

## CONSERVATION TEAM CONSULTATION APPLICATION RESPONSE

|                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>APPLICATION REF:</b>      | 26/01308/FPH & 26/01309/LBC                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>CASE OFFICER:</b>         | TH                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>APPLICATION SITE:</b>     | The Bull, High Street, Gosmore, Hertfordshire, SG4 7QG                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>DESCRIPTION OF WORKS:</b> | <p><b>26/01308/FPH</b> - Single storey rear extension and first floor rear extension following demolition of existing rear elements. Alterations to fenestration and external alterations (development already commenced).</p> <p><b>26/01309/LBC</b> - Single storey rear extension and first floor rear extension following demolition of existing rear elements. Alterations to fenestration and internal and external alterations (development already commenced).</p> |

### RECOMMENDATION:

Await feedback on window queries and brickwork to rear addition, otherwise I raise **NO OBJECTION** on the basis that the proposal will not harm the special character of The Bull or harm the character or appearance of the Gosmore Conservation Area thereby satisfying the provisions of Sections 16(2) (LBC only), 66(1) (FPH only) & 72(1) (both) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the aims of Section 16 of the NPPF and the aims of Policy HE1 of North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031.

### Impact on listed building's special character and its setting

The internal and external alterations will have an impact upon the building's special character.

### Harm, preserve or enhance.

See below - the proposed extensions and alterations will have a range of impacts (mainly non-harmful) on the building's special character and the character and appearance of the Gosmore Conservation Area.

### SITE CONTEXT:

The Bull is grade II listed and located within the Gosmore Conservation Area.



The list entry is given at the link below. Both the building and the area are Designated Heritage Assets for the purpose of applying the aims of Section of the NPPF and Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031.

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1175112?section=official-list-entry>

The significance of the listed building lies in the remaining eighteenth-century character and in its value as part of the street façade of the terrace group of High Street and on the junction with Maydencroft Lane.

I previously advised under ref: 25/02346/PREH for 'Internal and external alterations to improve accommodation for dwelling'. On 16 January 2026, I identified works currently being undertaken without having the benefit of listed building consent:

- *Removal of lath-and-plaster ceiling to bedroom 3 to form vaulted ceiling exposing higher level timbers (assuming that ceiling joists were perhaps laid over the spine beam previously)*
- *Taking down internal wall and constructing new stud wall and inserting new door position between existing Bedrooms 2 and 3 (between proposed Master Bedroom and its ensuite)*
- *Application of internal insulation to external walls (it appears that a vapour excluded system has been deployed as opposed to a vapour permeable system using wood fibreboard insulation which may have been less intrusive i.e. requiring less build-up within each room).*
- *Studwork between frame at ground floor between the proposed listening and living rooms (what is shown on the pre-app is not what has been carried out on site).*

At the time discussions also took place regarding the proposed extension works.

The following is noted in the supporting DAS.

**Main building, High Street:**

*No external changes are proposed on the High Street elevation (other than changes to fenestration described above).*

- *Minor internal alterations are proposed at Ground Floor level to remove the bar (non-original) which obstructs the plan.*
- *Repairs to timber frame, as required. New studwork partitions in original building to leave timber frame exposed as discussed with Conservation Officer on site.*
- *New doorsets (internal) as required: Crittal-style glazed, double doors proposed between Kitchen and Living Room. 4-panel timber doors proposed at First Floor level.*
- *Existing store to be subdivided to create new pantry and plant room (both accessed from the proposed kitchen).*
- *External walls to be lined internally with insulation, variable permeability vapour control layer and plasterboard (refer to detail drawing accompanying this application).*
- *Existing, original partition between proposed Master Bedroom and En-Suite Bathroom had been subject to heavy repairs and alterations previously. To be replaced with new, realigned plasterboard partition.*
- *The proposed En-suite Bathroom would re-use the existing SVP installed for the existing Bathroom.*
- *Existing timber joists will be strengthened where required following advice from structural engineer.*
- *Lime plaster from the existing ceiling over the proposed En-Suite bathroom collapsed due to water ingress from a defective lead flashing around the chimney on the northern gable. Extensive rot was found on the exposed laths. The ceiling has been removed to the existing Bedroom 3/ proposed En-Suite Bathroom to have a vaulted ceiling to match proposed Bedroom 2.*
- *1no. existing rooflight on the rear face of the existing plain tile roof over the original building will be relocated to suit the proposals.*
- *Modern, plasterboard boxing has been removed from the existing chimneybreast in the proposed En-Suite Bathroom and lime plaster repairs carried out as required.*

**DETAILED ANALYSIS AND CONSIDERATIONS:**

As noted by the Heritage Consultant at page 14 of the Built Heritage Statement Rev A:

*As with the vast majority of Listed Buildings the long-term conservation of the building depends on it remaining in a productive and viable use which is capable of generating sufficient economic value to ensure that the building is well maintained so that it can survive for future generations to come*

***Single storey rear extension and first floor rear extension following demolition of existing rear elements.***

There is an aggregation of built form on site spanning several centuries and there are at least four phases of development east of the historic core. Whilst all of these sections are subservient, there is an accumulation of built form to the rear. At pre-app I was not convinced that the proposal would maintain that subservience.



A key aspect of this proposal is the demolition of the slate roof, single-storey section in the image above. If the view is taken that this slate roof single-storey range possesses limited significance, then there is scope to introduce some first-floor accommodation. This service wing appears to pre-date the late-1870's and its significance is not fully understood other than being a service wing. This C19 wing is mentioned at page 13 of the Built Heritage Statement Rev A. Having said that, at my site visit on 7 January 2026 I was able to establish that the roof is of simple rafter/ridge board construction with some softwood C20 rafter replacements.



At page 15 of the Built Heritage Statement Rev A it says:

*However, it is acknowledged that the works to this wing will result in minor loss of 19th century brickwork where the new doorway for the proposed bedroom staircase will be formed to link into the new dining area. Some limited loss of 19th Century building fabric will also occur where the roof of the Waterdell Lane wing is lifted up to form the proposed additional bedroom accommodation. However, it is intended that this will be mitigated by retaining sound 19th century rafters and re-fitting these as part of the construction of the new raised roof structure.*

I conclude that this C19 wing is not considered to possess such intrinsic interest to resist change to this part of the listed building and a well justified and measured response could potentially be supported.

Following the pre-app site meeting, further iterations were presented for feedback. One of these iterations (Option 3) was my preferred option and which incorporated a more pronounced step down accentuating the extension's subservience. The problem with this solution was that if a flat roof is introduced behind then there would likely be an awkward junction detail between the single-storey pitched roof and the flat roof behind.



A compromise solution was offered (Option 3a). I acknowledged that by increasing the height of the lower section would enable a better junction to be formed with a flat roof element behind. I stated that *“this ultimately may be the way forward but the ‘step’ needs to be pronounced to achieve the appearance of stepped down ridges”*.



HIGH ST

WATERDELL LANE



HIGH ST

WATERDELL LANE

Furthermore, during the pre-application process whilst I raised no objection to a taller, well-proportioned central gable I was less convinced by the predominantly glazed gable treatment and I suggested an alternative approach.

Attention then turned to the potential of removing the vaulted gable ceiling to the later, central addition and replacing this with a flat roof, thus, more fully revealing the rear of the original listed building. This would allow the potential to introduce a window to the gable end of the new bathroom. The flat roof concept has been taken on board and although a contemporary intervention is considered acceptable.

### **Existing**

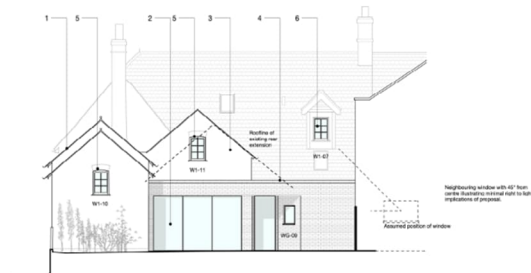


## First pre-app interaction

REAR ELEVATION



## Current proposal

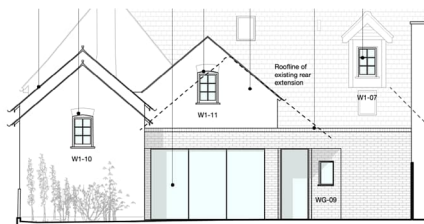


At page 29 of the Built Heritage Statement Rev A it says the following with which I concur:

*The application includes a carefully considered scheme for demolition and replacement of the existing 20th century rear extensions with a simplified low profile form which will be of clear positive benefit in better revealing the form of the 17th and 18th century historic or of the building and which will provide enhancement of the aesthetic value of this Heritage Asset.*

I have two questions at this point:

1. Is the rear central gable proposed to be covered with slate or clay tile – preference is for the latter – see draft Condition 3?
2. What is the proposed facing brickwork to the flat roof extension – red brick, gault brick, painted brick?



## Alterations to fenestration and internal and external alterations



The following is noted at page 17 of the Built Heritage Statement Rev A:

*The final element of the application proposal is a scheme of works designed to improve the thermal performance of the building in order to significantly reduce carbon use in order to address the climate change emergency.*

*This will involve three main strands with the first element of this work involving the provision of additional breathable insulation within the roof and ceiling voids within the property.*

*The second element of this work will involve replacement of the majority of the existing external windows and doors with new double glazed joinery. In this regard, site inspection indicates that the vast majority of the existing external joinery was previously replaced over the course of the 20th century and it is self evident that the pattern of replacement joinery which was installed with widespread use of timber fan lights is inappropriate and harmful to the architectural character of the Listed Building.*

*In detailing this work the architect has carefully assessed the existing external joinery and those historic windows and window frames which have survived will be repaired and retained whilst lower quality 20th Century windows will be replaced with new timber side hung casements without inappropriate fanlights.*

*Finally, the scheme proposes that the external walls of the building will insulated with a new wall lining comprising timber battens with intermediate breathable insulation with a new internal plasterboard wall lining laid over a variable permeability vapour control layer.*

Turning specifically to windows, I find the detailing extracts below and as set out in drawing no. DA 410 PL 1 to be acceptable with 4:4:4 glazing and 20mm wide 'through' as opposed to 'applied' glazing bars.



I have assessed drawings: DA 400 PL 1 (WG-01, 02 & 03), DA 401 PL 1 (W1-01 & 03), DA 402 PL 1 (W1-02 & 04), DA 403 PL 1 (WG-04), DA 404 PL 1 (WG-05), DA 405 PL 1 (W1-05, 06, 07, 08 & 09), DA 406 PL 1 (W1-06, 07, 10 & 11), DA 407 PL 1 (W1-07), DA 408 PL 1 (WG-06 & 07 – removed), DA 409 PL 1 (WG-08 - removed).

I have the following observations:

- Under drawing no. **DA 405 PL 1** it refers to **W1-05** on left side and **W1-05, 06, 07, 08, W1-08 & 09 – Proposed** on right side. I assume that the opening at W1-05 is proposed to be deepened to receive a pair of 6-pane casements? However, this window already has a low sill height. W1-07 is a proposed 6-pane casement in the rear dormer not a pair of 6-pane casements and I am unsure as to why W1-08 is repeated.
- Under drawing no. **DA 406 PL 1** it is assumed that W1-06 is also proposed to be deepened to receive a single 6-pane casements? This too has a low sill height.

There is not an overly convincing case to introduce uniformity across all windows, but I understand the rationale for doing so. To minimise modifications to the building, I

encourage the retention of existing opening sizes for **W1-05 & W1-06** and the style of the existing windows. Furthermore, considering the subservient, lower character of the Waterdell Lane 'stepped' rear wing, I would not be averse to windows **W1-08 & W1-09** also being shallower windows and to be double casement versions of **W1-05 and W1-06**.

### **Internal alterations**

My main concern at the pre-app stage was the application of an internal wall insulation system to external walls. As noted above I thought that a vapour excluded system was being deployed as opposed to a vapour permeable system using wood fibreboard insulation which may have been less intrusive i.e. requiring less build-up within each room. I note the detail presented in drawing no. GA 650 P 1 showing a 12.5mm plasterboard internal finish with plaster skim over a variable permeability vapour control layer over 50mm Isover acoustic wool insulation between 50x50 treated sw timber battens mechanically fixed on plastic shims with minimum 25mm air gap. The following is noted in the Built Heritage Statement Rev A:

### **Page 18**

*It is also clear that the architect has given considerable thought to the need to avoid the risk of interstitial condensation associated with the addition of internal solid wall insulation and the proposed detailing with the use of a variable permeability vapour control layer is a widely adopted strategy for the specification and detailing of thermal insulation of this type.*

*The architect has specified a "vapour open" form of insulation and this combined with the use of a variable permeability vapour control layer will allow moisture vapour to escape from within the wall construction.*

### **Page 32**

*A significant element within the proposed scheme of works will involve the installation of insulation through a combination of works including insulation of external walls, the provision of appropriate slim light double glazing and the provision of additional loft insulation. These works will dramatically improve the thermal performance of the building, will significantly reduce carbon use and will contribute in a positive manner towards the battle against climate change.*

Whilst I remain of the view that 'straightening out' the interior with plasterboard wall finishes does not necessarily enhance the interior space, the building is devoid of decorative cornices, dado/picture rails, original skirtings and the windows have plain reveals with no decorative architraves. **On balance, I consider that there are insufficient reasons to insist upon the removal of the lining system already implemented.**

During my pre-app site inspection, I noted that softwood studwork had been inserted between existing vertical frame members at ground floor between the proposed listening and living rooms. I understand from the owner that the modern studwork has since been removed and there is open access between the living and listening rooms. **The applicant would still like to close off these rooms as shown on proposed ground floor layout drawing no. GA310 PL 1, in which case this should be conditioned.**



Turning now to the ensuite bathroom, the following is noted at page 17 of the Built Heritage Statement Rev A:

*Nevertheless, it is acknowledged that the proposed works required to form the new en-suite bathroom and to form the proposed vaulted ceiling **will result in some loss of historic building fabric** consequent on the removal of earlier ceiling joists and loss of the residual surviving early elements of studwork and timber lathing within the partition wall and ceiling construction.*

The Heritage Consultant accepts that these elements of proposed work will result in some limited less than substantial harm to the significance of the building and that these elements of harm must be weighed up and balanced against those other elements that will provide clear positive benefits.

#### **Suggested conditions (LBC only)**

1. Standard time condition.
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. The roof of the central rear gable shall be covered with clay tiles, a sample or details of which shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of that part of the alterations hereby consented. Thereafter the roof shall be covered in accordance with the approved materials

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to the special character of the listed building and to the appearance of the Gosmore Conservation Area under Sections 16 & 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan.

4. The roof of the wing facing Waterdell Lane shall be covered with natural slate, a sample or details of which shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of that part of the alterations hereby consented. Thereafter the roof shall be covered in accordance with the approved materials.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to the special character of the listed building and to the appearance of the Gosmore Conservation Area under Sections 16 & 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan.

5. If the single-storey flat-roof rear addition is to be finished with facing brickwork, then details or samples of the facing brick including bond shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of that part of the alterations hereby consented. Thereafter the brickwork shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved materials. If the brickwork is proposed to be painted, then details of the brick bond and paint colour shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of that part of the alterations hereby consented. Thereafter the brickwork shall be painted in accordance with the approved colour.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to the special character of the listed building and to the appearance of the Gosmore Conservation Area under Sections 16 & 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan.

6. Details as to how the infill between the existing framing between the Living Room and Listening Room, is to be constructed shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of that part of the alterations hereby consented. Thereafter the wall shall be constructed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to the special character of the listed building and to the appearance of the Gosmore Conservation Area under Sections 16 & 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan.

#### **HERITAGE POLICY ASSESSMENT:**

##### **Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990:**

Sections 16(2) & 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:**

I concur with the Heritage Consultant that the fact that the proposal will result in change does not mean that it will cause harm to the actual significance of Heritage Assets. The consultant goes on to say that the fact that the proposal will result in physical and visual change, does not necessarily mean that it will result in harm to the overall significance of the listed building. There is some truth in the statement that even where there are some individual elements of work which might result in perceived harm it is perfectly normal for individual elements perceived as being harmful to be more than balanced out or outweighed by positive aspects of the scheme which are beneficial to the building in the long-term. The question is whether this scheme sets the right balance between change and any perceived harm?

On balance, I conclude that the formation of the en-suite and internal wall insulation system occasions a low level of less than substantial harm, but these serve to contribute towards the aims of finding this building an optimum viable use. I agree that there are

positive aspects of the scheme such as the slimlite windows (including to the rear dormer) and that the flat roof rear extension enables a better central rear gable to be formed with a window serving the bathroom.

Consequently, I find this proposal **UNOBJECTIONABLE**.

**OFFICER:** Mark Simmons

**DATE:** 05/08/2026