

CONSERVATION TEAM CONSULTATION APPLICATION RESPONSE

APPLICATION REF:	24/02355/FP
CASE OFFICER:	HT
APPLICATION SITE:	The Studio, Manor Farm, Church Lane, Graveley, Herts SG4 7BN
DESCRIPTION OF WORKS:	Replacement of box dormer with two dormer windows on north roofslope and continued use of first floor as one 1-bed studio accommodation.

RECOMMENDATION:

The description implies that if the replacement gable dormers are granted planning permission that the continued use of the first floor as one 1-bed studio accommodation is possible, but I do not believe that to be the case. I would have found a proposed for **'Replacement of box dormer with two dormer windows on north roofslope'** only to be acceptable however as the description stands, I raise an **OBJECTION**.

The two rear dormers (as amended) are considered better in design terms when compared with i) the existing box dormer and ii) the original submission under this current application. However, the dormers are directly linked in this proposal with the continued use of first floor as one 1-bed studio accommodation. On the basis that the dormers will not provide sufficient internal useable floor space for a 1-bed studio as set out in the Nationally Described Space Standard, there is good reason to resist the proposed use of the first floor. Furthermore, considering both the dismissed planning appeal under ref: 23/01101/FP (15 January 2026) and the associated enforcement appeal (16 October 2025), it is imperative in my view, that the enforcement notice is complied with by 16 April. On this basis, I assume that the case officer would be looking at a planning as opposed to heritage-based reason for refusal on the understanding that there appears to be insufficient justification for the continued use of first floor as one 1-bed studio accommodation and that I cannot see how this can be achieved with what is proposed.

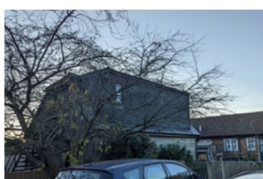
SHORT SUMMARY:

Impact on the setting of Manor Farmhouse and St Etheldreda Church.

The proposal will impact upon the above designated heritage assets.

DETAILED ANALYSIS AND CONSIDERATIONS:

These comments follow my last response dated 9 June 2025 at which I said at 1.7: *My understanding is that the decision on the appeal against the refusal of appn ref: 23/01101/FP remains pending for the box dormer in the image below.*



The Inspector's Decision Notice was received on 15 January 2026 which dismissed the appeal against the refusal of planning permission for '**retention of the change of use and extension of the garage to use as a self-contained flat**'. The Inspector set out the main issues as follows:

- i. *the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area and the significance of nearby heritage assets; and*
- ii. *the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of the occupiers of 1 Barn Cottages with particular regard to whether or not it would be overbearing.*

The appeal decision is unequivocal in establishing the extent of harm that is caused by the box dormer. For instance, at para 15 the Inspector's Decision reads:

*However, the box dormer to the north has only a slight set down from the main ridge and small set ins from the sides of the roof. The submitted plans also show the face of the dormer sitting broadly level with the ground floor elevation below. As a result, it would occupy **a substantial proportion of the host roofslope resulting in an awkward and unduly bulky feature which would dominate the building**. Moreover, the form and design of the box dormer give it a strongly domestic appearance and are far more typical of an urban or suburban area.*

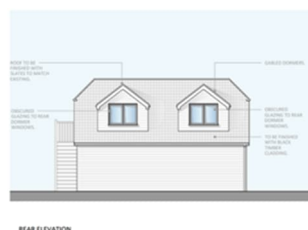
Whilst para 16 goes on to say:

*In combination, these factors result in a **highly incongruous and unsympathetic feature which stands out against the rural, agrarian surroundings and the modest ancillary character of the building**.*

Of further interest is para 24:

*There would be some economic benefit associated with the construction process and spending by future occupiers of the dwelling, but the scale of the proposal means that the effect is likely to be limited. **The loss of the first-floor study/office space which the dwelling replaces and which could also be expected to offer some economic benefit would further reduce the overall scale of any net effect.***

Although I previously said that the two rear dormers as amended by drawing no.1397_YPUK_P006 P5 - Proposed Elevations received on 3 April 2025 (see below) would on balance be acceptable, this would not, in my opinion, provide the space required to enable the first floor to be used as 1-bed studio accommodation.



Considering the Inspector's comments in para 24 above, there is no convincing justification for providing a separate residential unit given that the loss of the first-floor study/office space which the dwelling replaces would reduce the overall scale of any net effect.

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:

The proposal is considered **OBJECTIONABLE**.

OFFICER: Mark Simmons

DATE: 13/03/2026