

CONSERVATION TEAM CONSULTATION APPLICATION RESPONSE

APPLICATION REF:	25/02662/FPH & 25/02663/LBC
CASE OFFICER:	HT
APPLICATION SITE:	Church Farm House, Bennetts Lane, Rushden, Buntingford, Hertfordshire, SG9 0SQ
DESCRIPTION OF WORKS:	Replacement single storey rear extension and associated landscaping. <i>Note: On a minor point, the associated landscaping does not need to be included in the description on the application for LBC.</i>

RECOMMENDATION:

Subject to the suggested conditions, I raise **NO OBJECTION** to the scheme as it will satisfy the provisions of Sections 16(2) (LBC only), 66(1) (FPH only) and 72(1) (both) 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

There will be a low/moderate impact upon the listed building.

Impact on character and appearance of the Rushden Conservation Area (RCA)

Limited impact upon character and appearance as works are to the rear and set back and screened from the road.

Harm, preserve or enhance.

Overall, I take the view that the listed building's special character and the appearance of the RCA will be preserved.

SITE CONTEXT:

Church Farm House is grade II listed and is in the RCA. The building and area are 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/1347368?section=official-list-entry>

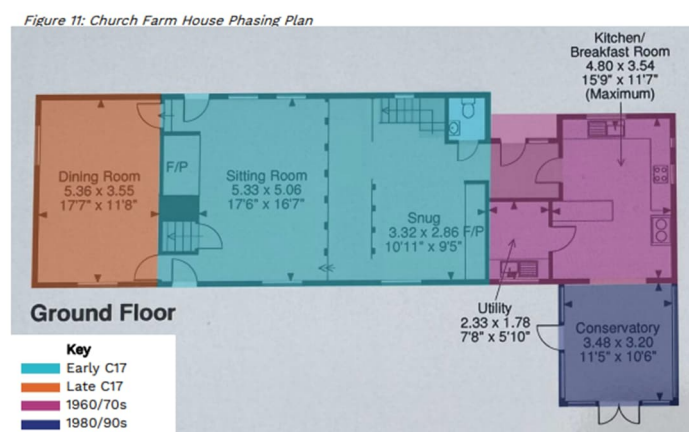
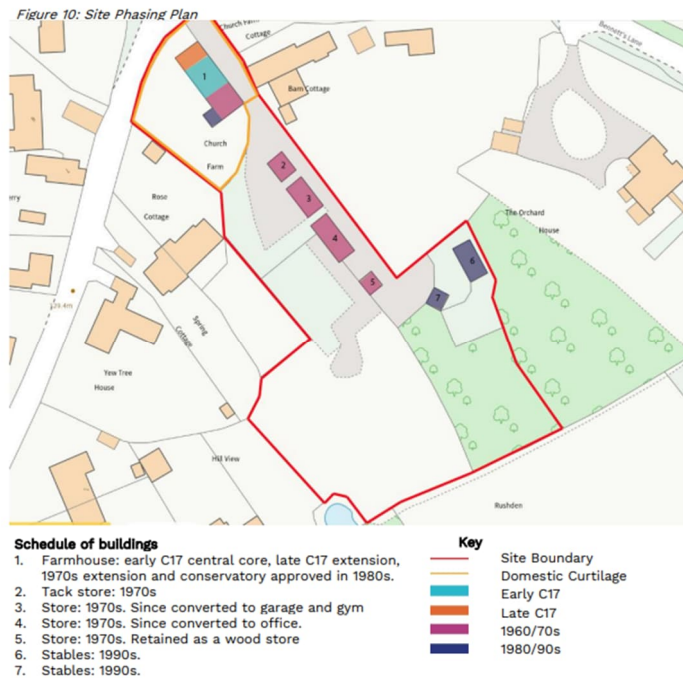


DETAILED ANALYSIS AND CONSIDERATIONS:

The key heritage issues are to consider the impact of the proposal upon:

- The special character of this listed building, and
- The character and appearance of the Rushden Conservation Area.

What I find useful in terms of aiding an understanding of the site, are Figures 10 and 11 from pages 23 and 24 of the Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by Berrys (see below). I also note, in particular, paragraphs 6.16 to 6.21 which provides a commentary on the proposed design.

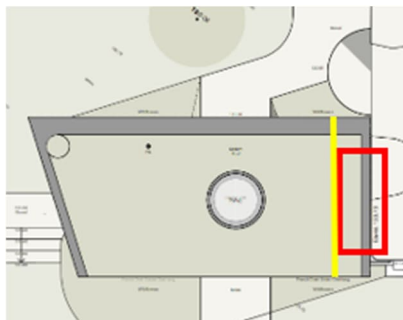


Although a pre-app was received under ref: 24/01819/PRELB last year, it was a second pre-app under ref: 25/01890/PREH received on 31 July 2025 that has informed the current submission.

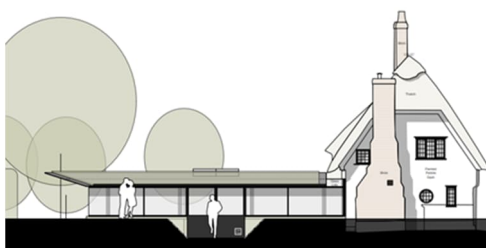
I could essentially reproduce my assessment of the latest pre-app which is dated 7 October 2025 but this has been reproduced and commented upon in the submitted Design and Access Statement prepared by Greenway Architecture.

I raised two design matters in the pre-app the first being as follows:

In my opinion, the small glazed link is a key feature of the design and I get the legibility issue, however, I question whether a deeper, narrower link, would convey the legibility issue even more so and provide a little 'breathing space' to the corner of the main building and to the external brick-built bread oven which adjoins the southern fireplace range. I indicate with the red outline rectangle perhaps a more acceptable link in terms of width and depth with the extension starting broadly where I have shown the yellow line. There is a case to suggest that the link may work well with 'rendered sides' reducing the impact of glazing.



The second point being a slight reservation I expressed regarding the depth of the left-hand overhang on the side elevation below but caveated that by saying that this may be insufficient reason to justify an objection.



At page 12 of the DAS it states

RESPONSE TO PRE-APP FEEDBACK

We welcome the positive feedback, which allows architecture to be created. In respect of the Conservation Officer's point regarding a deeper glass link to the house, we have designed the depth off the glass link to allow the rainwater from the thatched roof of the main house, which has no gutters, to fall onto the new sedum roof and then drain onto the garden via 'French drain'. If the glass link was wider as suggested then the rainwater from the main roof would all fall onto the glass which we fear would; a) not be able to cope with heavy rainfall, b) the water would have nowhere structured to go and c) be messy and dirty.

Turning to page 18 of the DAS I note the section entitled 'Design Philosophy'.

The proposals are designed to be recognisably of our age whilst respecting the prominence of the existing principle building and the Site's landscape. The design seeks to maintain established hierarchies, legibility in reading the buildings form, whilst lightly touching the existing building. Imitation of historic features and superficial echoing of the past would damage the fabric of the listed building. A proposed addition which is historicist in character would be inappropriate.

Therefore we put forward proposals which are contemporary in character but also contextual and of high quality. The proposals also respect the scale and rhythm of the existing building.

The proposal acknowledges that successful developments come about through both a difference from, and a respect for, their surroundings. The proposed new-build components will be modern in

character without jarring with the historic building or the character of existing building through material.

The proposals have found a form and architectural expression which is both bold enough to demonstrate the commitment to quality and modernity and modest enough to sit happily in the landscape.

The visible structural frame relates to the exposed timber from of the existing house, without copying it and the black detailing relate to the black window frames of the existing house.

The architecture of the proposals are suitable for the uses it contains and it does not try to be too grand, nor pretend to be more modest than it really is.

It is possible to combine modesty, boldness, modernity and popularity. The proposals find a language which embodies the applicant's aspiration for stylish modern architecture without disrupting the historic setting.

It is recognised that heritage assets are able to accommodate change without affecting their significance. The proposals demonstrate that it is possible to extend a historic building in a way that respects it and at the same time makes a positive contemporary architectural statement. It shows that as a result of such an initiative, new life can be given to the building itself and to its local area.

The proposals aim to successfully integrate with the surroundings, utilising the highest quality architecture, material specification and construction standards to compliment the listed building and make a positive contribution to the setting.

The proposals provide visual continuity with historic precedents as well as emphasising modernity. Good design is fundamental to delivering sustainable development.



Suggested conditions (LBC only)

The proposal is sufficiently well detailed and understood so as not to require the imposition of additional 'unnecessary' conditions so I consider the following should suffice:

1. The work to which this consent relates shall be begun by not later than the expiration of the period of 3 years from the date of this notice.

Reason: To comply with the provisions of Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. 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.

HERITAGE POLICY ASSESSMENT:

Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990:

Sections 16(2), 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:

I acknowledge that there are occasions (not always) where heritage assets are able to accommodate change without affecting their significance and this is one such case where change can be embraced. I am particularly drawn to the following statements in the DAS:

The proposals find a language which embodies the applicant's aspiration for stylish modern architecture without disrupting the historic setting.

The proposals aim to successfully integrate with the surroundings, utilising the highest quality architecture, material specification, and construction standards to compliment the listed building and make a positive contribution to the setting.

The proposal has been robustly and convincingly justified (213, NPPF) and I generally concur with the commentary at page 29 of the DAS and where it concludes:

The proposed extension results in no harm to the significance of the Grade II listed Church Farm House or the Rushden Conservation Area. Instead, it offers a clear enhancement: replacing an unsympathetic structure with a contemporary, modest and well-considered addition that preserves the special interest of the heritage asset. The design is visually discreet, materially appropriate, and functionally beneficial—fully justifying support from both heritage and planning perspectives.

I would not go as far as to say that the existing addition is an 'unsympathetic structure', rather, I suggest that it applies a different architectural language. I do, however, agree with 6.12 of the HIA where it states:

The existing extension is a later 2020 addition which is of no significance therefore its removal will not result in any loss of any historic fabric and consequently does not give rise to direct harm to the designated heritage asset.

To conclude, in my opinion, the proposal is considered acceptable.

OFFICER: Mark Simmons

DATE: 03/12/2025