

CONSERVATION TEAM CONSULTATION APPLICATION RESPONSE

APPLICATION REF:	25/01767/FPH
CASE OFFICER:	VW
APPLICATION SITE:	Windmill House, Bennetts Lane, Rushden, Buntingford Hertfordshire SG9 0SH
DESCRIPTION OF WORKS:	Erection of detached timber garage and workshop outbuilding with storage, following demolition of existing detached outbuilding/garage (as amended by plans received on 14/10/2025).

RECOMMENDATION:
Reluctantly, I consider that a heritage-based objection is not sustainable considering what is currently there and what has previously been granted permission. I raise **NO OBJECTION** on the basis that the proposal will satisfy the provisions of Sections 66(1) and 72(1) 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 building's special character

The proposal will have a small impact upon the wider setting of nearby listed buildings.

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

The proposal will have an impact upon the RCA's appearance.

Harm, preserve or enhance.

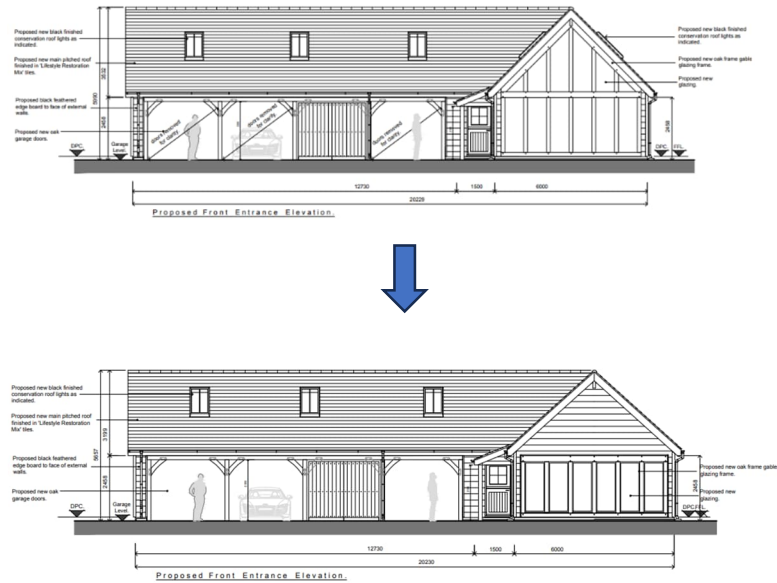
There would be no harm occasioned to the RCA.

DETAILED ANALYSIS AND CONSIDERATIONS:

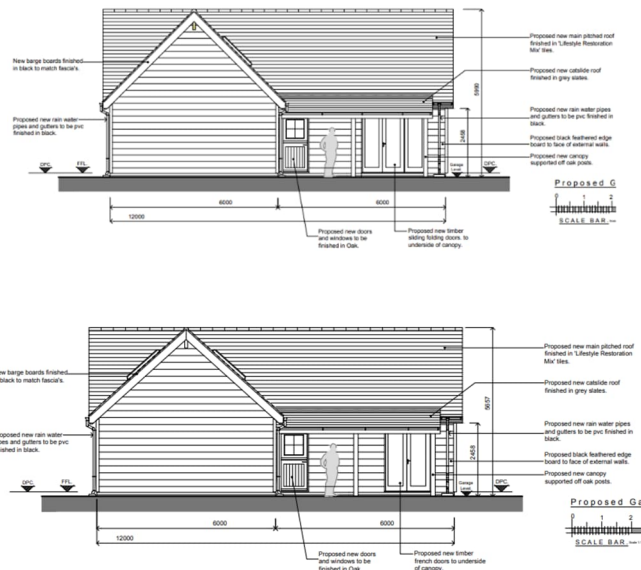
This is a response to amended plans received on 14 October 2025

As stated previously, it is considered that the outbuilding's appearance as a low, linear outbuilding is such that it has a relatively neutral impact on the character and appearance of the RCA. I note two garage/outbuildings in a more conspicuous location south of Old Thatches.

Previously I queried the amount of glazing to the north and west elevation of gym/office. I see that the front gable glazing has been reduced (replaced with horizontal boarding above the ground floor glazing) and that the side light has been omitted alongside the pair of doors on the side elevation. **I still consider that the glazing could be reduced further by replacing the outer panes with weatherboarding thus providing a 4no. glazed insert** but to be honest on its own this would not be a sufficient matter to justify refusal on heritage grounds.



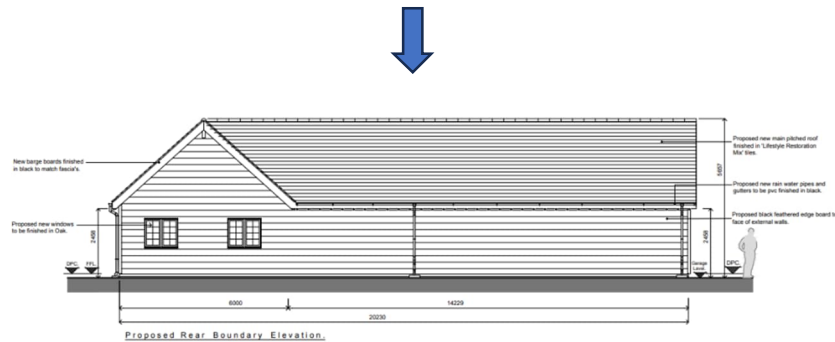
and from the following



to this...

I also questioned the need for 8no. roof lights and the 2no. external entrances, suggesting that access to the workshop could perhaps be taken through gym/office space. It is noted that roof lights are reduced to 4no. only.





As stated previously, the current proposal would result in a similar 'L-shaped arrangement' to that of the existing building + the scheme approved under ref: 13/00053/1HH (had that been implemented). Whilst similar in form, the current proposal is nonetheless wider and taller. Although I appreciate the similarities here, the erection of a 20,230mm long building with a 5990mm ridge and 6000m gable widths will result in a substantial building when compared with the existing. Furthermore, the cumulative impact of the framed and glazed west facing gable end, the glazed doors to the north elevation, small-pane windows, and several roof lights, would result in an outbuilding with an overly residential character.

It is also worthwhile noting that there have also been previous enquiries under refs: 17/01538/1PRE & 17/04088/PRE to locate a new dwelling to the west of this outbuilding but also demolishing the outbuilding to form a garage building serving the new dwelling. Officer responses were issued on 19 June 2017 and 13 December 2017 respectively and whilst the content of those enquiries remain confidential, the conclusion that an application of the type presented for pre-app in 2017 would not be supported in this location, is to an extent relevant but the policy position may have changed.

Does the case officer intend removing any PD rights?

Suggested conditions

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.

3. The roof shall be covered with 'Lifestyle Restoration Mix' clay tiles as stated on the approved drawings unless otherwise agreed and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the development will have an acceptable appearance which does not detract from the appearance and character of the surrounding

area and to comply with Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 to 2031.	
4. Section details of the new windows including a 1:1 scale drawing of the glazing bars shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the manufacture of the windows. Thereafter, the windows shall be installed in accordance with the approved details. Reason: To ensure that the development will have an acceptable appearance which does not detract from the appearance and character of the surrounding area and to comply with Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 to 2031.	
HERITAGE POLICY ASSESSMENT: Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990: Sections 66(1) and 72(1) North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031: Policy HE1 NPPF (December 2024): The following paragraphs are relevant: • 135 c) (<i>sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment</i>), • 207 (<i>local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting</i>) • 210 (<i>desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness</i>), • 212 (<i>great weight should be given to the asset's conservation</i>), • 213 (<i>clear and convincing justification</i>), and • 215 (<i>harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use</i>).	
CONCLUSION: This comes down to a judgement of whether there would harm to the setting and potentially the significance of nearby listed buildings and what would be the impact upon the character and appearance of the Rushden Conservation Area. There would be no direct impact upon the significance of listed buildings. Although the size of the building concerns me, the improvements to the building's external appearance is more respectful of the character and appearance of the RCA. I remain convinced that this proposal has the potential to be transformed into residential at a later date but clearly that would be considered on its own merits if such an application materialised. A smaller building with less glazing would more readily convey the attributes of an outbuilding but there appears to be a reluctance on the part of the applicant to reduce the building's length by let's say one tractor bay so I have given my recommendation at the top of this report.	
OFFICER: Mark Simmons	DATE: 17/10/2025