

CONSERVATION TEAM CONSULTATION APPLICATION RESPONSE

APPLICATION REF: 26/00726/FPH & 26/00727/LBC

CASE OFFICER: MT

APPLICATION SITE: Bridleways, Hill End Farm Lane, Langley, Hitchin
Hertfordshire SG4 7PT

DESCRIPTION OF WORKS: Single storey side extension.

RECOMMENDATION:

I raise an **OBJECTION** for the follow reason, but I seek an acceptable compromise:

Bridleways Barn is grade II listed, the significance of which is its C17 timber-frame construction, its historic association with Hill End (Langley End House) and the fact that E.L. Lutyens retained the barn range as part of his scheme c.1911 at Hill End (now Langley End). In terms of form and use of weatherboarding, the proposal is an improvement when compared to the existing 5-sided structure. However, by reason of retaining the glazed sections to the west elevation and introducing a large single roof light, the addition will still have design elements that are considered 'alien' to this former agrarian building, thereby occasioning less than substantial harm to its special character and significance. The addition fails to satisfy the provisions of Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the aims of Section 16 of the NPPF, the aims of Policy HE1 of North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031.

Note: Replace Section 66(1) with 16(2) for the LB application.

Impact on Bridleways.

The proposal will have a small adverse impact upon the above heritage asset.

SITE CONTEXT:

Bridleways (referred to in list entry as 'Barn Range at Bridle Ways') is grade II listed, therefore, a Designated Heritage Asset for the purpose of applying the aims of Section 16 of the NPPF. The list entry can be found at the following link:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1307858?section=official-list-entry>

DETAILED ANALYSIS AND CONSIDERATIONS:

The main issue is to consider the impact of the works on the special character of Bridleways Barn and upon the wider setting of other listed buildings in the vicinity. Recent history includes:

- **21/01518/LBC** - Retention of porch on south elevation and conservatory on west elevation together with two pairs of glazed doors in west gable end providing access into conservatory (as amended by drawing BB.02A received on 05/10/2021).
SPL 06.10.2021
- **21/03129/LBC** - Retention of conservatory on west elevation by setting this forward of the west gable end and linked to the converted barn via a recessed weatherboarded link (as a variation to the Split Decision under ref: 21/01518/LBC on 06.10.2021).
R 11.01.2023

- **21/03500/FPH - Retention of sunroom outbuilding in garden.**
UP 07.06.2022

Bridleways Barn has been subject to residential conversion, involving, amongst other things, the insertion of domestic windows and doors under ref: 98/01573/1LB. There have been a series of 'retention' applications over the years: car port (2001), porch, and pair of double doors in south-west gable end (Oct 2021) and a sunroom (June 2022) and two unsuccessful applications to retain the conservatory.

Under application ref: 98/01573/1LB, a pair of fully glazed doors were granted consent in this gable end and centred on a central post. More recently, a pair of doors were installed either side of the central post and these were granted listed building consent under Split Decision ref: 21/01518/LBC. Furthermore, under application ref: 21/03500/FPH, a detached sunroom outbuilding in the garden and located further to the south-west was granted unconditional permission on 07.06.2022. Therefore, over time and not least because of the residential conversion, Bridleways has taken on a domestic character of sorts.

In September 2017, Historic England reissued the following guidance 'Adapting Traditional Farm Buildings - Best Practice Guidelines for Adaptive Reuse'. At paragraph 3.11 of this guidance, it states under the subheading 'New extensions and buildings' the following:

"Overtly domestic extensions such as porches and conservatories are alien in character and can rarely work successfully within the context of historic farm buildings. However, a carefully designed extension or new structure might be considered alongside a farm building if this will safeguard the significance of the main structure."

Application ref: 21/03129/LBC was refused for the following reason:

Bridleways Barn is grade II listed, the significance of which is its C17 timber-frame construction, its historic association with Hill End (Langley End House) and the fact that E.L. Lutyens retained the barn range as part of his scheme c.1911 at Hill End (now Langley End). By reason of its form (5-sided structure), timber-clad flat roof link with vertical upstand forming part of the conservatory roof above, materials (predominantly glazed with dark brown aluminium frame sections and the use of foam bonding to affix the conservatory) and position (on south-west gable end) even by moving the existing conservatory further away from the south-west gable end by introducing a link only serves to exacerbate design concerns. The conservatory represents an overtly domestic 'alien' feature to this former agrarian building, thereby occasioning less than substantial harm to its special character and significance. The conservatory and link fails to satisfy the provisions of Section 16(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the aims of Section 16 of the NPPF, the aims of Policy HE1 of North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 and is contrary to Historic England guidance entitled 'Adapting Traditional Farm Buildings - Best Practice Guidelines for Adaptive Reuse' (re-issued Sept 2017) which states that ".... overtly domestic extensions such as porches and conservatories are alien in character and can rarely work successfully within the context of historic farm buildings".

In seeking to find an acceptable solution, negotiations have been ongoing to resolve this matter. The following was submitted under ref: 25/02926/PRELB late last year.



On 26 February 2026, under ref: 25/02926/PRELB, my colleague reported that *"This proposal is supported as it would be less domestic in appearance and therefore more sympathetic to the host dwelling and the setting of this listed building"*. Whilst is the case tha the proposal is 'less domestic', I recollect a conversation at the time in which we agreed that replacing the openings on the north and west elevations with smaller windows to reflect those on the main barn and either halving the number of roof lights or omitting altogether, would be an improvement.

The scheme submitted is set out below. The Design, Access and Heritage Statement concludes that *"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"* (9.2) and that *"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"* (9.3).



Contrary to the pre-application position taken, I am not supportive of retaining 6 of the 8 glazed sections. Also, although I think the intention may be to retain the north-facing glazing, either this is drawn incorrectly as some of the framing is missing or this is an entirely new opening (see comparison with existing photo below right).



I am less concerned about the treatment of the north elevation so as a compromise I am prepared to consider the retention of the existing glazing shown on this elevation. However, in terms of the West Elevation, I am unconvinced by the proposal as currently submitted for the following reasons: i) size of roof light, ii) retention of the opening on this elevation and iii) the timber framing detail i.e. knee braces etc. Considering that this elevation is seen when approaching up the driveway and in seeking to retain a more 'outbuilding' aesthetic, I suggest the following:

- i) halving the width of the roof light i.e. one of the roof lights in the pre-app;
- ii) changing the existing full height opening to a double or triple timber casement window of the same height as the first-floor gable end windows with weatherboarding below the sill;
- iii) omitting the timber framing detail and
- iv) introducing an 'open eaves' (exposed rafter feet with the metal rainwater goods on brackets).

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

Sections 16(2) & 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:

As the scheme currently stands, I find this **OBJECTIONABLE**.

OFFICER: Mark Simmons

DATE: 15/06/2026