

CONSERVATION TEAM CONSULTATION APPLICATION RESPONSE

APPLICATION REF:	25/03103/FPH & 25/03104/LBC
CASE OFFICER:	HS
APPLICATION SITE:	Hexton Manor, Hexton, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG5 3JH
DESCRIPTION OF WORKS:	Conversion of gardener's store to security guard office including external alterations. Internal and external alterations to facilitate conversion of gardener's store to security guard office.

RECOMMENDATION:

I raise **NO OBJECTION** on the basis that the proposal will neither harm the grade II listed wall to which the gardener's store is attached or harm the wider setting of Hexton Manor impacting upon its significance or harm the character or appearance of the Hexton Conservation Area or adversely impact upon the registered park and gardens. The proposal will satisfy the provisions of Section 16(2) (LBC only), Section 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 i) the grade II listed wall to which the gardener's store is attached ii) the wider setting of Hexton Manor, iii) the character or appearance of the Hexton Conservation Area and iv) the registered park and gardens.

The proposal will have very limited impact upon these designated heritage assets.

SITE CONTEXT:

Hexton Manor is grade II listed and is located within the Hexton Conservation Area and also within a grade II Registered Park and Garden. The gardener's store is a curtilage-listed building that is also adjacent to the grade II listed Walled Garden of Hexton Manor.



The building and the area are Designated Heritage Assets for the purpose of applying the aims of Section 16 of the NPPF.

The list entry for Hexton Manor is found at the following link:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1347069?section=official-list-entry>

whilst the list entry for the Walls to Walled Gardens at Hexton Manor Near Village Street is found at the following link:

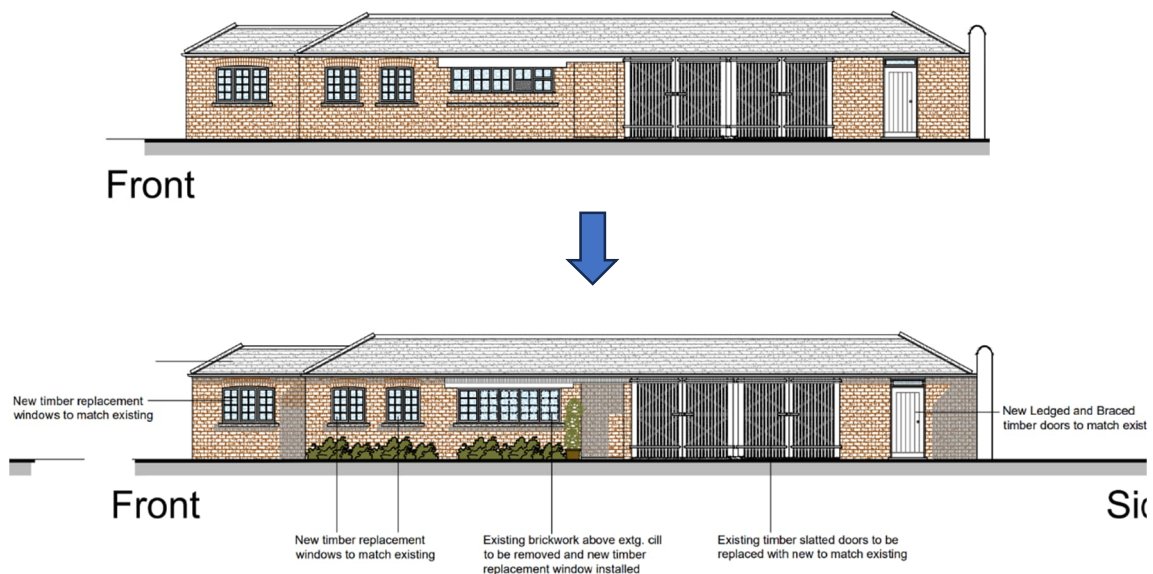
<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1103253?section=official-list-entry>



DETAILED ANALYSIS AND CONSIDERATIONS:

As stated at 4.3 of the submitted Planning, Design, Access & Heritage Statement

"The alterations include replacement of timber windows with matching timber windows. The widest window to front elevation would be enlarged in height to match the height of the other three existing windows, with the brickwork removed to suit. Replacement of ledged and braced timber doors to match existing is proposed, with replacement of the white vertical timber slatted doors, again to match existing."

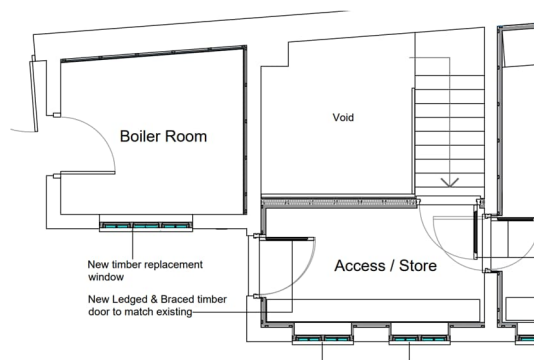


In my opinion, the alterations to the window opening below i.e. making this deeper so that the new window sits directly on the sill, is considered acceptable. The only issue is to ensure that the slimlite glazing incorporates 'through' as opposed to 'applied' bars.



Through bars will increase the cost of each window and with this in mind I raise no objection to these being changed to 6-pane should the applicant wish to do so.

I turn my attention to the windows serving the Boiler Room and Access/Store. These are 8-pane casements clearly do not need to be to a habitable standard. My question is (having not been to site to see the windows close up), are the existing windows capable of repair thus remaining single-glazed and presumably reducing cost. Having said that, whilst the existing windows to the left on the front elevation are 8-pane, it is not considered essential that they remain so.



If the condition of the windows is such that replacement is justified, I am prepared to consider slimlite 6-pane windows here as well, even though the 8-pane windows look fine in these openings. Furthermore, the internal character of the Boiler Room and Access/Store could be more fully retained by not insulating the walls internally (see images below).



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 have a duty under Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA. Section 66(1) of the Act also requires the decision maker, in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest.

Whilst the proposal comprises minor alterations, I question whether the following:

- i. Introduce stud wall between the Access/Store and the void.
- ii. Replacing the 8-pane windows.
- iii. Internally insulating walls to Boiler Room and Access/Store.

are absolutely necessary.

Having said that, generally the scheme is considered acceptable, but I would like a condition imposed regarding window joinery sections (I can offer this if necessary).

OFFICER: Mark Simmons

DATE: 26/02/2026