

CONSERVATION TEAM CONSULTATION APPLICATION RESPONSE

APPLICATION REF:	25/01539/FP & 25/01540/LBC
CASE OFFICER:	TR
APPLICATION SITE:	Holborn Farm, Dane End, Therfield, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 9RH
DESCRIPTION OF WORKS:	<i>Extension and conversion of the existing barn into a five bedroom dwelling with associated landscaping, following demolition of non-original stable extension, car port and lean-to structure.</i> <i>Extension and conversion of the existing barn into a five bedroom dwelling with associated landscaping, following demolition of non-original stable extension, car port and lean-to structure. Internal alterations.</i>

RECOMMENDATION:

I raise an **OBJECTION** for the following reasons:

This grade II listed C18, 7-bay barn has three appendages of no special interest. By reason of its height, end form facing the farmhouse, and through-eaves dormer with juliet balcony facing onto the road, the first floor forming the Master Bedroom wing will be an incongruous and assertive addition that will not only erode the barn's agrarian character but will adversely impact upon the setting of the farmhouse harming its significance. The first-floor link between the barn and the north-west annexe will require the removal of historic fabric harming the building's special character. Furthermore, the large, first floor window in the barn's half-hipped end together with the aluminium framed sliding glazed doors to the end elevation of the proposed single-storey addition, will introduce overtly residential accents to the road facing elevation potentially also leading to an increased and unwelcomed degree of illumination at night that would be harmful to the barn's agrarian character. Consequently, it is considered that these aspects of the scheme will fail to satisfy the provisions of Section 66(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. The degree of harm would be moderate on the less than substantial harm continuum and there would be no public benefits. Unlike the extant permission where an optimum viable use would be secured there is no convincing justification provided for the additional accommodation at first floor.

**** The above would apply to ref: 25/01539/FP whilst for ref: 25/01540/LBC, Section 66(1) would need replacing with Section 16(2).**

SHORT SUMMARY:

Impact on listed building's special character and its setting

The proposal will have an adverse impact upon the barn's special character and upon the significance of Holborn Farmhouse.

Harm, preserve or enhance.

The proposal would not preserve or enhance the barn's special character.

SITE CONTEXT:

Holborn Farmhouse and Barn 35M SE Holborn Farmhouse are both grade II listed and are Designated Heritage Assets for the purpose of applying the aims of Section 16 of the NPPF.

Both buildings were added to the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest on 29.01.1986. List entry links are provided below:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1347386?section=official-list-entry>

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1176771?section=official-list-entry>

DETAILED ANALYSIS AND CONSIDERATIONS:

A conversion scheme for the barn was granted last year (see below).

- **23/01220/FP** - Conversion of existing barn into one 4-bed dwelling including extensions, detached car port, widening of existing vehicular access, associated landscaping and parking following demolition of existing stable extension, car port and lean-to structure. (as amended by plan nos 301_R1, 302_R2, 3010_R1 & 313_R1, 304 PR R2 (P3); 303 PR (R1); 300 PR R2 (P3); 100 R2 (P3))
CP 12.04.2024
- **23/01221/LBC** - Conversion to existing barn into one 4-bed dwelling including extensions, detached car port, widening of existing vehicular access, associated landscaping and parking following demolition of existing stable extension, car port and lean-to structure.
CCON 12.04.2024

At page 16 of the Heritage Statement and Impact Assessment [HSIA] it reads:

Contribution of setting

Understanding and appreciation of the significance of Holborn Barn is heavily influenced by its setting, which is formed by the other buildings and open spaces of the farmstead, and the lane, Dane End, which runs past its west wall.

The historic structures on the farmstead have some group value, collectively illustrating the nature of a small historic farmstead in this part of Hertfordshire, and aiding understanding of the historic nature and purpose of the barn. They also form a visually harmonious group of structures, with similar materials, forms and scale, although the poor quality of the stables building does detract from the external appearance of the farmstead. Views to and from the farmhouse and barn are significant.

There is potential for making it a more attractive grouping through better landscaping and removal or adaptation of the non-significant structures. The modern farm buildings to the south-east of the barn detract from the visual appeal of its setting.

Dane End provides significant views of the barn, which allow its scale, use of materials and relationship to the other structures of the farmstead to be appreciated, although the poor quality of the stables building does detract from the visual appeal of the view.

Below is a comparative exercise to make it easier to understand the changes now sought to convert the barn into a 5-bed rather than a 4-bed dwelling. The North Elevation is the view of the barn from the farmhouse. The height of the stables projection (to right) is lower than the eaves of the main barn. Furthermore, the HSIA has the stables down as a detracting building.



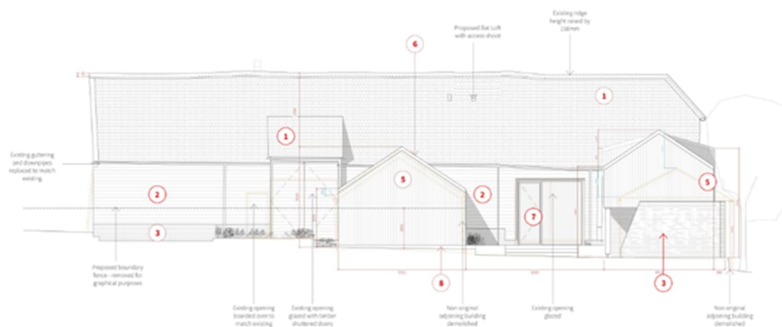
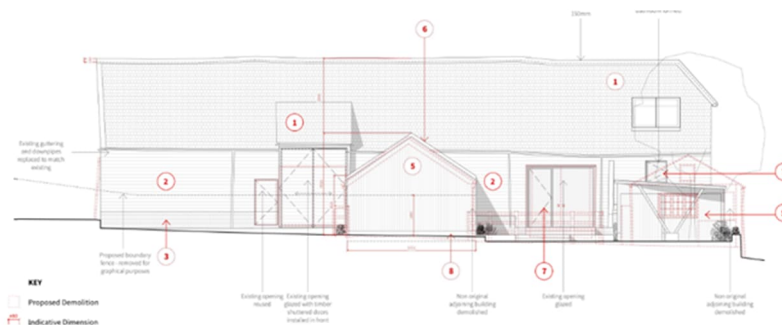
Fig. 4: View south from the farmhouse to the barn, with the shelter shed in front and stables to the right.



The extant permission provided a car port structure in place of the stable wing which was low and open on three sides. It would be a modest replacement addition. However, the current proposal would introduce a taller wing visually interrupting the eaves line and would be formed with undercroft parking with a first-floor gabled form partly carried on support posts.

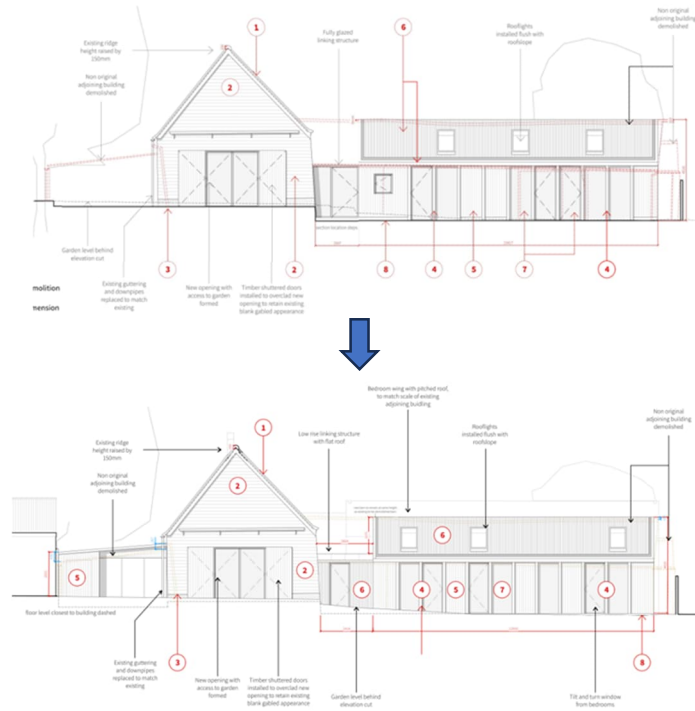
Although the HSIA says that the historic structures of the farmstead *'form a visually harmonious group of structures, with similar materials, forms and scale, although the poor quality of the stables building does detract from the external appearance of the farmstead'*, I do not see the proposed intervention as having a similar harmonious impact. I find the raised form, a somewhat incongruous and assertive feature that would have an erosive impact upon the barn. In contrast, a positive would be the omission of the large rooflight. What should be noted are the Bat Loft Access Shoots which I will come back to later.

North Elevation



The East Elevation is where the least amount of change is proposed and for which I find the proposal unobjectionable.

East Elevation



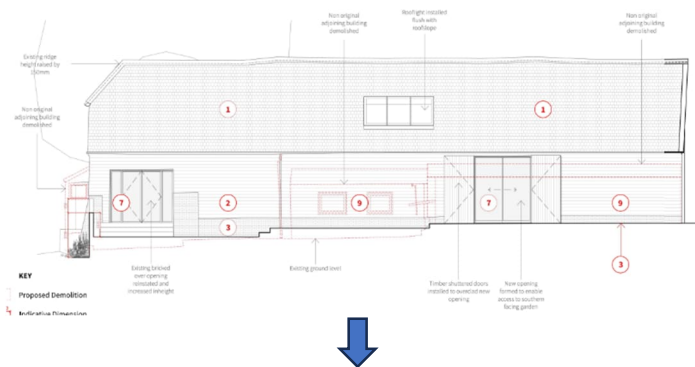
Moving on to the South Elevation, one significant benefit with the extant permission is that this elevation would be better revealed thus aligning with para 219 of the NPPF:

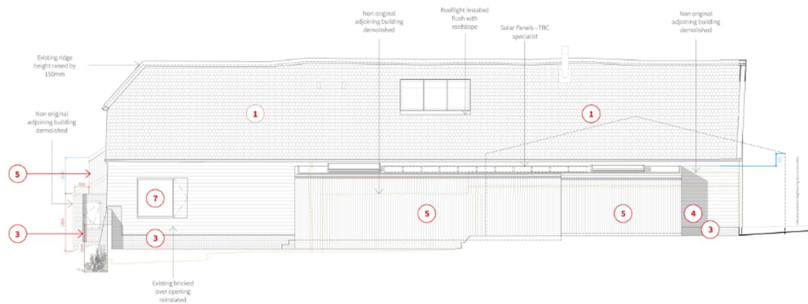
*Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, **to enhance or better reveal their significance**. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.*

Although disappointing to see the single-storey introduced, this still needs to be considered on its own merits. I conclude that an addition here in the form suggested, would not occasion harm.

The extant scheme allowed for a significant opening to be created to the far left-hand side of the elevation. This opening would be reduced down from a pair of glazed doors with sidelights to a single 'picture' window and is considered a modest improvement even though I do not have a full appreciation as to how the timber frame would be affected.

South Elevation





The current scheme would see a single-storey, shallow pitched addition replacing an existing structure (see right-hand photo on page 3 of this report) but unlike the wing proposed to replace the stables, this addition on the South Elevation would not project above the eaves line which is an important consideration.

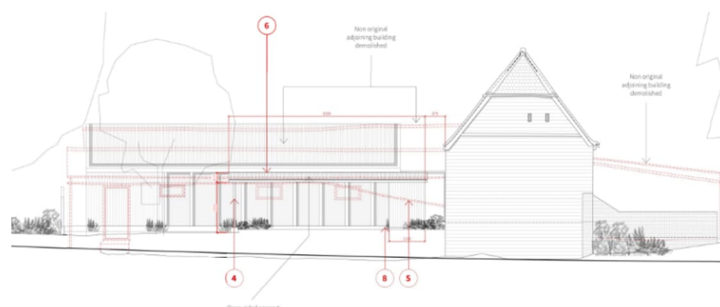
I note the close relationship between the existing lean-to and the storage building to the left in the right-hand image on page 3 of this report and one might conclude that the storage building outside the application site has a rather imposing impact. However, I note that under ref: 24/01283/FP planning permission was granted for '*Erection of detached stables and replace existing storage shed*' on 31 July 2024'. The application address is Holborn Farm Bungalow and the applicant is Ms Clare Malpas whereas the applicant for this current application is Mr Cassidy. It is unfortunate that the implementation of ref: 24/01283/FP cannot be relied upon to be delivered prior to the occupation of the converted barn should this be undertaken.

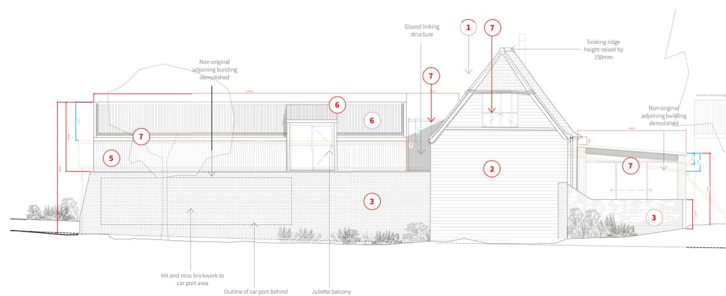
Finally, I turn to the West Elevation which is the elevation that would be appreciated most by those using the adjacent road. Here, the changes between the extent permission and that now proposed are more pronounced and include three significant glazed areas:

- Large, aluminium-framed first floor window in the barn's half-hipped end,
- Mono-pitch, through-eaves dormer with juliet balcony serving a Master Bedroom in place of the stable wing, and
- Aluminium sliding glazed door to the end elevation of the proposed single-storey addition on the south side.

These alterations introduce overtly residential accents in place of the more subtle and sensitively handled extant scheme. In addition, at night time these have the potential to introduce a degree of unwelcomed illumination that would be harmful to the barn agrarian character. Whilst the dormer is objectionable, I would be prepared to consider a more modest, vertical, 'slit' type window in the half-hipped end and a more 'solid' finish to the end of the lean-to addition i.e. black vertical timber cladding.

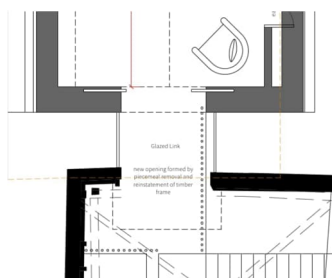
West Elevation





First floor link (junction between barn and north-west annexe)

As noted in the plan extract below, this will require the removal of some historic fabric which was not deemed necessary in the extant scheme.



Heritage Impact Assessment

At page 19 of the HSIA the table below is provided under the subheading 'Heritage Impact Assessment'.

High Positive	The proposed alterations or development will have a major positive impact, improving the character, setting and/or heritage values of the heritage asset. The change would have the potential to reveal and/or enhance several heritage values assigned to the building or setting as defined in the Assessment of Significance.	Minor Detrimental	A small negative impact will be brought about on the setting, character or heritage value of the heritage asset. Localised, minor detrimental impact may be accepted, if it is justified and mitigation measures have been adopted.
Moderate Positive	The proposed alterations or development will have a considerable beneficial impact, improving the character, setting and/or heritage values of the heritage asset. Moderate positive impact on the heritage asset as a whole may be caused by the cumulative minor positive impact on the heritage values of several features. This effect can be direct or indirect.	Moderate Detrimental	The proposed alterations or development will have a negative impact, adversely affecting the character, setting and/or heritage values of the heritage asset. This may be brought about to the heritage asset due to the cumulative minor detrimental impact on the heritage values of several features. This effect can be direct or indirect. Detrimental impact of this nature should be avoided, but it may be possible to accept if demonstrable positive mitigation is in place.
Minor Positive	Minimal beneficial improvements to the significance and character of the heritage asset brought about by the proposals. This can be direct or indirect.	High Detrimental	The proposed changes will have a seriously negative impact on the overall character, setting and/or heritage values of the heritage asset. Features that contribute to the overall heritage values, character or significance of the heritage asset would be disturbed. Major detrimental change should not be considered acceptable.
Neutral	There is no change incurred by the development or alteration on heritage values and significance		

This is a useful tool, however, I do not agree fully with the assessment.

Below are extracts of particular interest. I include item 15 on the basis that this refers to 'Large areas of glazing uncharacteristic of a barn' and is a point I have made earlier in this report.

MINOR DETRIMENTAL	15. Alterations to existing west door in north wall of barn <i>Proposal:</i> To replace the present large doors with new glazed screen and door. <i>Justification:</i> To resolve defects in the existing doors, and provide entrance and daylight and views for the new dwelling. <i>Potential negative impacts:</i> Large area of glazing uncharacteristic of a barn. Location visible at entrance to former farmyard. <i>Mitigation:</i> The present openings and doors are in poor condition and have been subject to makeshift repairs, and require upgrading. The detail design will be crucial. <i>Degree of harm:</i> Less than substantial. <i>Overall Heritage Impact Assessment:</i> MINOR DETRIMENTAL
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The following four extracts are all areas that I have focused on as part of my objection to this scheme. Item 16 is assessed as having a Moderate Detrimental impact with which I

agree. Items 19 and 23 are assessed as having a Minor Detrimental impact but I consider that these also have a Moderate Detrimental impact. Finally, I consider that Item 24 has a Minor Detrimental impact rather than the Neutral impact as stated. The cumulative impact of which is sufficient justification, in my opinion, to merit an objection.

MODERATE DETRIMENTAL	16. Alterations at junction with new north-west annexe	<i>Proposal:</i> New openings to provide access at G/F and 1/F level into new north-west annexe. Repairs to timber framing of external wall to allow removal of prop between bays 6 and 7. <i>Justification:</i> Access to new north-west annexe. <i>Potential negative impacts:</i> Removal of some historic fabric. Cutting through existing wall-plate to give 1/F headroom. 1/F link will be visible externally. <i>Mitigation:</i> The timber framing in this bay has been extensively disturbed and partially replaced by brickwork. The detail design of the 1/F link will be crucial. Removal of prop is beneficial. <i>Degree of harm:</i> Moderate. <i>Overall Heritage Impact Assessment:</i> MODERATE DETRIMENTAL
MINOR DETRIMENTAL	19. New window in west elevation	<i>Proposal:</i> To insert new window in west elevation of barn at high level. <i>Justification:</i> To provide light to new accommodation. <i>Potential negative impacts:</i> Alteration to present blank west elevation of barn. <i>Mitigation:</i> The window at high level will not be prominent in views of the barn from Dane End. The detail design of the new opening will be crucial. <i>Degree of harm:</i> Less than substantial. <i>Overall Heritage Impact Assessment:</i> MINOR DETRIMENTAL
MINOR DETRIMENTAL	23. New north-west annexe	<i>Proposal:</i> To build a new annex on the approximate footprint of the existing north-west annexe, with some open carport space at G/F and bedroom accommodation in 1/F attics. <i>Justification:</i> To provide accommodation for new use of the barn. <i>Potential negative impact:</i> Increased ridge height will cause some obstruction of views of the roof of the heritage barn. <i>Mitigation:</i> G/F brick wall facing Dane End replicates the scale of the existing wall; attic accommodation set back. Minimal impact of the setting of the heritage farmhouse and barn when viewed from the original farmyard between the buildings. <i>Degree of harm:</i> Less than substantial. <i>Overall Heritage Impact Assessment:</i> MINOR DETRIMENTAL
NEUTRAL	24. New south-east lean-to annexe	<i>Proposal:</i> To build a new annex occupying part of the footprint of the existing south-east annexe, set back from the east elevation of the heritage barn. <i>Justification:</i> To accommodate an exercise room. <i>Potential negative impact:</i> Minimal. <i>Mitigation:</i> The new annexe is not prominent in views of the heritage barn. The low pitch roof does not interrupt the eaves of the heritage barn. Photo-voltaic cells on roof. <i>Degree of harm:</i> None, subject to appropriate detailing. <i>Overall Heritage Impact Assessment:</i> NEUTRAL

Bats

Are we satisfied that relocating the bat loft will not adversely affect the presence of bats and the way they would use the building.

Suggested conditions

This is a significantly different scheme to that considered last year. In the event that the case officer is minded to recommend that permission be granted, I advise the following conditions.

1. The work to which this consent relates shall be begun by not later than the expiration of the period of 3 years from the date of this notice.

Reason: To comply with the provisions of Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out wholly in accordance with the details specified in the application and supporting approved documents and plans listed above.

Reason: To ensure the development is carried out in accordance with details which form the basis of this grant of permission.

3. Details and/or samples of materials to be used on all external elevations and the roof of the development hereby permitted shall be submitted to and approved in

writing by the Local Planning Authority before the development is commenced and the approved details shall be implemented on site.

Reason: To ensure that the development will have an acceptable appearance which does not detract from the appearance and character of the surrounding area and to comply with Policy D1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 to 2031.

4. Details of all structural works to the barn's envelope shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of the development. Thereafter the structural works shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of the listed building to which this consent relates and to comply with Policies SP13 and HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 to 2031.

5. The method of external insulation to include materials to be used, hereby granted planning permission, shall be submitted to and agreed, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority before any works are commenced. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of the listed building to which this consent relates and to comply with Policies SP13 and HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 to 2031

6. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted full details of the new floor in the listed barn including final surface finish shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of the listed building to which this consent relates and to comply with Policies SP13 and HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 to 2031

7. Notwithstanding the detail show on the submitted drawings further details of shutter doors to the primary entrance on the North Elevation shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of works. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of the listed building to which this consent relates and to comply with Policies SP13 and HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 to 2031

8. No development to which this consent relates shall commence until an appropriate programme of historic building recording and analysis has been secured and implemented in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out at all times in strict accordance with the approved scheme, or such other details as may be subsequently agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason : To ensure that an appropriate record is made of the historic building fabric that may be affected by the development

HERITAGE POLICY ASSESSMENT:**Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990:**

Sections 16(2) and 66(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:

The proposal is considered unacceptable.

OFFICER: Mark Simmons

DATE: 16/09/2025