

CONSERVATION TEAM CONSULTATION APPLICATION RESPONSE

APPLICATION REF:	26/00102/FP
CASE OFFICER:	HT
APPLICATION SITE:	Land adjoining Cantlebury Chapel Street and 1 Christys Yard, Hinxworth, Hertfordshire SG7 5EH
DESCRIPTION OF WORKS:	Minor revision of the previously approved scheme ref.24/02404/FP - Erection of one detached 2-bed bungalow with associated access, car parking, private garden and landscaping (with refined proportions, minor dimensional adjustments, and revised fenestration). No change of use is proposed.

RECOMMENDATION:
See suggested changes and await response before considering raising **NO OBJECTION**.

SHORT SUMMARY:

Impact on the setting of two listed buildings and upon the character and appearance of the Hinxworth Conservation Area.

The proposal will have some impact upon the above designated heritage assets.

SITE CONTEXT:

The application site is located within the Hinxworth Conservation Area and lies between two grade II listed buildings – Middle Farmhouse and Cantlebury which were both added to the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest on 19 November 1984 (see links to respective list entries below)

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1347345?section=official-list-entry>

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1175620?section=official-list-entry>

DETAILED ANALYSIS AND CONSIDERATIONS:

I previously commented under ref: 24/02404/FP on 30/01/2025 for the '*Erection of one detached 2-bed bungalow with associated access, car parking, private garden and landscaping*'.

I do not intend regurgitating the full planning history as set out in my earlier comments but simply to focus on the following part of my comments:

3.19 I acknowledge that since appn ref: 89/01557/1, there has for the last 35yrs been planning resistance to the development of this plot of land and as the former Principal Conservation Officer says that it would be 'impossible to improve upon the present attractiveness of this part of the site and the current proposal resisted at all cost'.

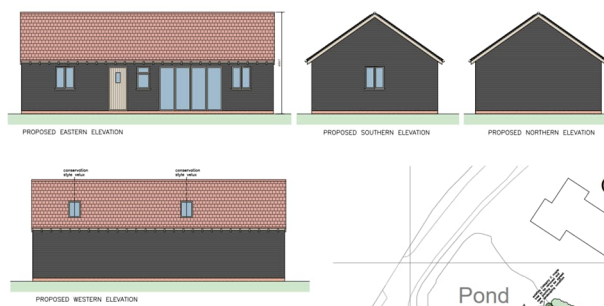
3.20 I have thought about this proposal very carefully and whilst the sensitivity of the site is undisputed, my view has changed from that of registering an in-principle objection to examining

whether a very simple built form with agrarian accents could occupy this site without detracting from the setting of the listed buildings on either side or the positive contribution that the pond area makes to the character and appearance of the HCA. It should be noted that whilst the openness of the site provides a view through to the Christy's Yard development from Chapel Street this view is not historic (less than 4 decades).

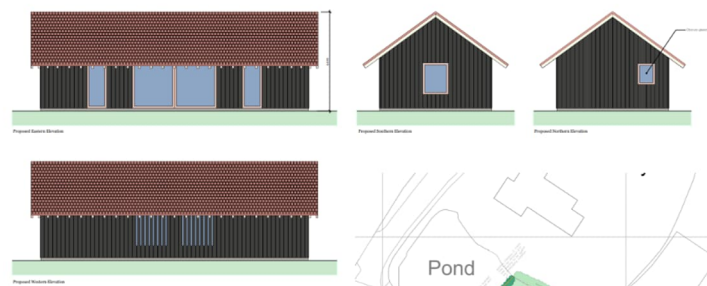
3.21 In my view the proposed building's orientation on site, together with its height, length, roof form and lack of fenestration facing the pond (apart from roof lights) are such that the setting of the two listed buildings would not be eroded or the character and appearance of the HCA harmed. I appreciate that it would screen the Christy's Yard development when viewed from Chapel Street and vice versa.

3.22 The loss of the Category C Maple tree and the protection of the Willow tree during development are matters for the case officer to consider.

The building granted planning permission measures 6000 x 12000 (see below).



On 31 October 2025, a pre-application ref: 25/02705/PRE was received for a building measuring 5700 x 13500 i.e. slightly narrower but 1.5m longer in footprint terms but even longer if taking the ridge length into account ($\geq 14\text{m}$).



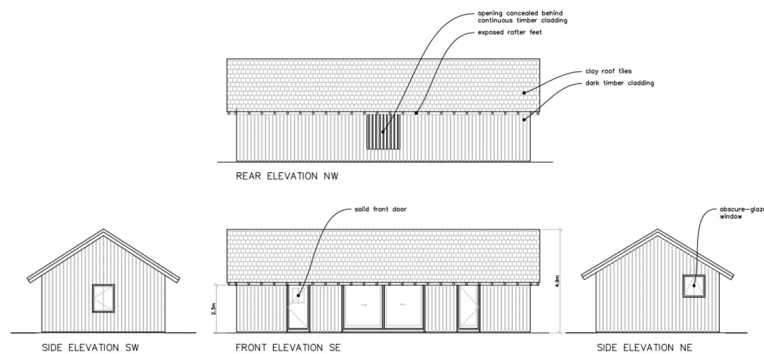
Amongst other matters, the case officer reported back the following on 5 January 2026:

This application was raised with North Herts' Senior Conservation Officer who provided the following comments during an item surgery. Due to its position in proximity to two designated heritage assets the approved scheme was designed to appear as a simple traditional outbuilding, however the proposed alterations would erode the scheme rather than improve it and would have a harmful impact on the wider setting of these assets. As such, the following comments are provided:

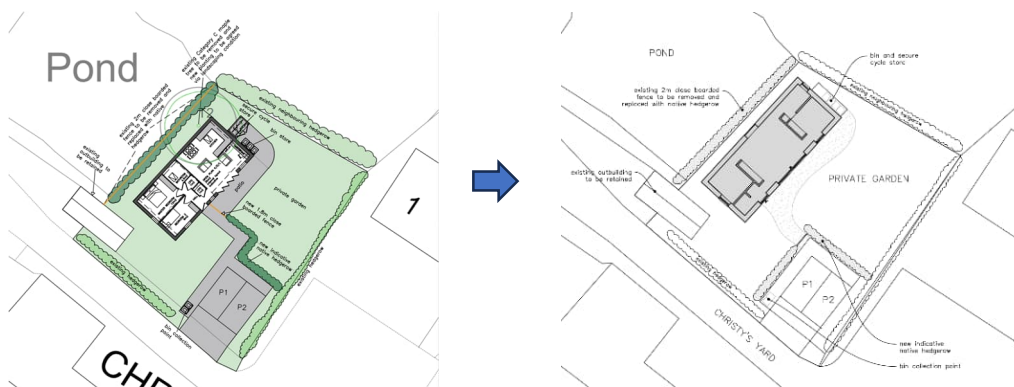
- *Eaves and verge overhang is not a typical roof detail. However, the exposed rafter feet are appreciated.*
- *Whilst ideally no opening towards the pond would be the optimal scheme, a reduction of the window by half may be considered more favourably.*
- *Size of the window on southern elevation is too large as seen from Highway.*
- *Solid door would be preferred*
- *Proposed materials are considered acceptable.*
- *Layout within the site is considered acceptable.*

The case officer concluded that *“the principle of a bungalow dwelling within this location is supported under Policy SP2 and CGB1, but the broad design would not be considered acceptable and **would harm the neighbouring heritage assets**”*. The scheme below is broadly similar to that at pre-app but I note:

- Less accentuated over-hanging eaves
- Solid front door
- Smaller window on SW elevation
- Single window to rear NW elevation



There is no doubting in my mind that the slightly wider yet more compact built form of the granted scheme is considered more positively when compared with the latest iteration and has a stronger outbuilding aesthetic. The question is, do these latest changes go far enough in addressing heritage-based concerns raised at pre-app?



I note the following at 4.4 of the submitted Design and Access Statement:

The material palette reflects traditional local building forms and previously approved materials:

- Handmade clay roof tiles;
- Vertical timber weatherboarding;
- Exposed rafter feet with restrained eaves detailing;
- Light oak-toned timber windows and doors.

These materials are consistent with nearby historic outbuildings and reinforce the proposal's subdued, rural character.

Not all the following matters were reported at pre-app but having reviewed this proposal I consider that it is important to raise these now. I also consider it important that the proposal reads as a traditional outbuilding sitting alongside the existing pantile/boarded building.

Normally, I would not raise a specific issue regarding overhanging verge details but here the additional footprint length means that any projecting verge exacerbates the perception of length. Either the roof verge should be like that below or the footprint reduced.



I had not previously mentioned the vertical boarding. A more successful scheme would be dark-stained traditional horizontal boarding as found elsewhere in the conservation area and as formed part of the granted scheme.



The granted scheme has a roof pitch of 35° which, on reflection, is unlikely to be sufficient to accommodate clay handmade tiles (normally 40°) even though that is what the application suggested and what is covered by Condition 3 part i. The current proposal sees the roof pitch slackened to 32° which is not only unlikely to be acceptable for clay handmade tiles but may not be sufficient even for machine made tiles. The gable width has been reduced by 300mm which should allow for the roof pitch to be raised from 35° without a significant rise in overall height and to the point of hopefully being able to take a handmade clay tile roof.

Whilst noting that the right-hand bedroom has no window and is reliant upon natural light from the door I suggest that either i) the door is a solid door (if required as alternative means of escape) and a small conservation roof light added at this end or ii) the door becomes more solid with a slatted appearance (below left and would echo the window on the rear NW elevation), or iii) part-glazed (below centre) or iv) a stable-type (below right). In either case, the timber being dark painted or stained to compliment hopefully dark-stained horizontal boarding and the left-hand entrance door.



Finally, the submitted DAS refers to 'light oak-toned' timber windows and doors. In my opinion, it would be better if the external joinery was similar to the dark-stained boarding rather than 'standing out'.

Suggested conditions.

I note the conditions imposed under ref:24/02404/FP. If this scheme were to be granted, planning condition 3 would need adjusting omitting iii Conservation roof lights unless my suggestion above of a roof light to the right-hand bedroom to compensate for a solid door is taken on board.

I previously stated that it is important that we are also able to control boundary treatment and that the existing close-board fencing on the west boundary facing the pond is removed and the planting scheme implemented as shown on the site plan. Is there a reason as to why we could not have a condition which requires agreed boundary treatment to be in place prior to occupation?

HERITAGE POLICY ASSESSMENT:**Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990:**

Sections 66(1) & 72(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:

Await feedback on matters raised, otherwise **UNOBJECTIONABLE**.

OFFICER: Mark Simmons

DATE: 26/03/2026