

M Scott / Architectural Design

Design, Access and Heritage Statement Listed Building Consent Application

for

Alteration and retention of existing extension as mono-pitch clad single-storey element

At

Bridleways Hill End Farm Lane, Langley, Hitchin, SG4 7PT.



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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Design, Access and Heritage Statement has been prepared in support of an application for Listed Building Consent for alterations to an existing addition on the west elevation of the Grade II listed Bridleways, Hill End Farm Lane, Langley.
- 1.2. The proposal seeks consent for the removal of most of an existing conservatory structure and its alteration into a modest mono-pitch lean-to addition, designed to better reflect the historic agricultural character of the building.
- 1.3. The existing conservatory has previously been the subject of planning refusals and enforcement action due to concerns regarding its domestic appearance and impact on the character of the listed building. The current proposal responds directly to these concerns by substantially revising the design, form and materials of the structure.
- 1.4. Pre-application advice was sought from North Hertfordshire District Council (Ref: 25/02926/PREL B). The Council's response confirmed that the revised proposal, involving the alteration of the existing addition to form a mono-pitch clad element, is supported in principle, subject to the submission of a formal Listed Building Consent application and appropriate details of materials.

2. Site and Heritage Asset

- 2.1. Bridleways is a listed former agricultural barn located within a rural setting on Hill End Farm Lane near Langley.
- 2.2. The building forms part of a group of historic farm buildings that reflect the agricultural origins of the site. The structure displays the simple and functional architectural characteristics typical of traditional barns, with a straightforward form and materials reflecting its historic use.



Figure 01 - Site Plan

- 2.3. Agricultural buildings of this type are typically characterised by:
 - simple roof forms
 - utilitarian construction
 - modest openings
 - functional additions and lean-to structures

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- 2.4. The significance of the listed building derives from its historic agricultural character and the survival of its simple barn form. As a designated heritage asset, any alterations must preserve the building's special architectural and historic interest.

3. Planning History

- 3.1. The property has a relevant planning history relating to the construction and retention of a conservatory on the west elevation. On 5 October 2021, a split decision was issued under application reference 21/01518/LBC which:
- Granted listed building consent for the retention of a porch on the south elevation and two pairs of glazed doors on the west elevation.
 - Refused listed building consent for the retention of the conservatory on the west elevation.
- 3.2. A subsequent application (21/03129/LBC) sought consent for the retention of the conservatory by setting it forward of the west gable end and linking it to the barn via a recessed weatherboarded link. This application was refused on 11 January 2023. The reason for refusal stated that the conservatory represented an overtly domestic and 'alien' feature within the context of the former agricultural building, resulting in less than substantial harm to the significance of the listed building.
- 3.3. In August 2025, the Local Planning Authority's Enforcement Team advised that the conservatory remained unauthorised and confirmed that alternative proposals could be considered which would better reflect the building's historic character. Pre-application advice was subsequently sought for a revised design approach.

4. Existing Situation

- 4.1. The existing addition on the west elevation takes the form of a largely glazed conservatory structure incorporating modern framing and construction methods.
- 4.2. Due to its highly glazed form, domestic character and contemporary materials, the structure contrasts with the simple and utilitarian appearance of the historic barn. As identified in previous planning decisions, the conservatory introduces a domestic architectural language which is not characteristic of traditional agricultural buildings.
- 4.3. The form, materials and appearance of the conservatory therefore detract from the agricultural character and historic significance of the listed building.

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5. Proposed Development



Figure 02 – Existing conservatory



Figure 03 – Proposed modest mono-pitch lean-to

- 5.1. The proposal seeks to substantially alter the existing structure to create a more sympathetic addition which reflects the agricultural character of the building. The works include:
- The removal of most of the existing conservatory structure.
 - The retention of limited elements of the existing glazing and doors where appropriate.
 - The construction of a mono-pitch lean-to style addition against the west elevation.
- 5.2. The proposed addition has been designed to remain clearly subservient to the main barn, with the mono-pitch roof beginning well below the eaves of the principal roof.
- 5.3. The new structure would incorporate:
- a mono-pitch slate roof to match the main barn roof style
 - two conservation-style rooflights
 - weatherboarded wall cladding to match the existing building
 - glazing and doors integrated within the weatherboarded elevations
- 5.4. The revised design intentionally reflects the form of a traditional lean-to structure; a type of addition commonly associated with agricultural buildings where smaller ancillary spaces were attached to larger barns.

6. Materials

- 6.1. The proposed materials have been selected to ensure that the addition integrates with the existing barn and reflects the simple agricultural character of the building.
- 6.2. The mono-pitch roof will be finished with slate in a dark grey tone. This material has been selected to accommodate the shallow pitch of the proposed roof while remaining consistent with materials commonly found on agricultural buildings.
- 6.3. External walls will be clad in timber weatherboarding, installed to reflect the appearance and arrangement of the existing barn cladding. The boarding will be finished in a colour to match the existing building, ensuring the addition reads as a modest continuation of the barn fabric rather than as a separate domestic structure.

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- 6.4. Openings within the addition will incorporate existing timber framed doors and glazing. This approach replaces the highly glazed appearance of the existing conservatory with a more restrained arrangement that sits comfortably within the weatherboarded elevations.
- 6.5. The roof will include one conservation-style rooflight, positioned flush within the roof slope to minimise visual impact.
- 6.6. Overall, the palette of materials has been carefully selected to ensure the proposed structure remains subservient, simple in appearance, and sympathetic to the historic agricultural character of the listed building.
- 6.7. Material table as follows:

Element	Material	Finish / Colour
Roof	Slate tiles	Dark grey tone to complement the existing barn
Rooflight	Conservation-style rooflight	Dark metal frame, flush with roof slope
External Walls	Timber weatherboarding	Finished to match existing barn cladding colour
Doors	Timber framed doors	Painted or stained to match existing building
Glazing	Timber framed glazing	Painted or stained timber frames to match doors
Rainwater Goods	Metal (cast aluminium or similar)	Black or dark painted finish

7. Heritage Impact Assessment

- 7.1. The proposal has been carefully designed to respond to the concerns raised in previous planning decisions and to better reflect the character and significance of the listed building.
- 7.2. The existing conservatory has been identified as harmful to the building due to its highly glazed form, domestic appearance and modern materials. The proposed works would remove much of this structure and replace it with a form which is more consistent with traditional agricultural buildings.
- 7.3. The proposed lean-to structure is deliberately simple in form and positioned significantly below the eaves of the main barn to ensure that the historic building remains visually dominant.
- 7.4. Lean-to additions are commonly associated with barns and agricultural buildings where smaller ancillary spaces were added over time for practical purposes. The proposed structure therefore reflects a form of development which is historically consistent with agricultural buildings of this type.
- 7.5. The use of weatherboarded cladding and a tiled mono-pitch roof helps to visually integrate the addition with the existing building, reducing the domestic appearance previously associated with the conservatory.

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- 7.6. Overall, the proposal represents a significant improvement over the existing unauthorised structure, replacing a domestic conservatory with a simple lean-to addition that better reflects the agricultural character of the listed building.

8. Planning Policy Context

- 8.1. Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's policy for conserving and enhancing the historic environment. It requires great weight to be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets when considering development proposals affecting their significance.
- 8.2. Paragraph 197 of the NPPF recognises the importance of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and ensuring that new development makes a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- 8.3. Paragraphs 199 and 200 confirm that great weight should be given to the conservation of heritage assets and that any harm to their significance requires clear and convincing justification. Where proposals would lead to less than substantial harm, paragraph 202 requires that this harm is weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
- 8.4. Paragraph 206 further encourages proposals within the setting of heritage assets that preserve or better reveal their significance.
- 8.5. At the local level, the proposal has also been considered against Policy HE1 of the emerging North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011–2031, which seeks to ensure that development affecting heritage assets preserves their significance, character and setting.
- 8.6. The assessment of the site and its surroundings have also been informed by Historic England guidance, including Good Practice Advice Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (Dec 2017).
- 8.7. The proposal has been designed in accordance with these policy objectives by removing a visually intrusive domestic structure and replacing it with a more sympathetic addition reflecting the agricultural character of the historic barn, thereby preserving its significance and setting.
- 8.8. In summary, the proposal is designed to avoid harm to the designated heritage asset and its setting. Where any impact is identified, it is assessed as neutral or beneficial, ensuring compliance with the NPPF's requirement to conserve heritage assets and to weigh any less than substantial harm against public benefits.

9. Conclusion

- 9.1. The application seeks consent for the alteration of an existing unauthorised conservatory structure on the west elevation of the listed barn at Bridleways.
- 9.2. The proposal would remove much of the existing conservatory and replace it with a modest mono-pitch lean-to addition designed to reflect the traditional character of agricultural buildings.
- 9.3. The revised form, materials and scale of the proposed structure would create a more sympathetic and subordinate addition which integrates more successfully with the character of the listed building.

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- 9.4. The proposal therefore represents an improvement to the existing situation and preserves the character and significance of the heritage asset.
- 9.5. Pre-application advice from North Hertfordshire District Council confirmed that the proposal is supported in principle, and it is therefore respectfully requested that Listed Building Consent be granted.

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