

CONSERVATION TEAM CONSULTATION APPLICATION RESPONSE

APPLICATION REF:	26/01511/FPH
CASE OFFICER:	VW
APPLICATION SITE:	35 High Street, Ashwell, Baldock, Hertfordshire, SG7 5NP
DESCRIPTION OF WORKS:	Erection of detached three bay cart lodge following demolition of existing outbuilding and associated cellar. Installation of external storage area and hardstanding to provide additional parking spaces.

RECOMMENDATION:

Considering previous planning history and that the outbuilding has been heavily reworked I find the proposal generally acceptable. However, I have sought to justify as to why the external appearance of the replacement building concerns me and I await feedback on this point. Having said that I am minded ultimately to raise **NO OBJECTION** on the grounds that the proposal will satisfy Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Section 20 of the NPPF, and Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011–2031.

SITE CONTEXT:

No.35 High Street is not listed but is in Ashwell Conservation Area. The submitted Design and Access Statement states:

Historic building recording undertaken in 2012, which included 35 High Street as part of a wider assessment of former Whitby Farm buildings, provides valuable insight into the development of the site. The study indicates that No. 35 formed part of an extended farmstead associated with Whitby Farm during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when the Angell family expanded and reorganised the holding. As the farm grew beyond its earlier core on Silver Street, agricultural structures were introduced along High Street, including the outbuilding at No.35.

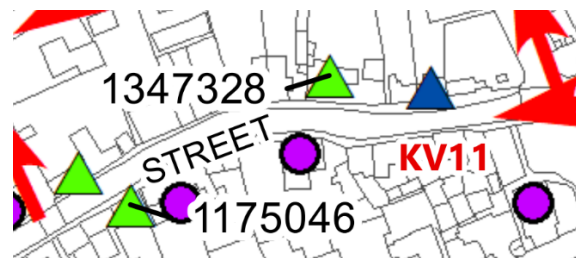


The map extract below provided with permission from the National Library of Scotland indicates that Angell Farm and Whitby Farm were previously known as Wallers Farm. No.35 and its associated outbuilding existed at this time 1880's. It is plausible that no.35 is early-mid C19 and it is understood that the rear wing to no.35 was erected in 1918.

Cambridgeshire LVII.14
 Surveyed: 1877 to 1886, Published: 1888

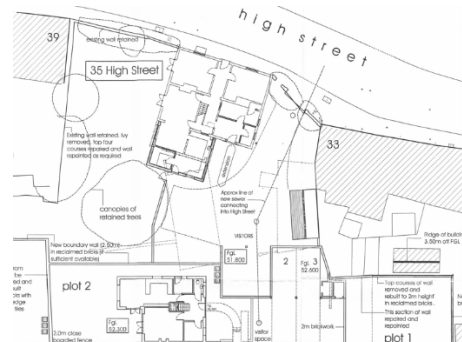
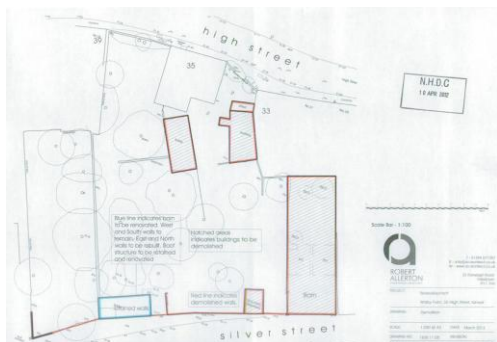


No.35 is referred to as a 'Positive Building' on the conservation area map (see below) as part of the Ashwell Conservation Area Character Statement [ACACS) prepared by Wood (April 2019). The building falls within Character Area 1 – Ashwell's Historic Core in the Ashwell Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan [ACACAMP] prepared by Place Services (Feb 2023). The outbuilding to which this application relates is neither listed, a BLI or recognised as a positive building in either the ACACS or ACACAMP.

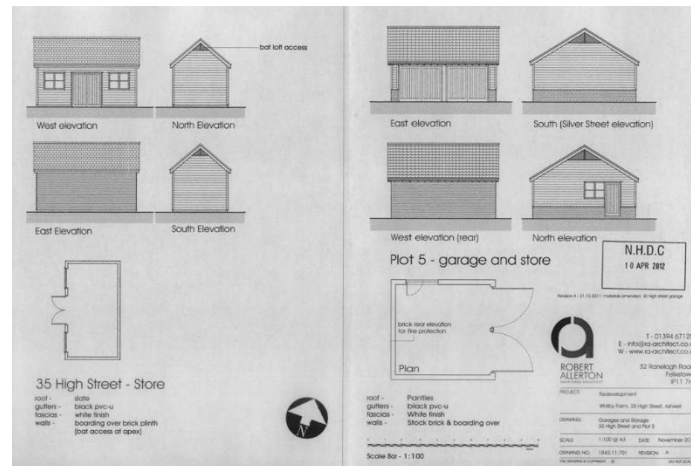


DETAILED ANALYSIS AND CONSIDERATIONS:

The outbuilding is one of several buildings that were granted Conservation Area Consent to be demolished under ref: 12/00813/1CAC (see plan below left) but clearly this was not fully implemented when a redevelopment scheme was implemented under ref: 12/00812/1 (extract below right) for 'Erection of 5 dwellings comprising of 1 four bedroom detached house with detached double garage, 2 four bedroom detached houses with attached double car ports and 2 three bedroom dwellings with double car port and storage, following demolition of existing farm buildings. Access road to plots 1-4 (inc) and access to plot 5 from Silver Street. Associated boundary walls and fencing. Two storey extension, first floor window in east elevation of existing house, double car port and new storage building to 35 High Street following demolition of existing rear extension and outbuildings'.



Under ref: 12/00812/1 permission was granted for the erection of the left-hand building on the plan below in the location of the existing outbuilding at no.35 High Street. At best, the approved replacement store building would have had a neutral impact upon the character and appearance of Ashwell Conservation Area.



The submitted Design and Access Statement for the current application reads as follows:

Heritage and Policy Compliance

The site contains no listed buildings; however, it lies within the Ashwell Conservation Area and in proximity to several listed buildings along High Street. The proposals have therefore been developed with full regard to the statutory duty under Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area, and with appropriate consideration of the setting of nearby designated heritage assets.

Although the outbuilding itself is not listed, the scheme adopts a proportionate, conservation minded approach that retains the boundary wall, maintains the historic character of the site, and ensures that the cart lodge and principal frontage structures remain unchanged. These measures collectively safeguard the contribution the site makes to the wider Conservation Area and ensure that the proposals do not adversely affect the setting of nearby listed buildings.

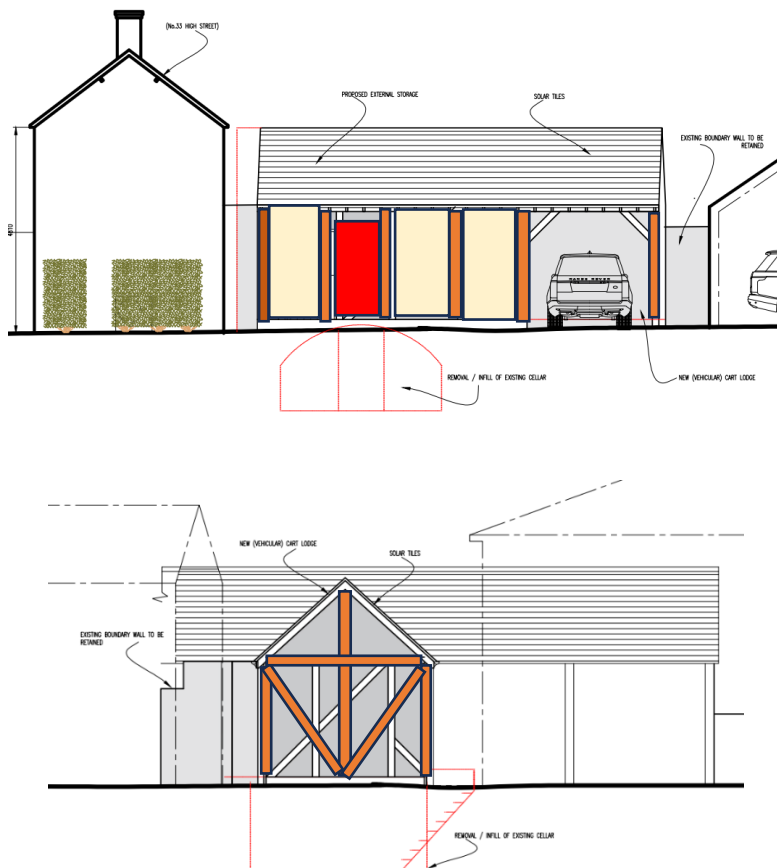
The proposals accord with the National Planning Policy Framework (2021), particularly paragraphs 131 and 180, which encourage biodiversity enhancement and require development to respond positively to local character. The works also comply with Section 211 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 in relation to tree works within Conservation Areas. Local planning policy within the North Hertfordshire Local Plan supports the retention and enhancement of heritage assets, the provision of adequate parking and the sensitive integration of landscaping. The proposals meet these objectives by improving the functional aspects of the site while maintaining and reinforcing its historic character and appearance.

With reference to some of the photos taken by the case officer, the outbuilding is of some historic interest as a probable mid C19 building and the cellar is an unusual find in this location. The building has partly been re-roofed and whilst it is desirable to retain structures such as this it is difficult to mount a convincing heritage argument for retention. With reference to the following extract from the submitted DAS, I am not entirely in agreement that *'the vaulted cellar beneath the outbuilding is a characteristic feature of historic agricultural buildings in the area'*.

The vaulted cellar beneath the outbuilding is a characteristic feature of historic agricultural buildings in the area, providing cool, stable storage conditions that supported farm operations. It is also plausible that the outbuilding served historically as a small stable or ancillary agricultural structure.



If I were to make any further comment it would be the rather surprising choice of external finish. I would have thought that a more conventional weatherboarded finish would be proposed as I question the longevity of an exposed scantling frame and indeed the position of the diagonal bracing. I encourage a weatherboarded finish or, if the applicant wishes to continue with an exposed frame option, that consideration is given to a more robust and architecturally legible oak framing option (highlighted below) including perhaps curved as opposed to straight knee braces to the car port and slightly moving the door position with may have an 'open' slated fanlight above.



HERITAGE POLICY ASSESSMENT:

Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990:
Section 72(1)

North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031:
Policy HE1

NPPF (August 2026):
Section 20

CONCLUSION:

The conclusion in the DAS reads as follows:

The proposals represent a heritage sensitive and proportionate response to the site's historic context. The complete removal of the existing outbuilding, with retention of the clunch boundary wall, allows the creation of a level and functional courtyard and driveway, improving vehicular circulation and safety. The introduction of a new three-bay open cart lodge with one bay providing enclosed storage provides practical facilities without compromising the openness or character of the site.

Overall, the scheme preserves and enhances the visual and historic qualities of the property and the wider Conservation Area, while delivering practical, long-term benefits for the occupants of 35 High Street.

Whilst finding the scheme unobjectionable there is certainly good reason to question the external appearance of the replacement building before determination.

OFFICER: Mark Simmons

DATE: 09/09/2026