

Hitchin Forum

CARING FOR OUR TOWN

29 Bearton Road

Hitchin

SG5 1UE

19 July 2025

Planning Department

North Herts Council

Gernon Road

Letchworth Garden City

For the attention of Sarah Kasparian

Dear Sirs

25/01383/LBC Highover Farm Threshing Barn

I am writing on behalf of Hitchin Forum.

The proposal is to repair and alter this Grade 2 timber-framed building dating from the 16th or 17th centuries to serve as 2 semi-detached houses.

Hitchin Forum is generally in favour of these proposals, to preserve this historic building. Alternative uses could be a museum or gallery.

The building is in a very poor state of repair and has suffered from rainwater ingress through holes in the roof covering, resulting in decay of the timber frame and timber weatherboarding. There is also damage and evidence of past movement in the brick and stone plinths to the walls.

The Condition Survey by Heritage Consulting clearly states that it is not a Schedule of Condition or Specification of Works, but provides an overview of the works required. It

advises that a full detailed specification of works should be prepared at the appropriate stage, once full access, opening-up, and further investigation have been undertaken.

The Condition Survey envisages traditional repairs of decayed timber, using oak timber framing, and masonry plinths repaired with lime mortar. It suggests replacing all the weatherboarding with new and replacing the slate roof covering, both with new windows and insulation installed inboard of the coverings.

We have not seen any target for percentage of original structure to be retained.

The drawings for the finished building are small and missing any structural detail. It is envisaged that the ground floor will be ground-bearing and the first floor will be supported on free-standing steel framing founded at ground level. We suggest that this should be confirmed.

We do not understand the following statement on Page 8 of the Condition Survey:-

It is understood that as part of the proposed conversion works, a new steel frame is to be erected in front of the existing timber frame and over the existing roof structure. New roof coverings are then to be installed over this new steel framework.

Please note these comments relate only to the barn, and not surrounding buildings or landscaping shown on the submitted drawings.

Yours faithfully

Neil Dodds

On behalf of Hitchin Forum