

North Hertfordshire District Council

Building Conservation comments

File Ref: 25/00309/FP

Date: 27/05/2025

Planning Officer: HT

Address: Ivy's Cottage, Smiths End Lane, Barley, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 8LH

Subject: Erection of one detached self-build 2-bed retirement dwelling and ancillary works.

1.0 Recommendation

- 1.1 This is a rare occasion where I have come to a different conclusion to that of a previous proposal on the same site less than 3 years ago. Subject to a suggested slight modification (chimney stack) and contrary to my recommendation under ref: 22/00852/OP, it is considered that the proposed dwelling will not occasion harm to the significance of Ravello Rose (grade II) or to the character or appearance of the BCA thus satisfying the provisions of Sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (LB & CA) Act 1990 and will accord with Section 16 of the Framework or Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 – 2031. Consequently, I find the proposal **UNOBJECTIONABLE**.

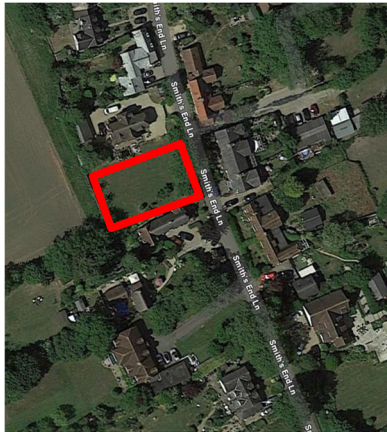
2.0 The Local Plan and NPPF

- 2.1 Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 - 2031 is relevant as are the following paragraphs of the NPPF:
- **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*).

3.0 Context

- 3.1 As stated at 1.2 of the Combined Planning and Heritage Statement: *The property is not listed but the site is within the Barley Conservation Area and is immediately adjacent to Ravello Rose Cottage which is Grade II listed. Smiths End Lane comprises a linear ribbon section of development running southwards from the village centre. It is surrounded by arable agricultural land consisting of large enclosed fields.*
- 3.2 The BCA and Ravello Rose are Designated Heritage Assets for the purpose of applying the aims of Section 16 of the NPPF. The listed building was added to the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest on 3 June 1987 (see link below for description):

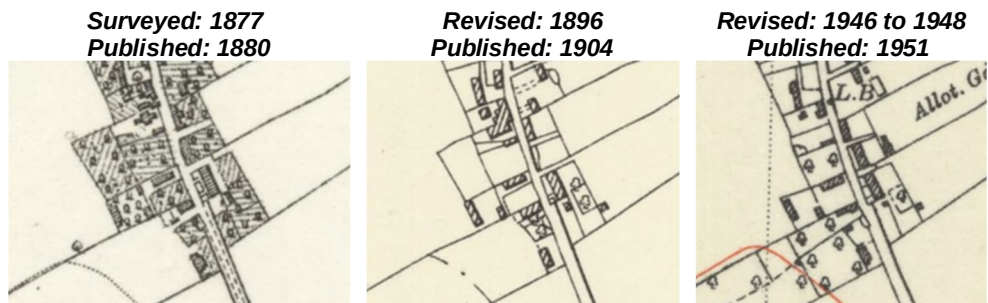
<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1347393?section=official-list-entry>



3.3 At 2.1.2 of the BCA Character Statement it says:

".....Smith's End and the area at the west of the village have a feel of being somewhat separated from the rest of Barley, although this is partly due to their elevation above most of the village. Secondary streets rising from the main streets, including Hanaper Drive, School Lane, Pudding Lane and Crossways, contain most of Barley's modern buildings, which has helped the Conservation Area retain a distinct, mixed historic character. Buildings at the corner of London Road and High Street have been lost and the site is currently occupied by a coach garage."

3.4 Historic map bases have been assessed, and it is noted that the application site has always appeared to have been an open site from at least 1877.



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3.5 The current site has an interesting planning history spanning the last 28 years. Planning permission was refused on 21 April 1994 for two dwellings under ref: 94/0259/1 followed by the granting of planning permission for one dwelling under ref: 99/1214/1. This raises the question that if a scheme of better quality had been proposed in 1994 would a two-dwelling scheme have been supported? The fact is that only one was considered acceptable 5 years later at which time the former Principal Conservation Officer stated:

"In part, this piece of land has value as open space contributing to the character and appearance of this part of Barley Conservation Area. However, the northern part of the site is occupied by outbuildings which are rather unsightly and detract from the appearance of the area. By demolishing them and introducing a small cottage in their place, the general openness of the site will still be retained. In design terms, the proposed cottage reflects the character of existing traditional vernacular buildings in the immediate vicinity and in the rural areas of the district generally."

- 3.6 In the officer's report relating to the latter application, it says:

"Furthermore, the siting of the proposed dwelling and a garage in the northern half of the site would not, I consider, impinge unacceptably on the setting of the Listed Building, Ravello Rose."

Later in the same report it says that:

"...it is considered that the demolition of the existing buildings and their replacement by the particular dwelling proposed now has the potential for enhancement of the Conservation Area...."

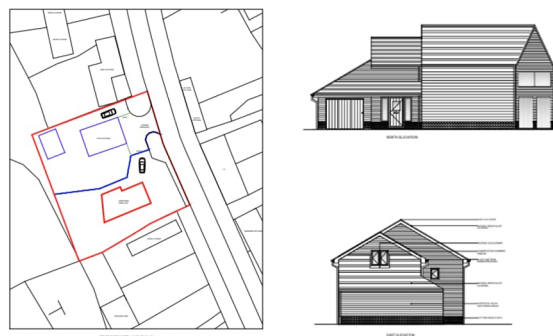
- 3.7 Then, on 31 January 2002, under ref: 01/01707/1, conditional permission was granted for 'Detached four-bedroom dwellinghouse with detached double garage/store with ancillary storage space in roof (as variation of previous planning permission ref no. 99/1214/1 granted on 18th November 1999) amended by drawing numbers 9921/01B, 9921/02B and 9921/03B'. This is Ivy's Cottage.

- 3.8 As stated at 2.1 of the Combined Planning and Heritage Statement, in March 2022 an application was submitted in outline form for the erection of a two-storey dwelling and garage in the garden of Ivy's Cottage. Upon submission, the Council felt that it was not able to consider the application without it being accompanied by details of the appearance, scale and layout of the dwelling. Those details were submitted, and the application (reference 22/00852/OP) was refused on 15th September 2022 for the following reason:

The application site has remained undeveloped since the first edition OS approximately 150 years ago. Ravello Rose and other listed buildings nearby have enjoyed an edge-of-countryside setting since the Barley Conservation Area was designated in 1969 and this cluster of heritage assets together with the verdant gap between Ivy's Cottage and Ravello Rose, make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. In contrast, the height, form, fenestration and position of the proposed dwelling would not make a positive contribution to Ravello Rose's setting or respond positively to Ivy's Cottage and would have an erosive impact upon the character and appearance of the Barley Conservation Area. The proposal would occasion some limited harm to the setting of Ravello Rose harming this building's significance. The proposal would fail to satisfy the provisions of Sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and as supported by the aims of Section 16 of the NPPF and the aims of Policy HE1 of the emerging North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 Incorporating the Proposed Main Modifications (November 2018) and further Proposed Modifications (May 2021).

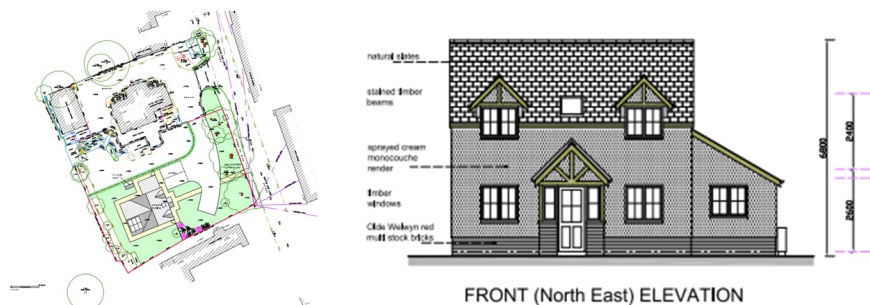
- 3.9 The key issue here is deciding whether the heritage reasons for objecting to the scheme previously i.e. setting of Ravello Cottage and impact upon the character and appearance of the BCA still stands now or whether it is appropriate to take an alternative look at the site and the proposal?
- 3.10 As stated at 1.2 and 1.3 above, Barley has seen relatively little modern development and Smith's End Lane and the area at the west of the village have a feel of being somewhat separated from the rest of Barley. Under the 1994 refused scheme, the case officer considered that two dwellings would consolidate the sporadic development in the locality and be visually detrimental to this area of attractive countryside.

- 3.11 In considering these two points, under ref: 22/00852/OP I said that I was not convinced that development at the southern end of Smiths End Lane can be considered to be 'sporadic' nor am I am convinced that this site is read as being in an area of attractive countryside. There are effectively three 'pockets' of development along Smiths End Lane with the first being at the junction with London Road followed by a central 'pocket' then the most southerly 'pocket' which includes the application site. To a certain extent, development along Smiths End Lane may be regarded as 'sporadic' but within the southern 'pocket', the grain of development is of buildings either set back from the lane or with shallow front gardens with buildings at regular intervals in this 'pocket'.
- 3.12 I previously held the opinion that the site is an open, grassed, large side garden to Ivy's Cottage but it is not identified as an important open space, and the plot sits behind a well-established Laurel hedge and well-treed frontage. In my opinion, the site does not possess a significant degree of openness, and I concluded that the development would also not, in my opinion have any significant bearing upon the four terraced properties on the opposite side of the road.
- 3.13 Nonetheless, I took the view that the new dwelling would be a notable addition when viewed from the entrance to the site or by Ravello Rose to the south and due to its appearance, would potentially have an erosive impact upon this building's setting, hence harming its significance.



4.0 The Proposal

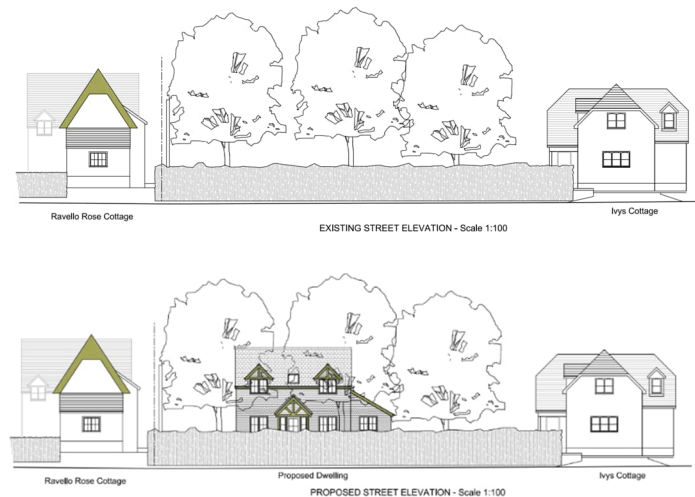
- 4.1 What is now proposed is different to the 2022 scheme in terms of height, form, fenestration, position, and orientation.



- 4.2 In 2022, I made reference to an appeal on land between Cherry Holt and 2 Caldecote Road, Newnham suggesting a similar context to that under consideration here. Application ref 22/00346/FP for a dwelling was dismissed at appeal and para 13 of the Inspector's Report is noted.

13. I note that the proposed dwelling is intended to be reflective of a barn and dominant architectural features in the area. However, its proportions, roof design, wall dormers and fenestration taken together would result in a prominent dwelling with a modern aesthetic that would contrast negatively with the prevailing traditional form of Cherry Holt. For these reasons, the proposed dwelling would be poorly juxtaposed with, compete in views of and detract from the listed building. **Furthermore, due to the scale and position of the proposed dwelling, the infilling of the gap between the existing dwellings would harm the open and spacious setting of the listed building. Similarly, the loose-knit pattern of development and verdant character of the conservation area would be adversely affected by the replacement of a significant proportion of the garden with a new dwelling between the buildings.** The presence of existing and proposed landscaping would not provide mitigation to the extent that the issues identified would be addressed.

- 4.3 The main difference between this site and the Newnham site is that Cherry Holt did not present a relatively blank side elevation onto the adjoining site in the way that Ravello Rose does, and Ivy's Cottage does not have the same positive impact upon the streetscene as nos. 1 and 2 Caldecote Road do at Newnham. For these reasons, I consider that this side garden makes less of a contribution to the BCA when compared with the contribution made to the NCA by the side garden of no.2 Caldecote Road.



- 4.4 I am aware that the BPC has raised an objection, and I understand their reasons for doing so. It is not often that I take a different position to that I have recently given but on this occasion, I have reconsidered the heritage aspects of this case. Notwithstanding the contemporary rear elevation with rear external deck/balcony, I find that the improvements to the built form when compared with the scheme 3 years ago can be supported. Ideally, however, I would like to see a side or ridge chimney stack introduced to complement the building's traditional cottage appearance and downpipes introduced that would serve to define side gable proportions. Otherwise, I conclude that no harm would be occasioned to the significance of Ravello Rose or to the character or appearance of the BCA.
- 4.5 I advise that it may be prudent to withdraw Class E PD rights if the scheme is recommended for approval and we should also condition sample roof materials and window details.

Mark Simmons
Senior Conservation Officer