

CONSERVATION TEAM CONSULTATION APPLICATION RESPONSE

APPLICATION REF:	26/00318/FP
CASE OFFICER:	TH
APPLICATION SITE:	Barn to the west of Lordship Farmhouse, Pirton Road Holwell, Hertfordshire
DESCRIPTION OF WORKS:	Conversion of a grade II listed building and associated curtilage listed building to two semi-detached residential dwellings (1 x 3-bed and 1 x 4-bed) including demolition of modern extension and replacement single storey extension. Erection of four detached and semi-detached dwellings (4 x 4 bed); four bay cart shed for covered parking; associated parking and gardens; and minor alteration to existing vehicular access and partial widening of access road following demolition of existing structures.

RECOMMENDATION:

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 Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031.

SHORT SUMMARY:

Impact on listed building's special character and its setting

Whilst the alterations will impact upon the special character of both buildings, the interventions are generally quite modest with minimal impact upon historic fabric. The proposal will ensure the long-term use of these buildings, the setting of which will be impacted upon by the new build but is considered a better overall arrangement when compared with the scheme approved under ref: 22/01842/FP.

Harm, preserve or enhance.

Although it may be considered that the scheme will result in a small amount of less than substantial harm, the proposal will secure an optimal viable use for this listed building, positively outweighing the harm.

SITE CONTEXT:

Barn at Lordship Farm to Wnw of Farmhouse is grade II listed and is a Designated Heritage Assets for the purpose of applying the aims of Section 16 the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The list entry can be found at the following link:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1103223?section=official-list-entry>

Although noted as not being of special interest to merit listing in its own right, the part timber frame/part brick building attached to the south appears to be a former stable/storage building. Historically, this barn and its listed neighbour were accessed from

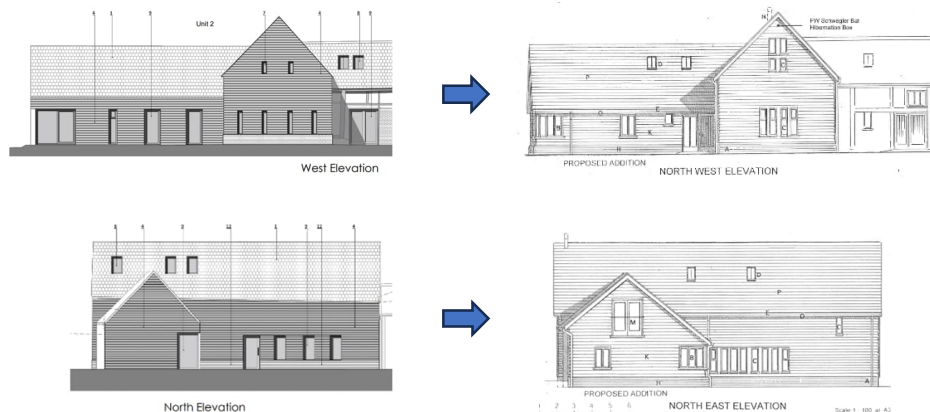
the east, from an access that also served the farmhouse. This attachment to the listed barn is considered to be curtilage-listed. I am satisfied that other buildings within the farm building complex do not possess curtilage-listed status.

DETAILED ANALYSIS AND CONSIDERATIONS:

The key heritage issues are to consider the impact of the proposal upon the special character of this listed building and its setting. I previously commented on a scheme to convert this barn under refs: 18/01187/LBC. I then commented on a scheme to convert this barn under refs: 22/01842/FP & 22/01843/LBC raising no objection. Although the status of the Local Plan had changed by 2022 there had been no material change in policy to affect my recommendation to support the proposal. The current scheme is slightly different and a different version of the NPPF is now applied.

Barn conversion

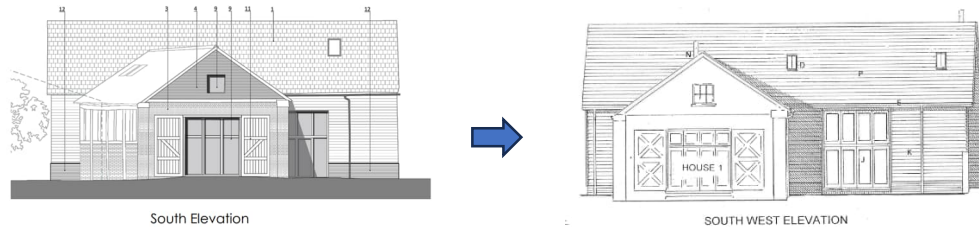
The proposal has adopted a more conventional fenestration rather than the slightly more contemporary approach previously. In terms of the northwest elevation, the left-hand addition has been shortened but is wider with a lower eave height. This is only achieved by introducing an asymmetrical wider gable which I consider to be a retrograde step. I advise that the northeast gable remains symmetrical and that the additional ground floor space is created by introducing a lean-to to the northwest elevation. I am also unconvinced by the glazed doors and juliet balcony at first floor in the northeast gable end. I am prepared to consider a simple, modest-sized, glazed opening maybe even with ledged-and-braced 'shutters'.



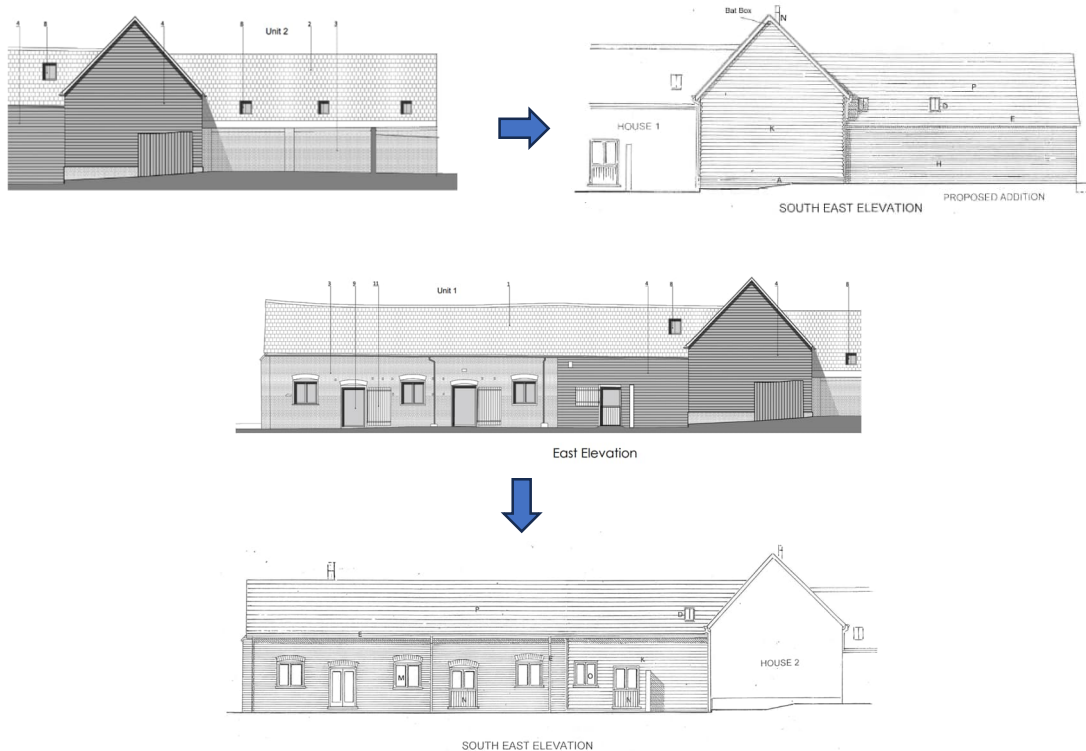
I am unconvinced by the northwest elevation gable end fenestration and question the justification for the 4no. first-floor windows that serve a mezzanine sitting area. Could this not be reduced to two? Furthermore, the repetition of 8no. openings to the right of this gable creates an overtly domestic character. Considering the lack of framing in this part of the barn, I would not be opposed to let's say a 'picture window' or two being introduced (see below) and which would also maximise views out towards Holwell church. These could be different sizes (blue infill below) and omit glazing in red infill. I appreciate that such openings would not be the same 'language' as the more conventional openings.



I am satisfied that the Southwest Elevation will work well. Lugged-and-braced as opposed to cross-braced doors may be slightly better for the large 'shutter' doors but that is a minor point (see doors below on main barn). Regarding the floor plan for House 1, the 'shutter' doors to the gable end are not shown and I also queried on site the ceiling height of the rooms in this unit.



I also raise no objection to the fenestration for the Southeast Elevations below.



The only other issue raised on site regarding House 1 was the boundary wall delineating the boundary with Lordship Farmhouse. I am prepared to accept a slight increase in height for most of its length and then stepping up further to more fully enclose the small outside space to House 2.

New Build

I find the new build generally very well-handled and so the proposal is to be commended. However, I have the following points to make:

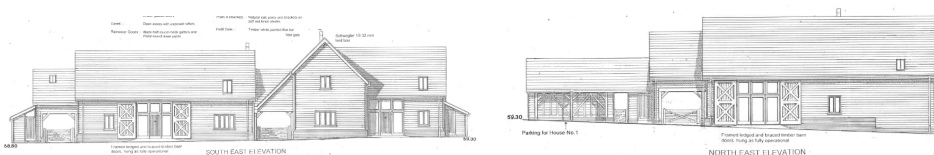
I am unconvinced that the three sets of first-floor glazed doors with Juliet balconies to the Northwest Elevation (the right-hand one also having a fanlight over) are entirely sympathetic to the overall design concept. When also considered alongside the 4no. sets of ground floor glazed door openings the impact upon of this outward looking elevation is that it has less of a barn aesthetic when compared to the internal elevation treatment. For discussion purposes I have infilled in blue, alternative glazed openings to reduce this impact.



As noted earlier in these comments, I suggest that the assymetrical gable to Unit 2 be looked at, introducing a symmetrical gable and modifying the first floor opening.



I have no comment to make on the following elevations other than to say that although I commented on the preference for ledged-and-braced doors as opposed to cross-braced doors for the end gable of Unit 1, the elevations below all show cross-braced doors. I am not averse to this door type but rather the simplified door type as suggested is a preference no more and no less.



Finally, my last point is in relation to the rear projection to Unit 6. The image below left is noted on page 7 of the submitted Planning, Design & Access Statement. This is the most public view of what would be the new development as viewed from the driveway. The rear gable to unit 6 is relatively narrow and to an extent is reminiscent of a stair turret type feature, thus, may be considered a slightly incongruous feature. I just wonder whether widening this feature and reducing its eaves would appear less domestic (see below right). However, this is not on its own, an objectionable point.



View on approach along the drive from the south



Suggested conditions

The conditions below are the heritage-based ones I advised on under ref: 22/01842/FP with a few minor adjustments.

- All new buildings shall have open eaves (exposed rafter feet) unless otherwise agreed and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to preserving the setting of the listed barn and curtilage-listed outbuilding under Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

- A sample of the new slate for the roofs of Units 3 and 6 shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of that part of the development hereby approved. Thereafter the roofs shall be completed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to preserving the setting of the listed barn and curtilage-listed outbuilding under Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

- A sample of the handmade clay tiles for the roofs of Units 4 and 5 and the carport building shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of that part of the development hereby approved. Thereafter the roofs shall be completed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to preserving the setting of the listed barn and curtilage-listed outbuilding under Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

- All new windows, external doors and frames to glazed screens shall be constructed in timber unless otherwise agreed and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the external finish thereof shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the installation of the new windows, external doors and frames to glazed screens. Thereafter the external finishes shall be completed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to preserving the setting of the listed barn and curtilage-listed outbuilding under Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

- Full details (including bond and copings) of the proposed boundary wall to the east of Unit 1 shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the construction of the walls hereby approved. Thereafter the wall shall be completed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to preserving the setting of the listed barn and grade II listed farmhouse under Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

- A sample of the brick to be used for all facing brickwork to the new build units and carport building and the construction of the boundary walls shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the construction of the walls hereby approved. Thereafter the brickwork shall be completed in accordance with the approved sample.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to preserving the setting of the listed barn and grade II listed farmhouse under Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

- All new rainwater goods shall either be black-painted metal or black cast-iron effect unless otherwise agreed and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to preserving the setting of the listed barn and curtilage-listed outbuilding under Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

HERITAGE POLICY ASSESSMENT:

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

North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031:
Policy HE1

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:

I note the following in the submitted Planning, Design & Access Statement:

4.6 As will be noted the removal of the driveway and northern parking area enables the creation of a more enclosed courtyard which is considered advantageous in terms of a traditional farmstead form.

4.7 The layout also provides more space to the site boundaries, particularly around Plot 6.

4.8 A more appropriate main pedestrian access to Plot 1 from the courtyard rather than at the southern gable is also introduced.

4.9 The layout retains appropriate parking and turning whilst introducing a central landscaped feature with new tree planting.

Further on at para 6.14 it states with which I concur:

In terms of the adjoining historic barn RWB notes that any less than substantial harm arising from the conversion works must be balanced against the fundamentally positive benefit of the scheme which results from the provision of a viable long-term use for the building. In particular it is highlighted that the timber frame of the west elevation of the building, is in a very serious state of disrepair to the extent that it is considered that there is a medium-term risk of large-scale structural failure and collapse. Therefore whilst the works proposed to this barn are similar to the extant scheme they now also include a new internal support wall to address the potential structural failure of the building.



Apart from receiving a response to the comments above, I find this proposal **UNOBJECTIONABLE**.

OFFICER: Mark Simmons

DATE: 09/04/2026