

North Hertfordshire District Council

Building Conservation comments

File Ref: 25/00926/FP

Date: 13/06/2025

Planning Officer: AHD

Address: Friends Green Farm, Friends Green, Damask Green Road, Weston, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG4 7BU

Subject: Use of buildings as (Sui Generis) car sales and (Use Class B2 general industrial) car servicing. Alterations to fenestration to building 1 and retention of southern vehicular access.

1.0 Recommendation

- 1.1 I previously commented on 14 August 2023 under ref: 23/01259/FP, having said that, no formal conservation input was provided with respect to the existing buildings obtaining planning permission. Previously, it has been reported that there is no direct impact upon heritage assets from these structures even though I previously suggested that the cumulative impact of three implemented schemes under refs: 15/02582/1, 18/00663/FPH & 21/00411/FP together with further potential buildings under refs: 22/02883/FP & 23/01478/FP, would further erode the agrarian character of the immediate surroundings north and south of the farmhouse.
- 1.2 Matters relating to use I leave with the case officer but in terms of alterations to fenestration to building 1 and retention of southern vehicular access, these are considered in terms of whether they are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment, would make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness and not harm the setting (and in doing so the significance) of the group of grade II listed buildings at Friends Green Farm.
- 1.3 The proposed development would therefore satisfy the provisions of Section 66(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** in heritage terms.

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 The Proposal

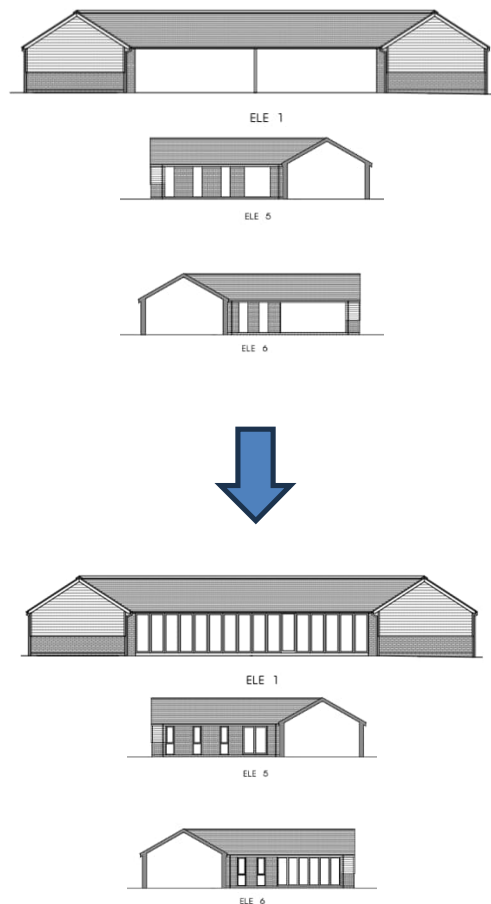
3.1 It is noted at 2.2.1 of the Planning Statement that:

The site has temporary consent under reference 23/01259/FP for the change of use of existing stables to car sales and servicing. This application seeks a permanent consent, given there is now under 12-months for the temporary consent to run, allowing this application sufficient time to go through the Planning process.

3.2 At 6.2.2 the following is noted:

The design of the buildings has been in accordance with the approved scheme under 17/04137/S73, albeit with the proposals including the modest alteration Building 1 which would include the erection of internal walls, as a well as new windows and bi-fold doors, to allow this building to be enclosed rather than open facing the internal courtyard.

3.3 In my opinion, the fenestration changes and southern vehicular access would not have any significant and noticeable impact upon the wider setting of the group of grade II listed buildings at Friends Green Farm.



Mark Simmons
Senior Conservation Officer