



Historic England

Mr Mark Simmons  
North Herts Council  
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Nottingham  
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Direct Dial: 01223 582721

Our ref: L01594447

17 July 2025

Dear Mr Simmons

### **Arrangements for Handling Heritage Applications Direction 2021**

**TUDOR HOUSE, POYNDERS END, PRESTON, HITCHIN, HERTFORDSHIRE,  
SG4 7RX**

**Application No. 25/01580/LBC**

Thank you for your letter of 27 June 2025 regarding the above application for listed building consent. On the basis of the information available to date, we offer the following advice to assist your authority in determining the application.

#### **Historic England Advice**

The grade II\* listed Tudor House, Preston, is an imposing timber framed house dating from the later 15th or early 16<sup>th</sup> century with a crosswing added in the mid-17th century and extension c.1700. The free-standing octagonal dairy is a delightful ornamental building from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and listed in its own right at grade II.

The proposed works comprise a series of relatively modest changes to the listed house chiefly affecting modern fabric or decorative finishes. Perhaps the most significant intervention is the replacement of the ground floor to install underfloor heating. We have no concerns about this in principle as the fabric be removed appears to be modern, but not only should the ability of the floor and wall structures to allow the passage of water vapour be retained but this should be seen as an opportunity to improve that and avoid the possibility of harmful dampness in future. The replacement of the concrete floor (taking care to consider remains of any earlier floor levels below) should allow for the use of breathable limecrete and at least an area around the exterior walls with full permeability.

The other matter we would like to comment on is the proposed blocking of a doorway on the ground floor. The heritage impact assessment submitted with the application



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is a very well-produced and helpful document, particularly in the way it establishes the significance of historic fabric and impact on it. In this case the assessment notes the impact blocking this doorway would have on historic fabric and we do not have any concerns about that. However, it is less clear if the blocking would affect an understanding of the circulation pattern in the building and its historic layout in a way which might affect its significance. We would therefore recommend the Council seek clarification on that point. If any such harm would result from the proposal the doorway might be blocked by sealing the door in place (or replacing it with a panel suggesting its previous use) to better reflect the former function.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that the purpose of the planning system is to achieve sustainable development and that protection and enhancement of the historic environment is an overarching objective in this (paragraphs 7 and 8). The significance of listed buildings can be harmed or lost by alteration to them or development in their setting. The NPPF states that clear and convincing justification should be made for any such harm and that 'great weight' should be given to the conservation of listed buildings irrespective of the level of harm caused (paragraphs 213 and 215). This justification should be especially convincing where harm to buildings of a high grade of listing is concerned, as is the case here.

We have considered this application in terms of this policy and would not object to the proposals in principle but recommend the Council seek clarification on the impact of blocking the ground floor doorway (and design alternatives) and ensure the new underfloor heating system would allow the building to remain permeable to avoid issues with damp.

### **Recommendation**

Historic England supports the application in principle, but would recommend the Council seek clarification on the impact of blocking the ground floor doorway (and design alternatives) and ensure the new underfloor heating system would allow the building structure to remain permeable to avoid issues with damp.

We consider that the issues and safeguards outlined in our advice need to be addressed in order for the application to meet the requirements of paragraphs 7, 8, 213 and 215 of the NPPF. In determining this application you should bear in mind the statutory duty of section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

Your authority should take these representations into account and seek amendments, safeguards or further information as set out in our advice. We are content to leave this matter to the council along with the determination of the application without further reference to Historic England.

Yours sincerely



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