

CONSERVATION TEAM CONSULTATION APPLICATION RESPONSE

APPLICATION REF:	25/02229/FPH
CASE OFFICER:	VW
APPLICATION SITE:	Hinxworth House, New Inn Road, Hinxworth, Baldock Hertfordshire SG7 5HG
DESCRIPTION OF WORKS:	Erection of a detached annexe with decking, following the demolition of the existing summerhouse (revised scheme further to that approved under planning application reference 22/03214/FPH granted on 08.02.2023).

RECOMMENDATION:
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 listed building's significance and the character and appearance of the Hinxworth Conservation Area (HCA)
Considering: a) the 30m distance between the house and annexe with an intervening tree screen; b) the boundary treatments to the north and east; c) the removal of the shingle roof, timber-framed summerhouse and d) subject to having a clearer understanding of the alterations to be made to the site topography and what the final height of the annexe would be relatively to the nearby boundaries, I conclude that the annexe will have a relatively neutral impact upon the HCA and the setting of Hinxworth House.

Harm, preserve or enhance.
The significance of Hinxworth House and the character & appearance of the HCA will not be harmed.

SITE CONTEXT:
Hinxworth House and a garden wall are both grade II listed and are located within the Hinxworth Conservation Area. The building and area are Designated Heritage Assets for the purpose of applying the aims of Section 16 the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The list entry for the house and wall can be found at the following links:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1308226?section=official-list-entry>

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1102695?section=official-list-entry>

DETAILED ANALYSIS AND CONSIDERATIONS:
The key heritage issues are to consider the impact of the proposal upon:

- The setting of the listed building and how this may affect its significance, and

- The character and appearance of the Hinxworth Conservation Area.

I commented in detail under ref: 21/02386/PREH on 12 April 2022. What has changed in the meantime is the version of the NPPF and the status of the Local Plan. My comments were then considered as essentially conservation support for the following applications:

- **22/03214/FPH** - Erection of a detached one-bedroom annexe with associated decking following the demolition of the existing summerhouse
CP 08.02.2023
- **23/00794/FPH** - Erection of a detached annexe with associated decking following the demolition of the existing summerhouse (as a variation of planning permission 22/03214/FPH granted 08/02/2023)
CP 16.05.2023

The Supporting Statement dated 3 September 2025 accompanying this application states that planning application ref. 23/00794/FPH was approved in May 2023 for a very similar scheme to that approved in February 2023, albeit the proposed annexe was increase in footprint slightly. The Statement says that

The proposed detached annexe is exactly as per that previously approved under application ref. 23/00794/FPH. It is proposed to have a contemporary design based on an HufHaus design 'ART Bungalow Sample 5'. It would have a flat roof with a maximum height of 3.9m when measured from ground level. The ground level on the site of the annexe is proposed to be reduced by approximately 300mm. Its height in context with nearby buildings is shown on drawing PL24A.

Below is a shortened version of my pre-app response in which I stated that the garden grounds contribute positively to the setting of Hinxworth House, therefore, contribute to the dwelling's significance even though there is clear evidence to suggest that the character or the site has changed since the beginning of the C20.

A significant consideration is the topography of the site as there is a distinct mound where the annexe would be positioned and where the existing summerhouse sits in a rather elevated position. The summerhouse can be viewed through the shrubbery / tree screen when standing at the driveway to the church (below left). If I have a concern, it is that if the soft landscaping is not maintained in the image below right that the annexe may be more fully experienced at the entrance to the church.



I went on to say it is my understanding that the annexe would be set down, therefore, the site may require significant landscaping works. I raise no objection to the principle of reducing the height of the existing mound or cutting into this mound to set the annexe much lower into the site when compared with the summerhouse. A tree (apparently planted by the applicant 20 years ago) may be affected by the proposal. In my opinion, its removal is unlikely to be objectionable. I advised at the time that a detailed tree and topographical survey are undertaken in support of a formal submission.

I previously stated that unless the proposed annexe is set down within the site, there is a distinct possibility that the annexe could have an impact upon the entrance to the churchyard adjacent particularly at night-time if the glazed clerestory to the east elevation is emitting light on this side. I advised that also in support of a formal submission, accurate site section drawings are provided that show the height relationship between the annexe and grade II listed wall and between the annexe and churchyard boundary.

Site Sections AA and BB below illustrate the relationship between the annexe and front boundary wall in AA and the annexe and churchyard boundary in BB.



I note that Condition 5 below was imposed on the previous permission.

New trees to be planted shall be of native species. This shall be carried out before the end of the first planting season following either the first occupation of any of the building or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner; and any trees or plants which, within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development, die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased, shall be replaced during the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority agrees in writing to vary or dispense with this requirement.

Reason: To be in keeping with the visual amenities of the locality.

Considering the height differential between the annexe roof and the boundaries, the soft landscape buffer could be key here and I am not entirely convinced that the wording of Condition 5 is robust enough. Would we not normally condition a landscape plan – we don't know how many new trees are to be planted, what their species is or where they would be located. I suggest that the reason for the condition is also looked at i.e.

To minimise the impact of annexe from public areas and to maintain the character and appearance of the Hinxworth Conservation Area in accordance with Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan.

The annexe would, in my opinion, introduce a contemporary built form that would sit reasonably happily in its context with views towards the duck pond/small lake. The annexe would be a stand-alone building rather than being seen as a secondary feature related to the house. It would be relatively low and would not have an erosive effect on the wider garden landscape setting to the house, thus would not harm the listed house's significance. It would likely have a small yet harmless effect on the appearance of the Conservation Area in this location particularly if the soft landscape screen is maintained and indeed reinforced.

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)** (*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*).

CONCLUSION:

As set out above, paragraph 212 of the NPPF requires that “... *great weight should be given to the asset's conservation....*”. Paragraph 213 says that “... *Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification*”.

I find this proposal **UNOBJECTIONABLE**.

OFFICER: Mark Simmons

DATE: 10/10/2025