

HERITAGE STATEMENT AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT

for proposed alteration and extension of

HOLBORN BARN, DANE END, THERFIELD



View of Holborn Barn from the south (21 April 2023)

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(4584) 1.2

1. INTRODUCTION

This Heritage Statement and Impact Assessment has been prepared as part of a planning application to North Hertfordshire District Council for the proposed adaptation of Holborn Barn to domestic use, involving extension and alteration of the listed building. It has been prepared by Nick Chapple Dipl Cons (AA) and William Fawcett MA PhD RIBA.

The purpose of this document is to identify the heritage assets that could be affected by the proposed alterations; assess their significance; consider the impact of the proposed changes on their significance; and assess whether the proposals are acceptable in heritage/conservation terms. Conservation good practice and the relevant policies in local and national guidance for alterations to listed buildings are considered.

This document is a revised version of the Heritage Statement and Impact Assessment prepared in May 2023, reflecting revisions to the design of the proposed adaptation of Holborn Barn.

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2. UNDERSTANDING HOLBORN BARN AND ITS SETTING

Holborn farmstead

The barn is part of a small farmstead in the parish of Therfield, consisting of an historic farmhouse and a group of agricultural buildings, some historic and some modern, arranged in a loose courtyard plan (Figs 1 and 2). The landscape of North Hertfordshire is characterised by small, dispersed farmsteads such as this, mostly in arable cultivation. The name is said to be a corruption of 'Old Bourne', a reference to a stream that runs past the farm.



Fig. 1: Aerial view of the site, 2023. (© Google maps)

Fig. 2: Site plan as existing.

KEY

- 1. Holborn Barn
- 2. Holborn Farmhouse
- 3. Stables
- 4. Shelter shed
- 5. Lean-to additions to the barn

Application site

Grade II listed buildings



Despite the age of the farmhouse (late 16th or early 17th century with later additions) it is not marked on the Dury and Andrews map of the county of 1766. This is likely to reflect the lack of local significance of this as a farmstead rather than indicating that it did not exist at that date.

The farmhouse (listed at Grade II) is a timber-framed building probably dating from the late 16th or early 17th century, although there may well have been an earlier building on the site. It has been extended and altered since. It was reported in 1935 to have been ‘recently restored and redecorated’ (*Hertfordshire Express*, 25 May 1935, p.6). The farmhouse has recently been refurbished and extended to designs by Will Gamble Architects.

Historically, farming in this area was dominated by grain crops, so it is typical that the largest of the agricultural buildings is Holborn Barn (listed Grade II), which would originally have been used for the processing and temporary storage of the grain crop. At the south-east corner of the farmhouse is another, smaller barn (listed Grade II as part of the farmhouse), with a timber frame of similar design to the larger barn and probably of a similar date.

The 1876 Ordnance Survey shows some other buildings on the east side of the yard which had gone by 1896, probably a result of the late-19th-century agricultural depression (Fig. 3). The range of buildings on the road side of the yard, where there are now stables appears to have been rebuilt on a smaller footprint in the same period and an enclosure formed outside it, probably for penning livestock.

In the early-20th century new buildings were added on the east side of the yard and adjoining the barn, where the existing shelter shed stands. (Fig. 3) A lean-to extension was made to the south side of the barn, with an enclosure outside it. These new, small-scale structures may reflect a change to more mixed farming in the 20th century, although arable still dominated. When the farm was sold in 1945, the majority of its 140 acres were ‘sound heavy arable’, but there were 18 acres of pasture and the buildings included a ‘Modern Cowhouse for 12 and Bull Box’ (*Herts and Essex Observer*, 1 September 1945, p. 1).

Further, late-20th century structures stand around an area to the south-east of the historic yard, outside the application site.

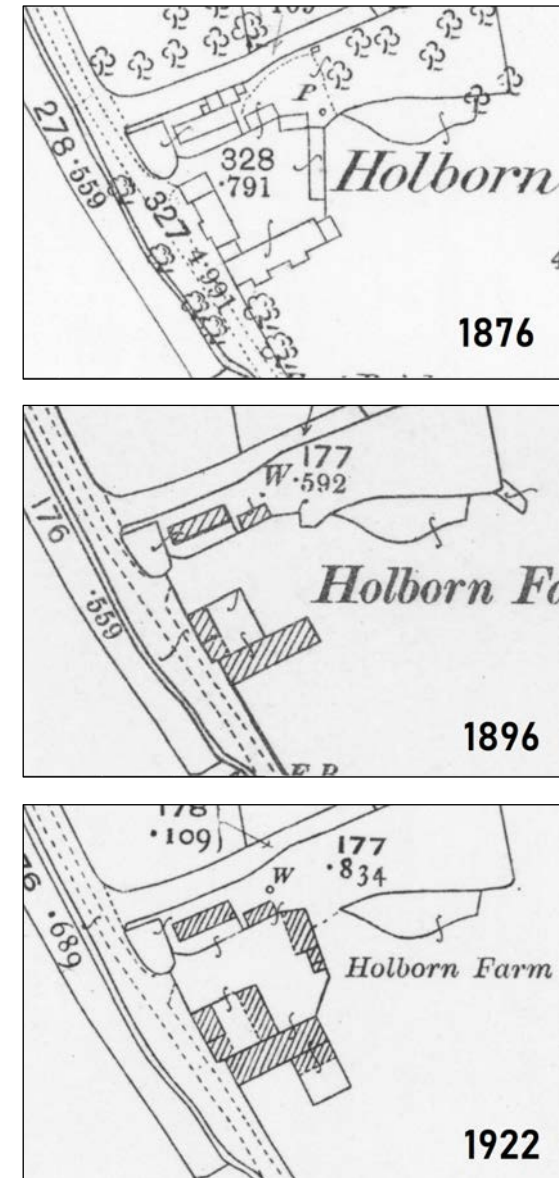


Fig. 3: Ordnance Survey maps showing the buildings of the farmstead, 1870s to 1920s.

HOLBORN BARN, THERFIELD

The older agricultural buildings are functional in appearance, but the common use of traditional building forms and materials characteristic of the local area, such as black boarded walls and orange/red clay tile roofs create a harmonious grouping with the farmhouse (Figs 4–6).

The farm yard slopes gently down from east to west before dropping down to road level at the western edge of the site.



Fig. 4: View south from the farmhouse to the barn, with the shelter shed in front and stables to the right.



Fig. 5: View looking north from the barn to the farmhouse, with the stables to the left and shelter shed to the right.



Fig. 6: The shelter shed and stables, with the roof of the barn glimpsed behind them.



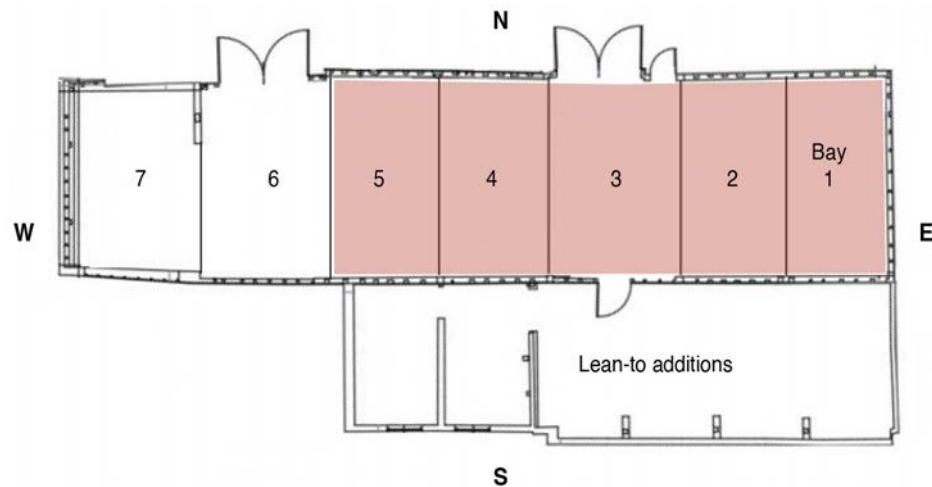
Fig. 7: View west showing the barn (left) and shelter shed (right).

Holborn Barn: construction and evolution

The barn is a timber-framed structure of seven bays (here numbered 1–7 from east to west), standing on a brick plinth and clad in black-stained weatherboarding; the roof is covered in orange pantiles.

The barn is believed to date to the eighteenth century (see list description). It was initially a five-bay structure (bays 1–5), with a threshing floor in Bay 3, which was slightly wider than the bays to either side. It was typical of traditional barns to have the threshing floor in the central bay of a three or five bay barn, as would appear to have been the case here.

Evidence for the original size of the barn can be seen in the posts and tie beam at the west end of Bay 5: the mortices for the original downward bracing in what would have been the west wall of the barn can be seen in the posts, while the underside of the tie beam has the mortices for the upright studs of the original wall and the groove down the middle which is present on the tie beam in the east wall and the north and south wall plates.



The two bays to the west (bays 6 and 7) were added later and there was probably a second threshing floor in Bay 6. The extension may have been relatively early, possibly a reflection of increasing grain production on the farm.



Fig. 8 (*above*): The post and truss at the south end of Bay 5, formerly the end (west) wall of the barn; note the mortices for downward braces and studs, and the lighter studwork in Bay 6 (right-hand side of photo).

Fig. 9 (*left*): General arrangement plan of the barn as existing, with the earliest five bays shaded.

By the time of the 1876 Ordnance Survey, the barn had certainly reached its current length (Fig. 3). The same map also shows two projecting elements on the south side of the barn which are no longer extant. These may have been porches or porch canopies, indicating two threshing floors, with two sets of cart doors, facing into the field to the south, rather than into the yard as presently. The porches are not shown in the 1896 Ordnance Survey and there are no longer cart doors on the south side of the barn.

The existing cart doors on the north side of the barn are modern. The list description (1986) describes the doors to Bay 6 as being blocked, but they have since been reinstated, by cutting back the weatherboarding and installing a new set of doors which sit within what appear to be an older lintel and posts (Fig. 12).

Between the 1896 and 1922 OS revisions a lean-to was added on the south side of the barn (*see* Fig. 3), extending from the east wall to the end of Bay 3. This was extended by two bays later in the 20th century with a blockwork structure. The earlier lean-to is likely to have been quite lightly built as it has been rebuilt with blockwork walls and corrugated fibre roof (Fig. 17).

On the north side of the barn a stable building and shelter shed were added after the 1876 OS revision and before the 1922 revision (Fig.6). They were clearly related to the needs of a working farm.

After World War II new farm buildings were erected to the south and east of the original farm, and the old farm buildings became redundant for modern agricultural purposes. It was probably a gradual process; the dating is uncertain.

The age of the main barn is discussed below.

Timber frame. The impressive timber frame, though subject to considerable alteration and repair, retains much of its historic form and large amounts of original fabric. Bays 1-5 formed the original barn; some of the timbers in the bays 6-7 extension appear historic (possibly re-used timbers from the former west wall). Generally, however, the timberwork in bays 6-7 is inferior to that in bays 1-5 and there are few substantial timbers of the kind found in the earlier part of the barn. There have been extensive modern repairs to the timber framing of the walls and roof, including a new truss between bays 1 and 2, various brackets and bracing, and machine-sawn replacement structural



Fig. 10: The south wall of bays 1 to 5 (and part of Bay 6), showing a mixture of old and new timbers.



Fig. 11: Bays 6 and 7 looking west – later and more altered than bays 1 to 5.



Fig. 12: The much-altered western cart entrance on the north side of the barn (Bay 6).

elements; however, despite these repairs, the historic framing remains visually dominant inside the barn.

Brickwork. The brick plinth appears to be largely, if not entirely, 20th-century to judge by the brick stock used. The lower parts of the walls in Bay 7 have been rebuilt in brick, probably in the second half of the 20th century, with two brick piers on the south side flanking an opening, probably newly formed after the Second World War, but now blocked and covered over with weatherboarding. Supported by the brick piers is a roller-door mechanism of similar vintage. On the exterior of Bay 7, on the south-west corner of the barn, there is a large brick buttress (keyed into the brick pier at that corner), likely to have been added in response to structural problems caused by the barn slipping down the slope towards the road.

Pantiles. It is likely that the roof was originally thatched or covered in plain clay tiles, rather than pantiles which were not commonly used in this area in the eighteenth century. Since the pantiles run continuously across both the original bays of the barn and the extension, they have clearly been added after the extension, and after the possible removal of porch canopies on the south side of the roof in the late-19th century. The reinforced underlay below the tiles, and the many repairs to the rafters, indicate a recent repair/re-roofing exercise. The tiles are of good quality and have been carefully laid, with only one or two slipped out of place, and they form an attractive contrast with the black-stained weatherboarding.

Weatherboarding. The external weatherboarding of the barn appears to be largely, if not entirely, modern, although generally sympathetic to the building's historic character. It consists of thin, machine-cut timber so is clearly not the original covering. It has been added after the racking of the frame at the east end of the barn occurred, and is laid over the blocked-up modern opening on the south side of Bay 7 (Fig. 13), and over the modern brick part of the west wall, further evidence that it is relatively recent fabric. As noted above, it is likely the existing weatherboarding was also laid across the cart doors to the north in Bay 6.

The evidence of timber repairs, brick plinths, re-roofing and weatherboarding suggests that the barn may have undergone an extensive restoration exercise in the recent past, although no documentation is available. Listed Building Consent was obtained in 1999 for 'replacement roofs on two stable blocks' (ref.99/1147/1LB), but it is not clear which were the stable blocks; the date would be consistent with the plastic underlay below the plain tiling on the shelter shed.



Fig. 13: west end of the south wall, showing the blocked opening between brick piers, overlaid with weatherboarding.

Elements of the site

The Barn

Exterior

The barn is a timber-framed structure of seven bays, standing on a brick plinth and clad in black-stained weatherboarding. The steeply pitched roof is gabled at the east end and semi-hipped at the west end, and is covered in orange pantiles.

There are two pairs of non-original cart doors, on the north side of the barn, in Bay 3 and Bay 6.

The east wall leans to the south, but this appears to be historic movement (Fig. 14). At the south-west corner is a brick buttress, keyed into a brick pier, likely to have been added to arrest historic structural problems (Fig. 15); the adjoining stables may be having a buttressing effect on the other corner.

On the south side of the barn there is a lean-to extension, accessed through a small door in Bay 3. It is entirely of modern construction, of two phases: adjoining bays 1–3, it has low blockwork walls, with black-stained weatherboarding above; the part adjoining bays 4–5 has blockwork walls, which on the outside imitate the form of weatherboarding. It has a shallow-pitched roof covered in a corrugated fibre.



Fig. 14: East end of the barn; note the lean to the left (south).



Fig. 15: West end of the barn.

Interior

The barn interior is a single space, open to the roof. The exposed timber frame is of post and truss type.

The roof trusses are composed of arch-braced tie beams with queen struts and collars. Each truss is supported by a pair of jowled posts. Running longitudinally is a single clasped purlin to each roof slope. The rafters are a mixture of historic and modern, with the latter either replacing or reinforcing historic rafters. There are modern wind braces to the roof in bays 1, 3, 5, 6 and 7. The roof has a reinforced membrane below the tiling, but is not boarded.

The walls are formed of vertical studs in between each set of posts, with downward braces. The wallplates each have a groove cut down the centre, possibly to secure infill panels of wattle. There are corner braces in the end bays and in Bay 6.

On the east wall there are three tiers of vertical studs. The upper two tiers appear to be composed entirely historic timbers, but the timbers in middle of the lower tier have all been replaced. This wall's lean to the south is only evident in the historic timbers, not in the modern replacement timbers at the centre of the wall.

In Bay 7 the walls have been largely rebuilt: the west wall has a lower part of brick with modern timber studding above, although the wallplate is historic, re-used (it has been turned on its side); on the south wall a former (20th century) opening has been partially infilled with blockwork and modern timber studding above; a section of the north wall is formed of brick and blockwork, below a mixture of historic and modern timbers.

There are cart doors on the north side in Bays 3 and 6, with a small door to the east side of the doors in Bay 3. The head of the north door in Bay 3 appears to have been raised as a post-construction alteration. There is a small door in the south wall of Bay 3 leading into the lean-to additions. A blocked opening in the south wall of Bay 7.

There are no windows in the barn.

There is a concrete floor throughout, which drops to the west, following the fall in the site.



Fig. 16: General view of the interior looking west.



Fig. 17: Interior of the lean-to addition.

Stables

The stables are attached at right angles to the north side of Bay 7 of the barn, and back onto the road.

Map evidence shows that there have been earlier structures on the site, but the existing stables appear to be modern in construction, and have been altered many times.

The long, low building is divided internally divided into a number of stalls, with a store room and WC at the north end. The concrete floor has drainage channels cast into it.

The wall facing into the yard is of traditional black-stained weatherboarding over a brick plinth, with three stable doors. The return walls and the west wall, facing the road, have been rebuilt in brick. The roof covering of corrugated fibre is failing.

The stables show signs of past structural problems, with metal posts propping up parts of the roadside wall.



Fig. 18: Stables seen from the yard.



Fig. 19: Stables seen from the road.

Shelter shed

The shelter shed is attached at right angles to the north side of Bays 4 and 5 of the barn, parallel to the stables.

It consists of a single space with blockwork animal pens at the south end. The north wall and part of the east wall are clad in vertical timber boards stained black, while the west side is open. The remainder of the east wall is black-painted blockwork. The shed is covered with an undulating pitched roof, covered in plain clay tiles; the plastic roof underlay indicates that the roof was recently re-laid.

The ridgeline of the shelter shed is above the eaves level of the barn roof and where the two roofs meet there is an awkward junction detail (Fig. 21).

Map evidence indicates that there was a structure on the site first erected sometime between 1896 and 1922, although the existing structure may post-date that. Other than some of the roof trusses and the jowled posts on the open side of the shed, all the timber is machine-sawn and the fabric appears to be quite recent.

The sagging of the edge beam and presence of two scaffolding props on the open west side indicate that currently the shed is structurally unsound. (Figs. 20 and 21).



Fig. 20: View of the open (west) side of the shelter shed.



Fig. 21: The junction between the shelter shed and barn.

3. HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE OF HOLBORN BARN

Statutory designations

Both the barn itself and the nearby farmhouse are listed. The proposals will affect both the fabric of the barn and the setting of the farmhouse. The other structures described above, although not of special historic or architectural interest themselves, are assumed to be protected by virtue of being attached to the barn. The site is outside the Therfield conservation area.

BARN ABOUT 35 METRES SOUTH EAST OF HOLBORN FARM HOUSE

The barn was listed at Grade II on 29 January 1986, list entry number 1176771. The description reads:

THERFIELD DANE END TL 33 NW (East side) 4/109 Barn about 35m SE of Holborn Farm House GV II Barn. C18. Timber frame on brick base, weatherboarded. Pantiled roof. 7 bays. Open bay to house in 3rd bay from left end, blocked opening 2nd bay from right, half hipped to right end. Interior: arched braces from jowled posts to tie beams, angled struts to principals, collars clasp purlins. Listing NGR: TL3471336117

HOLBORN FARM HOUSE, DANE END

The farmhouse was listed at Grade II on 29 January 1986, list entry number 1347386. The description reads:

THERFIELD DANE END TL 33 NW (East side) 4/108 Holborn Farm House GV II House. Late C16 or early C17, altered C19, extended C20. Timber frame, roughcast. Steeply pitched tiled roof. Originally broad 3 cell lobby entry. 2 storeys. Projecting gabled entrance porch to right of centre with flanking 3 light small pane flush frame casements, second entrance to left. First floor jettied with curved brackets, underbuilt at both ends. Three 2 light casements with cambered heads on first floor, cross axial ridge stack rebuilt as original with 2 diagonal flues. Rendered left end with a ground floor 2 light casement, weatherboarded attic. Right end first floor 2 light casement, weatherboarded attic. 1 storey C20 outshut to right links to earlier outbuilding, weatherboarded with steeply pitched half hipped tiled roof. 2 bays. Double doors and a smaller door to front. Interior not inspected. C20 addition to rear of no special interest. Listing NGR: TL3469636153

Heritage assessment

This assessment follows the guidance of Historic England and assesses heritage significance with respect to four aspects: archaeological, historical, and architectural and artistic. In addition, it assesses the contribution of the barn's setting to understanding and appreciation of its significance.

The scale used for the assessment of significance has five levels: High; Moderate; Low; Neutral; Detracting.

Overall significance

Holborn Barn is significant as a surviving 18th-century farm building, located on a farmstead with other historic structures. The use of materials characteristic of the local area – and echoed by other structures on the farmstead – is also part of its significance, although much of the existing fabric is modern. It has, however, been altered through changes to the openings, rebuilding of parts in different or inferior materials, and the addition of lean-to structures along most of its south side. It is possible to identify elements of greater and lesser significance on the application site:

	Holborn Barn	Site as a whole
High	Surviving elements and overall design of 18th-century timber frame	
Moderate	Spatial qualities of the interior Palette of traditional materials Simple, agricultural character	Views of the barn from the farmhouse and from Dane End Relationship with other structures of the farmstead
Low	Pantile roof	
Neutral	Modern replacement materials: weatherboarding, brickwork, timber studs and rafters, concrete floor Larger south lean-to	Shelter shed
Detracting	Smaller south lean-to	Stables Landscaping

Archaeological interest

Although the Hertfordshire HER does not list any archaeological finds in the immediate vicinity of Holborn Farm, it is likely to have been a site of human activity over many centuries and there is potential for small finds or below-ground remains of earlier structures, although they are likely to be of only local significance.

The standing fabric of the barn is of archaeological interest as an example of a traditionally-built timber-framed building, with later alterations which help tell the story of the farm. Large parts of the eighteenth-century timber frame survive, providing evidence of the historic methods of woodworking and construction. More detailed study of the timber frame would expand the record of traditional buildings in Hertfordshire, although it is unlikely to reveal anything that would alter the well-understood story of timber-framing traditions.

The overall archaeological interest is LOW-MODERATE.

Historical interest

Despite changes to all of the principal structures, Holborn Farm is a significant as an historic farmstead characteristic of the landscape of North Hertfordshire, and is still legible as such.

The barn has been greatly altered but large amounts of the eighteenth-century timber frame survive and the original form and construction methods are legible. Hertfordshire is particularly rich in timber-framed buildings and eighteenth-century barns are not especially rare nationally, so although the barn's survival is significant it is not an exceptionally good example of its building type or period. Moreover, there are no historic fixtures to illustrate its past use (or changes of use), which would add to its historic interest.

The barn, and the farmstead generally, are not known to have associations with any significant people or events.

The overall historical interest is MODERATE.

Architectural and artistic interest

The barn is a functional structure, plain and unornamented, so its architectural interest comes not from sophisticated or innovative design, but its use of materials, spatial qualities and traditional agricultural character.

The exterior is dominated by the mixture of orange pantiles and black-stained weatherboarding, two traditional materials, which weather attractively. The spacious interior is dominated by the historic timber frame, which is exposed to view throughout. The timber frame is in itself attractive, due to the visual rhythm of the roof trusses, posts and studs, as well as the irregularity of its handcrafted timbers. The later, machine cut timbers detract to some extent from the visual effect of the frame.

Despite the alterations to the barn, it retains a strong and attractive historic character due to its evident imperfections such as the undulating roof, the racking of the frame at the east end, and the irregular nature of the timber frame.

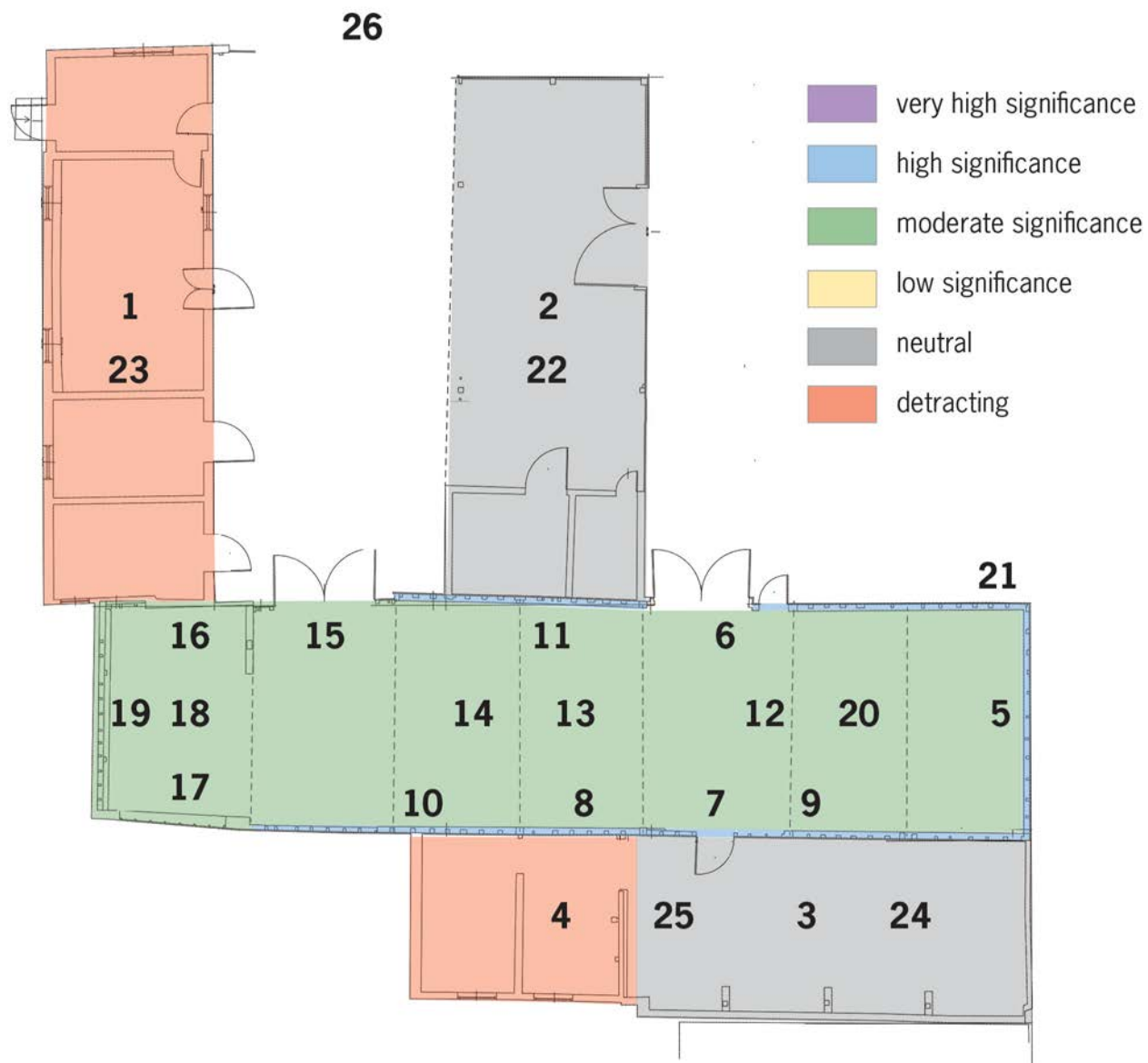
The overall architectural/artistic interest of the barn is MODERATE.

Contribution of setting

Understanding and appreciation of the significance of Holborn Barn is heavily influenced by its setting, which is formed by the other buildings and open spaces of the farmstead, and the lane, Dane End, which runs past its west wall.

The historic structures on the farmstead have some group value, collectively illustrating the nature of a small historic farmstead in this part of Hertfordshire, and aiding understanding of the historic nature and purpose of the barn. They also form a visually harmonious group of structures, with similar materials, forms and scale, although the poor quality of the stables building does detract from the external appearance of the farmstead. Views to and from the farmhouse and barn are significant. There is potential for making it a more attractive grouping through better landscaping and removal or adaptation of the non-significant structures. The modern farm buildings to the south-east of the barn detract from the visual appeal of its setting.

Dane End provides significant views of the barn, which allow its scale, use of materials and relationship to the other structures of the farmstead to be appreciated, although the poor quality of the stables building does detract from the visual appeal of the view.



4. PROPOSED ALTERATIONS TO HOLBORN BARN

The listed barn is redundant for modern agricultural purposes and its conservation requires an adaptive reuse that is sustainable and retains heritage significance.

The proposed alterations are shown on the architects' drawings:

300-Pr Site plan
301-Pr GF plan
302-Pr FF plan
303-Pr Roof plan
310-Pr Elevation-North
311-Pr Elevation-East
312-Pr Elevation-South
313-Pr Elevation-West
314-Pr SectionA
315-Pr SectionB.

The objective is to adapt the historic barn to create a new dwelling that meets modern expectations and performance standards, giving the barn current economic viability while being carried out in a way that retains its historic character and significance.

The proposed alterations are assessed individually in the Heritage Impact Assessment table below.

Heritage Impact Assessment

This Heritage Impact Assessment sets out the potential impacts of the proposed alterations on the heritage values and significance of the historic barn itself and the neighbouring Holborn Farmhouse and the local setting. It is based on a site visit on 21 April 2023 and Will Gamble Architects (WGA) drawings. The levels of impact used for this assessment are defined below:

High Positive	The proposed alterations or development will have a major positive impact, improving the character, setting and/or heritage values of the heritage asset. The change would have the potential to reveal and/or enhance several heritage values assigned to the building or setting as defined in the Assessment of Significance.	Minor Detrimental	A small negative impact will be brought about on the setting, character or heritage value of the heritage asset. Localised, minor detrimental impact may be accepted, if it is justified and mitigation measure have been adopted.
Moderate Positive	The proposed alterations or development will have a considerable beneficial impact, improving the character, setting and/or heritage values of the heritage asset. Moderate positive impact on the heritage asset as a whole may be caused by the cumulative minor positive impact on the heritage values of several features. This effect can be direct or indirect.	Moderate Detrimental	The proposed alterations or development will have a negative impact, adversely affecting the character, setting and/or heritage values of the heritage asset. This may be brought about to the heritage asset due to the cumulative minor detrimental impact on the heritage values of several features. This affect can be direct or indirect. Detrimental impact of this nature should be avoided, but it may be possible to accept if demonstrable positive mitigation is in place.
Minor Positive	Minimal beneficial improvements to the significance and character of the heritage asset brought about by the proposals. This can be direct or indirect.	High Detrimental	The proposed changes will have a seriously negative impact on the overall character, setting and/or heritage values of the heritage asset. Features that contribute to the overall heritage values, character or significance of the heritage asset would be disturbed. Major detrimental change should not be considered acceptable.
Neutral	There is no change incurred by the development or alteration on heritage values and significance		

Heritage Impact Assessment table

The following table lists the proposed changes shown on WGA drawings with an assessment of their impact on the heritage significance of the historic barn, plus proposals for mitigation as appropriate. The colour code on the left column relates to the level of impact defined in the table above.

IMPACT	LOCATION	IMPACT AND MITIGATION
MODERATE POSITIVE	1. Demolition of north-west stables	<i>Proposal:</i> To remove the entirety of the existing north-west annexe. <i>Justification:</i> The building is much more recent than the barn, is of a purely utilitarian character and is in poor condition with subsidence to the west. It is unsuitable for adaptation. <i>Potential negative impacts:</i> None <i>Mitigation:</i> Design of replacement annexe will be crucial. <i>Degree of harm:</i> None. <i>Overall Heritage Impact Assessment:</i> MODERATE POSITIVE
MINOR POSITIVE	2. Demolition of north-east shelter shed	<i>Proposal:</i> To remove the entirety of the existing north-east annexe. <i>Justification:</i> The building is much more recent than the barn, is of little intrinsic interest, and is unsuitable for adaptation. <i>Potential negative impacts:</i> None. <i>Mitigation:</i> Design of replacement annexe will be crucial. <i>Degree of harm:</i> None. <i>Overall Heritage Impact Assessment:</i> MINOR POSITIVE
MODERATE POSITIVE	3. Demolition of larger south lean-to	<i>Proposal:</i> To remove the entirety of the existing south-east annexe. <i>Justification:</i> The building is of more recent than the barn, is of a purely utilitarian character and is in poor condition. It is unsuitable for adaptation. <i>Potential negative impacts:</i> Exposes more of adjacent utilitarian farm building to view. <i>Mitigation:</i> Design of replacement annexe will be crucial. <i>Degree of harm:</i> None. <i>Overall Heritage Impact Assessment:</i> MODERATE POSITIVE
MAJOR POSITIVE	4. Demolition of smaller south lean-to	<i>Proposal:</i> To remove the entirety of the existing south-west annexe built of concrete blocks. <i>Justification:</i> The building is much more recent than the barn, is poorly built and is incongruous in its setting. It is unsuitable for adaptation. <i>Potential negative impacts:</i> None. <i>Mitigation:</i> Design of replacement annexe will be crucial.

		<i>Degree of harm:</i> None. <i>Overall Heritage Impact Assessment:</i> MAJOR POSITIVE
MINOR DETRIMENTAL	5. New opening in east wall of barn	<i>Proposal:</i> To form a new opening in the east wall of the barn, with new glazed doors and external timber shutters/doors. <i>Justification:</i> To provide daylight, views and connection to private garden space. <i>Potential negative impacts:</i> Loss of some existing timber framing. New opening in current blank east wall of barn. <i>Mitigation:</i> The timber framing that will be lost is more recent than the historic framing of the barn. Externally, the new opening will not be seen from Holborn Farmhouse or the former farmyard. The scale of the opening is similar to the cart doors that occur elsewhere in the barn. When the external shutters/doors are closed the glazing will not be seen. The detail design of the new opening will be crucial. <i>Degree of harm:</i> Less than substantial. <i>Overall Heritage Impact Assessment:</i> MINOR DETRIMENTAL
NEUTRAL	6. Alterations to existing east door in north wall of barn	<i>Proposal:</i> i) To replace the present large doors new glazed doors and external timber shutters/doors; ii) block smaller adjacent door and board over externally <i>Justification:</i> To resolve defects in the exiting doors and provide daylight and views for the new dwelling. <i>Potential negative impacts:</i> Large area of glazing uncharacteristic of a barn. <i>Mitigation:</i> No loss of historic fabric. The present openings and doors are in poor condition and have been subject to makeshift repairs. When the external shutters/doors are closed the glazing will not be seen. The detail design of the new opening will be crucial. <i>Degree of harm:</i> Minimal. <i>Overall Heritage Impact Assessment:</i> NEUTRAL
NEUTRAL	7. Close existing east door in south wall of barn (Bay 3)	<i>Proposal:</i> To block existing single door opening and form a continuous panel over the disturbed studwork in this bay. <i>Justification:</i> To resolve poor workmanship in this area and remove redundant door opening. <i>Potential negative impacts:</i> Masking some existing (but distressed) timber framing. <i>Mitigation:</i> The south wall of Bay 3 has suffered various changes and is in poor condition. <i>Degree of harm:</i> Minimal. <i>Overall Heritage Impact Assessment:</i> NEUTRAL
NEUTRAL	8. Translucent screen	<i>Proposal:</i> To expose studwork in south wall of Bay 4, backed by a translucent insulating screen. <i>Justification:</i> To provide light to barn from rooflight in new lean-to. <i>Potential negative impacts:</i> Appearance of translucent screen will be critical. <i>Mitigation:</i> None required – existing studwork is retained. <i>Degree of harm:</i> Minimal. <i>Overall Heritage Impact Assessment:</i> NEUTRAL

MINOR DETRIMENTAL	9. New door in Bay 2	<i>Proposak:</i> To expose studwork in south wall of Bay 4, backed by a translucent insulating screen with door opening in screen. Remove one stud and cut out plinth to make door usable. <i>Justification:</i> To give access to new lean-to, and provide light to barn from rooflight in new lean-to. <i>Potential negative impacts:</i> Some loss of timber framing. <i>Mitigation:</i> Detailing of door and appearance of translucent screen will be critical. <i>Degree of harm:</i> Less than substantial. <i>Overall Heritage Impact Assessment:</i> MINOR DETRIMENTAL
MINOR DETRIMENTAL	10. New door in Bay 5	<i>Proposak:</i> To expose studwork in south wall of Bay 4, backed by a screen wall with door opening. Remove one stud and cut out plinth to make door usable. <i>Justification:</i> To give access to new lean-to. <i>Potential negative impacts:</i> Some loss of timber framing. <i>Mitigation:</i> Detailing of door and appearance of screen wall will be critical. <i>Degree of harm:</i> Less than substantial. <i>Overall Heritage Impact Assessment:</i> MINOR DETRIMENTAL
MINOR DETRIMENTAL	11. Alterations to north wall of barn at junction with new north-east annexe	<i>Proposak:</i> To remove boarding over existing studs, remove two studs and cut out plinth to create access to new annexe. Form screen wall facing barn, expose studs facing new bathroom. <i>Justification:</i> To form access route to new north-east annexe. <i>Potential negative impacts:</i> Some loss of original fabric. <i>Mitigation:</i> The two studs that will be removed are more slender than the adjacent historic studs; the diagonal braces are retained. The two removed studs will be re-used in the alterations. The plinth that will be cut is more recent than the historic framing of the barn. The timber boarding that will be lost is not old. <i>Degree of harm:</i> Less than substantial <i>Overall Heritage Impact Assessment:</i> MINOR DETRIMENTAL
MINOR DETRIMENTAL	12. Flue for solid fuel stove	<i>Proposak:</i> To install a solid fuel stove with an insulated flue passing though south slope of main barn roof. <i>Justification:</i> To provide heat and amenity. <i>Potential negative impacts:</i> Visibility of flue in open barn; visibility of flue penetrating barn roof. <i>Mitigation:</i> Flue is slender compared to volume of barn. Flue outlet in south slope of barn roof is masked from central space between heritage farmhouse and barn. <i>Degree of harm:</i> Less than substantial. <i>Overall Heritage Impact Assessment:</i> MINOR DETRIMENTAL
MINOR DETRIMENTAL	13. Rooflight over proposed kitchen area	<i>Proposak:</i> To insert rooflight in south slope of barn roof to light kitchen area. <i>Justification:</i> To provide natural light in areas poorly provide with windows. <i>Potential negative impacts:</i> Visual intrusion in appearance of roof.

		<i>Mitigation:</i> Avoids need to insert windows in walls of historic barn. Rooflight in less prominent south slope of barn roof. Conservation rooflight should be used. <i>Degree of harm:</i> Less than substantial <i>Overall Heritage Impact Assessment:</i> MINOR DETRIMENTAL
MINOR DETRIMENTAL	14. Freestanding kitchen with bat loft over	<i>Proposal:</i> To construct a freestanding structure for kitchen, pantry and WC at lower level, and form boxing at higher level to provide bat loft. <i>Justification:</i> To provide facilities that need small spaces, which do not exist in the historic barn; to provide habitat for bats. <i>Potential negative impacts:</i> Partial restriction of vista along centre of barn. <i>Mitigation:</i> Freestanding structure inset from walls of barn, minimising change to historic fabric. Potentially reversible. Provision for bats is ecological requirement. <i>Degree of harm:</i> Less than substantial <i>Overall Heritage Impact Assessment:</i> MINOR DETRIMENTAL
MINOR DETRIMENTAL	15. Alterations to existing west door in north wall of barn	<i>Proposal:</i> To replace the present large doors with new glazed screen and door. <i>Justification:</i> To resolve defects in the exiting doors, and provide entrance and daylight and views for the new dwelling. <i>Potential negative impacts:</i> Large area of glazing uncharacteristic of a barn. Location visible at entrance to former farmyard. <i>Mitigation:</i> The present openings and doors are in poor condition and have been subject to makeshift repairs, and require upgrading. The detail design will be crucial. <i>Degree of harm:</i> Less than substantial. <i>Overall Heritage Impact Assessment:</i> MINOR DETRIMENTAL
MODERATE DETRIMENTAL	16. Alterations at junction with new north-west annexe	<i>Proposal:</i> New openings to provide access at G/F and 1/F level into new north-west annexe. Repairs to timber framing of external wall to allow removal of prop between bays 6 and 7. <i>Justification:</i> Access to new north-west annexe. <i>Potential negative impacts:</i> Removal of some historic fabric. Cutting through existing wall-plate to give 1/F headroom. 1/F link will be visible externally. <i>Mitigation:</i> The timber framing in this bay has been extensively disturbed and partially replaced by brickwork. The detail design of the 1/F link will be crucial. Removal of prop is beneficial. <i>Degree of harm:</i> Moderate. <i>Overall Heritage Impact Assessment:</i> MODERATE DETRIMENTAL
MINOR POSITIVE	17. Alterations to existing west door in south wall of barn	<i>Proposal:</i> To upgrade the present unsatisfactory state of this bay of the barn and install a window. <i>Justification:</i> Making good previous makeshift alterations including defunct roller shutter. Providing natural light to new bedroom. <i>Potential negative impacts:</i> Minor loss of historic fabric. <i>Mitigation:</i> This is the position of a previous large door opening, now crudely blocked. The present situation is unsatisfactory. The detail design of the new opening will be important.

		<i>Degree of harm:</i> None, subject to appropriate appearance. <i>Overall Heritage Impact Assessment:</i> MINOR POSITIVE
MINOR DETRIMENTAL	18. Enclose bedroom and bathroom	<i>Proposal:</i> To enclose the west bay (bay 7) of the barn at low level to create a bedroom and bathroom with steps up to dressing area on higher level platform. <i>Justification:</i> To adapt the barn for residential use. <i>Potential negative impacts:</i> Blocking end of vista along length of barn. <i>Mitigation:</i> The historic wall framing in this part of the barn has suffered most from ad hoc alterations. Vista of roof is preserved above enclosed volume. The raised platform is a freestanding structure, not attached to the timber framing. Design of new elements will be crucial. <i>Degree of harm:</i> Less than substantial <i>Overall Heritage Impact Assessment:</i> MINOR DETRIMENTAL
MINOR DETRIMENTAL	19. New window in west elevation	<i>Proposal:</i> To insert new window in west elevation of barn at high level. <i>Justification:</i> To provide light to new accommodation. <i>Potential negative impacts:</i> Alteration to present blank west elevation of barn. <i>Mitigation:</i> The window at high level will not be prominent in views of the barn from Dane End. The detail design of the new opening will be crucial. <i>Degree of harm:</i> Less than substantial. <i>Overall Heritage Impact Assessment:</i> MINOR DETRIMENTAL
MINOR POSITIVE	20. Upgrading of concrete floor	<i>Proposal:</i> To overlay the existing concrete floor in the barn with insulation and new finished floor. <i>Justification:</i> To add insulation and damp-proofing and install higher quality floor finishes. <i>Potential negative impacts:</i> None. <i>Mitigation:</i> The existing concrete floor is not old and had been laid with poor workmanship. <i>Degree of harm:</i> None. <i>Overall Heritage Impact Assessment:</i> MINOR POSITIVE
NEUTRAL	21. New insulation on exterior of wall and roof framing of barn	<i>Proposal:</i> To strip the existing boarding from the wall and tiles from the roof, make repairs, add breathable insulation outside the wall and roof framing, and re-clad and re-tile. <i>Justification:</i> To repair and preserve the historic timber structure, make the new dwelling energy-efficient and sustainable, while retaining the visibility of the historic timber structure internally. <i>Potential negative impact:</i> Small increase in overall dimensions. Risk of losing characteristic irregularity in exterior appearance of historic structure. <i>Mitigation:</i> Essential for conservation and sustainability of new residence. Neither the existing boarding nor roof tiles are old. Important to retain irregularity in exterior appearance of historic structure. <i>Degree of harm:</i> None, subject to appropriate detailing <i>Overall Heritage Impact Assessment:</i> NEUTRAL

MINOR POSITIVE	22. New north-east annexe	<i>Proposal:</i> To build a new annexe on the approximate footprint of the existing north-east annexe. <i>Justification:</i> To accommodate bedrooms and bathrooms without subdividing the heritage barn. <i>Potential negative impact:</i> Risk of inappropriate appearance in setting of former farmyard. <i>Mitigation:</i> The existing open shed is of poor quality and clashes with the eaves of the heritage barn. The new annexe retains same scale and form, with a lower element abutting the heritage barn below eaves level. The annexe will be prominently visible in the former farmyard, so the detail design will be crucial – visually subordinate to the historic barn, and appropriate to the setting. <i>Degree of harm:</i> None, subject to appropriate appearance. <i>Overall Heritage Impact Assessment:</i> MINOR POSITIVE
MINOR DETRIMENTAL	23. New north-west annexe	<i>Proposal:</i> To build a new annex on the approximate footprint of the existing north-west annexe, with some open carport space at G/F and bedroom accommodation in 1/F attics. <i>Justification:</i> To provide accommodation for new use of the barn. <i>Potential negative impact:</i> Increased ridge height will cause some obstruction of views of the roof of the heritage barn. <i>Mitigation:</i> G/F brick wall facing Dane End replicates the scale of the existing wall; attic accommodation set back. Minimal impact of the setting of the heritage farmhouse and barn when viewed from the original farmyard between the buildings. <i>Degree of harm:</i> Less than substantial. <i>Overall Heritage Impact Assessment:</i> MINOR DETRIMENTAL
NEUTRAL	24. New south-east lean-to annexe	<i>Proposal:</i> To build a new annex occupying part of the footprint of the existing south-east annexe, set back from the east elevation of the heritage barn. <i>Justification:</i> To accommodate an exercise room. <i>Potential negative impact:</i> Minimal. <i>Mitigation:</i> The new annexe is not prominent in views of the heritage barn. The low pitch roof does not interrupt the eaves of the heritage barn. Photo-voltaic cells on roof. <i>Degree of harm:</i> None, subject to appropriate detailing. <i>Overall Heritage Impact Assessment:</i> NEUTRAL
NEUTRAL	25. New south-west lean-to annexe	<i>Proposal:</i> To build a new annex occupying part of the footprint of the existing south-east and south-west annexes, set back from the west elevation of the heritage barn. <i>Justification:</i> To accommodate a study. <i>Potential negative impact:</i> Minimal. <i>Mitigation:</i> The new annexe is not seen in views of the heritage barn. The low pitch roof does not interrupt the eaves of the heritage barn. <i>Degree of harm:</i> None, subject to appropriate detailing. <i>Overall Heritage Impact Assessment:</i> NEUTRAL

NEUTRAL	26. Boundary treatment	<i>Proposal:</i> To create a boundary between Holborn Farmhouse and its driveway and the new residence incorporating the historic barn. <i>Justification:</i> To separate the two residences. <i>Potential negative impact:</i> Risk of losing the perceived grouping of buildings forming the historic farmstead. <i>Mitigation:</i> The perceived grouping of buildings derives primarily from their roofs, which will be seen over a boundary fence or hedge that is not excessively high. The design of the boundary will be important – recessive not dominant in the appearance of the former farmyard. <i>Degree of harm:</i> None, subject to appropriate design. <i>Overall Heritage Impact Assessment:</i> NEUTRAL
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Policy framework

The following national and local policies are relevant to the assessment of the heritage impact of the development proposals for Holborn Barn.

National Planning Policy Framework, July 2021 revision	
Para 194: In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.	<i>This Heritage Statement and Impact Assessment meets the policy requirement.</i>
Para 199: 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 (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.	<i>The proposals are shown in this Heritage Statement and Impact Assessment to be mindful of the significance of Holborn Barn.</i>
Para 200: Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.	<i>The proposed interventions predominantly affect elements of the fabric with lower levels of significance, and convincing justification has been made.</i>
Para 201: Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss.	<i>None of the proposals for Holborn Barn cause substantial harm.</i>
Para 202: 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. necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss.	<i>Where the proposals cause less-than-substantial harm, these have been weighed against the heritage benefits of ensuring viable use for the listed barn that is currently redundant, and considered justified.</i>

Historic England: <i>Conservation Principles</i>, 2008	
§138: New Work and Alteration New work or alteration to a significant place should normally be acceptable if: a) there is sufficient information comprehensively to understand the impacts of the proposal on the significance of the place; b) the proposal would not materially harm the values of the place, which, where appropriate, would be reinforced or further revealed; c) the proposals aspire to a quality of design and execution which may be valued now and in the future; d) the long-term consequences of the proposals can, from experience, be demonstrated to be benign, or the proposals are designed not to prejudice alternative solutions in the future.	<i>The proposed interventions for Holborn Barn are in accordance with HE's Conservation Principles.</i>
North Hertfordshire District Council: Local Plan, 2011-2031, submission October 2016	
Planning applications relating to Designated heritage assets shall be accompanied by a Heritage Assessment/Justification Statement that: - assess the significance of heritage assets, including their setting, impacted by the proposal; - justify and detail the impacts of any proposal upon the significance of the designated asset(s); and - inform any necessary mitigation measures to minimise or mitigate against any identified harms; Planning permission for development proposals affecting Designated Heritage Assets or their setting will be granted where they (as applicable): - enable the heritage asset to be used in a manner that secures its conservation and preserves its significance; - incorporate a palette of materials that make a positive contribution to local character or distinctiveness, where it is appropriate and justified.	<i>This Heritage Statement and Impact Assessment meets the policy requirement.</i> <i>The proposed adaptation of Holborn Barn is considered in accordance with this policy, by retaining the essential significance of the building and providing a viable on-going use.</i> <i>The palette of materials for repair and restoration of the barn are consistent with the historic fabric and setting. New insertions and the new annexe are intended to be read as such and use a modern material palette appropriate to the context.</i>

Historic England have produced a series of publications on conserving and adapting traditional farm buildings (*see* Sources of Information below). The clearest statement of principles is considered below. |

Historic England <i>Farmstead Assessment Framework: Informing sustainable development and the conservation of traditional farmsteads</i>, 2015, pp.11-12	
Work to existing buildings Retain existing historic openings and minimise alterations to prominent and significant external elevations, through careful attention to internal planning and how and where to introduce or borrow light. The size, proportion and detail of window and door design and materials has a major impact on overall appearance. Minimise external lighting which can lend a suburban character to farmsteads. Repair historic fabric with suitable materials and techniques. Select paints that complement the colours and texture of walling and roofing, using local colours where relevant. Where possible conserve open interiors with impressive proportions. Retain historic features where possible, including door and window treatment, exposed roof trusses, floor structure, machinery, floor surfaces and folk marks/ graffiti as these often give most information about historic function and innovation.	<i>This applies to the proposed adaptation. New openings are few in number, located in secondary elevations, and appropriate to the scale of the Barn. One rooflight is located in the less prominent roof slope to introduce daylight to a windowless part of the plan.</i> <i>To be considered later in design development.</i> <i>This applies to the proposed adaptation.</i> <i>To be considered later in design development.</i> <i>This applies to the proposed adaptation.</i> <i>This applies to the surviving historic fabric in the proposed adaptation.</i>
Issues for new buildings and their siting Site new buildings on the footprint of lost buildings or site them so that they respond and are sensitive to the historic plan form of the site and its wider setting in the landscape	<i>This applies to the proposed adaptation – the new Annexe is built on the footprint of the former shelter shed.</i>

5. CONCLUSIONS

The proposal to use the listed Holborn Barn as a new residence is in accordance with the accepted principle of adaptation to new uses as a way of conserving traditional farm buildings that are redundant for modern agricultural purposes.

The adaptation has been designed to retain the important features of heritage significance, while the requirements for residential use are mostly introduced by making changes to elements that have already been altered in the past. Most of the smaller spaces are accommodated in new annexes to avoid subdividing the heritage barn; changes to accommodate the kitchen, living, dining, guest bedroom and bat loft in the barn are reversible.

Both the principle and the detail design of the adaptation of Holborn Barn for residential use are consistent with good conservation practice.

6. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

R. W. Brunskill (1987) *Traditional Farm Buildings of Britain*

Richard Harris (2009) *Discovering Timber-Framed Buildings*

Historic England (2015) *Farmstead Assessment Framework: Informing sustainable development and the conservation of traditional farmsteads*

Historic England (2017) *The Adaptive Reuse of Traditional Farm Buildings* (Advice Note 9; HEAG 156)

Historic England (2017) *The Maintenance and Repair of Traditional Farm Buildings: A Guide to Good Practice* (HEAG 157)

Historic England (2017) *Adapting Traditional Farm Buildings: Best Practice Guidelines for Adaptive Reuse* (HEAG 158)

Susanna Wade Martins (1991) *Historic Farm Buildings*

North Hertfordshire Landscape Study, 2011

National Library of Scotland historic maps collection online: <https://maps.nls.uk/>

Listed Building Consent no.99/1147/1LB, dated 4 November 1999, North Hertfordshire District Council (decision notice only – on-line resource)