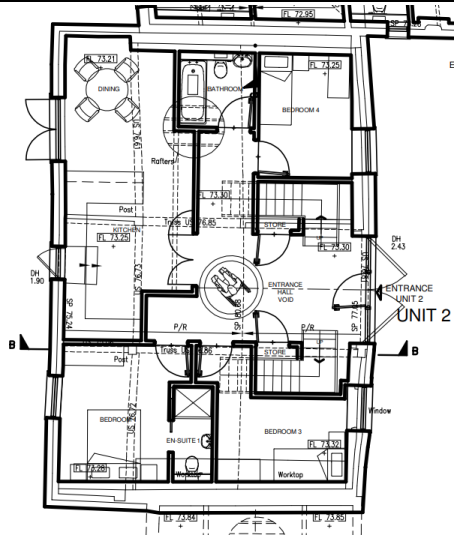
Regrettably, I have no photos of this barn's interior and the only images I have found on file are those at page 33 of the Initial Built Heritage Appraisal (Sept 2024) - below left.



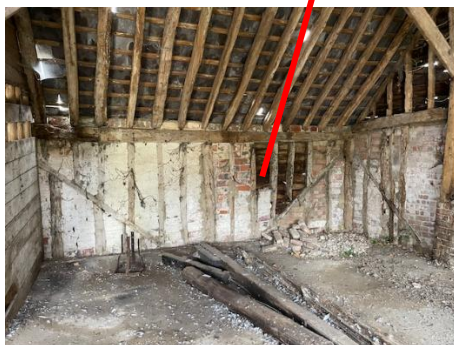
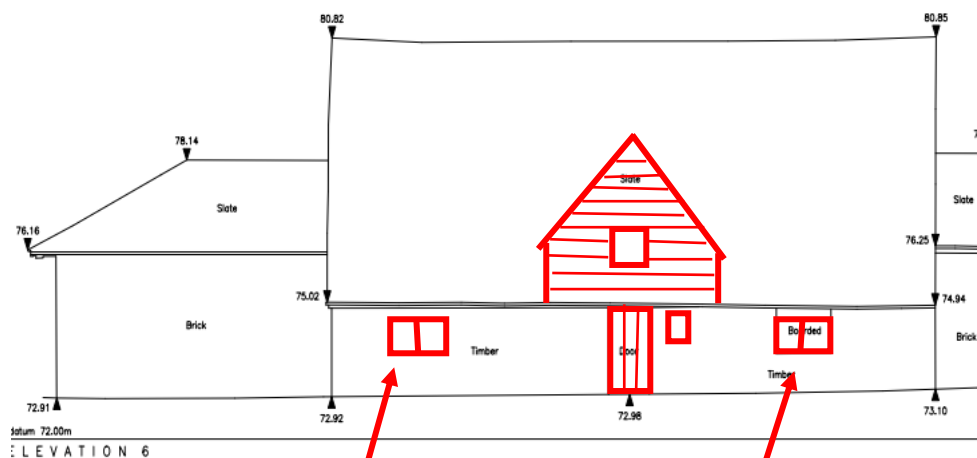
Figure 39: Internal of store- note the brick infill in the gable end



Figure 40: Internal of store adjacent to the Threshing Barn

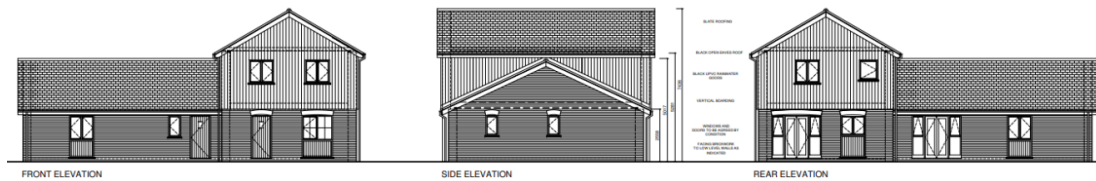


I advise that the window to Bedroom 1 becomes a horizontal long window (not a means of escape so an emergency door may be required on the side elevation facing the access). The glazed middle door appears to conflict with the position of kitchen units so either a roof light over the kitchen units could work but I am prepared to consider the creation of a flush as opposed to a projecting midstreys as indicated below. Such a suggestion may lead the applicant to consider a re-arrangement of the interior to potentially use addition headroom at first floor if the wall plate does not inhibit. As for the left-hand pair of doors serving the dining area, once again, a roof light may be sufficient but instead, I would be prepared to consider another horizontal window as shown below.



Plots 13 & 14

These are the only new build dwellings within this group and whilst I previously sought a smaller single unit, this pair of dwellings is considered on the cusp of acceptability and therefore are unobjectionable.



Car Port Unit 5

I question the need for two double-casement windows serving this car port (Elevations 21 and 23). By its very nature as a car port, Elevation 20 is open, so the windows are deemed unnecessary.

Suggested conditions (draft only and may need to consider others or amendments).

1. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out wholly in accordance with the details specified in the application and supporting approved documents and plans listed above.

Reason: To ensure the development is carried out in accordance with details which form the basis of this grant of permission.

2. As agreed by the case officer by email on the existing slates shall be temporarily removed and stored securely on site ready for reuse. The roofs shall be temporarily covered with as agreed by email on As part of the conversion works and prior to occupation the temporary roof coverings shall be replaced with either salvaged or new natural slate.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to protecting the special architectural and historic interest and integrity of this grouping at Highover Farm under Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy HE1 of the Local Plan.

3. The roofs of all buildings shall be recovered with natural slate unless otherwise agreed and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. A sample of the slate shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the roofs being covered. The roofs thereafter shall be built in accordance with the approved slate sample.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to protecting the special architectural and historic interest and integrity of this grouping at Highover Farm under Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy HE1 of the Local Plan.

4. Details of any steelwork interventions to the barn forming Unit 2 shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of any steel work. Thereafter the steel work shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to protecting the special architectural and historic interest and integrity of this grade II listed building under Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy HE1 of the Local Plan.

5. Sections details of all roof and wall insulation works for units 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of the insulation works. Thereafter this work shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to protecting the special architectural and historic interest and integrity of this grade II listed building under Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy HE1 of the Local Plan.

6. A sample panel(s) of the facing brickwork for:

- i) North wall of Unit 1,
- ii) Units 9 and 10,
- iii) Units 11 & 12, and
- iv) Units 13 & 14

shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the plinths being constructed. Thereafter these areas of brickwork shall be built in accordance with the approved sample panel(s).

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to protecting the special architectural and historic interest and integrity of this grouping at Highover Farm under Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy HE1 of the Local Plan.

7. The arches over window and door openings in Units 13 and 14 shall be brick-faced unless otherwise agreed and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to protecting the special architectural and historic interest and integrity of this grouping at Highover Farm under Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy HE1 of the Local Plan.

8. All new windows and doors shall be manufactured in timber unless otherwise agreed and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to protecting the special architectural and historic interest and integrity of this grouping at Highover Farm under Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy HE1 of the Local Plan.

9. Section details of all new vertical sliding sash windows to be installed at the farmhouse shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to their manufacture. Thereafter, the windows shall be installed in accordance with the approved window section details.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to protecting the special architectural and historic interest and integrity of this grouping at Highover Farm

under Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy HE1 of the Local Plan.

10. Where new windows are indicated to be side hung casements, these shall be flush casements unless otherwise agreed and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to protecting the special architectural and historic interest and integrity of this grouping at Highover Farm under Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy HE1 of the Local Plan.

11. The vertical-boarded sliding screens to the front elevations of Units 6, 7 and 8 shall be installed prior to the occupation of these units unless otherwise agreed and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to protecting the special architectural and historic interest and integrity of this grouping at Highover Farm under Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy HE1 of the Local Plan.

12. All new rainwater goods shall be black metal or cast-iron effect, details of which shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the rainwater goods shall be installed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to protecting the special architectural and historic interest and integrity of this grouping at Highover Farm under Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy HE1 of the Local Plan.

Note: Also suggested removing Class E PD rights.

HERITAGE POLICY ASSESSMENT:

Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990:
Section 66(1)

North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031:
Policies HE1 & HE2

NPPF (December 2024):
The following paragraphs are relevant:

- **135 c)** (*sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment*),
- **207** (*local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting*)
- **210** (*desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness*),
- **212** (*great weight should be given to the asset's conservation*),
- **213** (*clear and convincing justification*), and
- **215** (*harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use*).

CONCLUSION:

Generally, an acceptable scheme although responses are sought to the points raised.

OFFICER: Mark Simmons**DATE:** 28/07/2025