

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 (as amended by drawing nos. 2208.PL.02C, - PL03C; - PL04B; - PL05C; - PL06C; - PL07B; - PL08B; - PL09B and – PL12A received on 19/08/2025 and amplified by Structural Appraisal of removal of Roof Covering to Existing Corner & Threshing Timber Barns dated 27/08/2025 and received on 28/08/2025).
RECOMMENDATION:	As you will see I have updated the description above to reflect latest submissions. I raise NO OBJECTION on the basis that the proposal will 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.

DETAILED ANALYSIS AND CONSIDERATIONS:

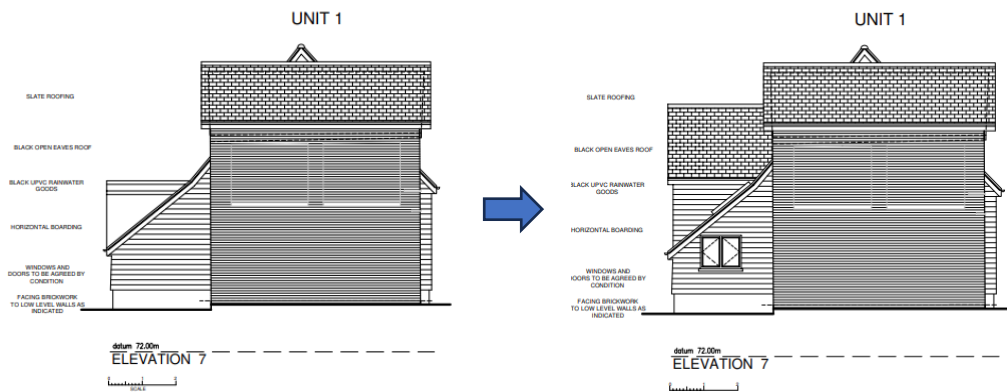
Plot 2

The height of the barn doors on Elevation 8 have been raised and are now the same height as the adjacent glazed opening. In addition, the triple gable forms on Elevation 6 have been replaced with a single central taller gabled projection and which now respects the character of the host building more fully. Both changes are acceptable.



I previously advised 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). I don't know if a means of escape was required but what is now shown is a pair of side-hung casements. I was not anticipating this response and the top left hand corner of the window frame almost touches the roof verge. A single right-hand casement

would be preferable and would reduce cost if a double is not required as a means of escape.



I note the content of the Structural Appraisal of removal of Roof Covering to Existing Corner & Threshing Timber Barns dated 27/08/2025 and received on 28/08/2025 in which it states:

Stuart Thomas Associates Ltd are appointed as Consulting Engineers for the redevelopment of Highover Farm where existing agricultural buildings are being converted for residential use.

*There are two timber framed barns **which are to be over-framed with a modern steel framed structure which will form the final structural fabric of the building**, providing support and restraint to the original timber framing which will be retained and exposed as far as possible within.*

This has remained a point of contention. No technical details as to how this might be achieved have been submitted to resolve this and I note the following in the report addressing the Threshing Barn and Hay Barn respectively:

*The Heritage Consulting report recommends limited replacement of rotten timbers and further survey of others. The principal structural members are all in surprisingly **good condition**.*

and

*STA Ltd have carried out a walkover survey of the barn, the principal members are **in good condition***

This in my view, offers the possibility of addressing both buildings by a combination of frame repairs, 'structural bracing' by introducing steel work internally to create the floors in conjunction with a timber over-framing structure rather than over-framing with a modern steel frame.

I note what the case officer has reported to the applicant previously (see below):

Regarding the removal of slates, initially we agree to the removal of slates from all non-listed/brick barns and the farmhouse building (not 'the corner grouping');

- *For all the non-listed, brick built barns, battened down tarpaulin would be fine. We could agree these details formally by email and we may impose a condition regarding temporary roof coverings.*
- *For the farmhouse, the removal of slate is agreed but we need to be confident that any material for rainwater runoff will be effective to limit internal damage. Mark suggested using felt, or metal sheeting, rather than tarpaulin. Please confirm which material you will be.*
- *If you want to proceed with removal of slates from the listed Threshing Barn, together with the corner brick building and unit 2 timber framed building ('the corner grouping'), please:*

1. examine the timbers underneath in line with the structural survey to assess the impact of slate removal on historic fabric;
2. confirm that the change in loading from slate to a temporary material (felt?) will be structurally sound; and
3. provide a method statement of how you will do the work and protect the timber structure.

Note, these can be registered planning application documents and secured by grant of permission

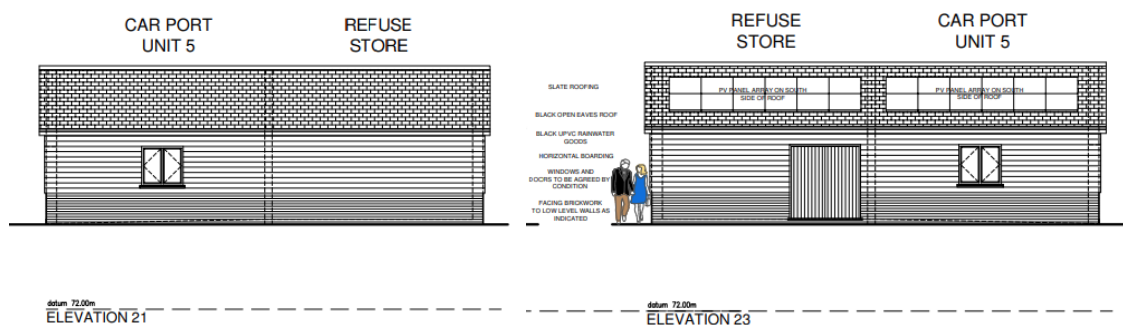
With regard to roof loading, the Structural Appraisal report states that “The new roof covering is to be tarpaulin or plastic sheeting to protect the underlying timber work. This will see a reduction of 20-25kg/m² over the existing slate weight”. I am satisfied that the removal of slates should not harm the building’s structural integrity.

I have also noted the comments regarding bats, including Liz’s comments on 18 August 2025 which references the plan below which should be duly considered. I am prepared to accept the removal of the slates to carry out essential frame repairs on the understanding that both buildings will remain weathertight and that bat habitats would not be adversely affected.



Car Port Unit 5

I previously questioned 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. Drawing no. PL10 has not been amended but their omission would be an improvement and would presumably reduce cost very slightly.



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. Section details of all roof and wall insulation work 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.

CONCLUSION:

Generally acceptable although responses are sought to the points raised.

OFFICER: Mark Simmons

DATE: 09/09/2025