

CONSERVATION TEAM CONSULTATION APPLICATION RESPONSE

APPLICATION REF:	25/01936/lbc
CASE OFFICER:	Henry Thomas
APPLICATION SITE:	Irongate Barn Halls Green Weston Hitchin Hertfordshire SG4 7DR
DESCRIPTION OF WORKS:	Change of use of existing barn from storage and distribution (Use Class B8) to use as a community event and learning centre for agriculture, cookery and related rural based activities (Use Class F1). Repairs to timber frame and external weatherboarding, including interfaces with adjacent construction, making good after downtaking of harmful modern fabric. Internal wall linings. Replacement glazing and adjusted openings with replacement glazing, localised repairs to existing concrete floor slab. Provision of services routes.
RECOMMENDATION: There is NO OBJECTION. The scheme will satisfy the provisions of Sections 16(2) (LBC) and /or 66(1) (FP/FPH) and/or 72(1) (both) 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. SUGGESTED CONDITIONS: Details and/or samples of materials to be used for the works, hereby granted consent, shall be submitted to and agreed, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority before any works are commenced. 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. Full joinery details of the proposed new timber doors/windows to a metric scale and 1:1 scale drawings of the proposed glazing bars hereby granted consent, shall be submitted to and agreed, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority before any works are commenced/prior to manufacturing of the doors.	

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.

SHORT SUMMARY:

Impact on listed building's special character –

The site is considered to be curtilage listed through it's associated with Grade II* listed Irongate Farmhouse location in Hall's Green.

Although the farmhouse is the main listed asset it derives its significance due to its exterior decoration, internal features and an example of "unusually elaborate 3-cells house"

The link to the list description is copied below.

[IRONGATE FARMHOUSE, Weston - 1347439 | Historic England](#)

Irongate Farmhouse is not untypical of the structures that appear across North Hertfordshire demonstrating the agrarian society that existed prior to the industrial revolution and examples of vernacular architecture that flowed from this activity.

The barn was built in 1600 and subject to internal upgrades in late C17 and external in C18. No particular mention is made of the barns in the official listed but it is clear from HER records that the Grade II* farmhouse having four ranges of farm buildings arranged around a rectangular yard north of the house.

These are considered to be closely associated with the farmhouse and have a strong evidential value terms of the former farmyard and as a result a key contributor to the significance of main house. The arrangement of the barns and their scale along the roadside make a strong contribution to historic inward-looking character of the streetscape.

From the form of construction suggests that the current structure is of a later phase to the farmhouse. Currently the barn is a poor condition and would benefit for immediate works that would prevent further degradation.

The barn has been subject to later interventions which have caused harm through inappropriate interventions e.g. blockwork infill building and a lean to on the west gable end. This together with material choices have accelerated damp and decay.

Proposed works

The proposal seeks a change of use that is not incompatible with the historic setting and would remove previous ill-considered and damaging interventions. The down taking of modern interventions as outlined in the drawings is welcomed and proposed localised repairs supported as they are of a traditional approach and using appropriate materials.

New openings proposed are not out of character with openings that would have originally existing for barns of this nature.

Proposed new windows are accepted due to the condition of existing windows.

Internal glazed partitions are accepted as this would still allow legibility of the of space and nondomestic in scale.

New services to be run without intervention into historic and is considered acceptable.

Impact on character and appearance of the conservation area – N/A

Impact on setting of heritage assets and how this affects significance – The proposal will due to its change of from, agricultural to institution attract more cars and movement to the site. This will have an impact on the historical significance of the barns but overall, the proposal and change of use is considered to result in tangible heritage gain.

Does the proposal occasion harm or preserve or enhance – The application is considered to cause less than substantial at this lowest level but will see enhancement through the removal of previous negative interventions which is welcomed.

Site Context:

The site involves a curtilage Listed Barn associated with the grade II* listed Irongate Farmhouse located in Hall's Green. The farmhouse is the main listed asset but is not subject to this application and no works are planned. Refer to 3.3. The farmhouse however is notable for its exterior decoration, its form and significant internal features. It is an example of "an unusually elaborate 3-cells house" (Historic England). The residence is situated immediately in a garden to its front and rear.

The site is historically associated with the agrarian environment of North Hertfordshire preindustrial revolution.

DETAILED ANALYSIS AND CONSIDERATIONS:

Please see summary section above.

HERITAGE POLICY ASSESSMENT:

Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990:

North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031:

NPPF (December 2024):

The Local Plan and NPPF

North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 and the policies contained within it i.e., Policy HE1. The plan was adopted November 2022.

The relevant paragraph numbers at Section 16 of the July 2021 version of the NPPF have been changed as follows:

197. In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

199. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

200. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.....

202. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

206. 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.

The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition) – December 2017

At para 14 under the sub-heading 'Landscape Assessment and Amenity' it states that "Analysis of setting is different from landscape assessment. While landscapes include everything within them, the entirety of very extensive settings may not contribute equally to the significance of a heritage asset, if at all. **Careful analysis is therefore required to assess whether one heritage asset at a considerable distance from another, though intervisible with it – a church spire, for instance – is a major component of the setting, rather than just an incidental element within the wider landscape.**"

At para 17 it states (my emphasis in bold): "All heritage assets have significance, some of which have particular significance and are designated. The contribution made by their setting to their significance also varies. **Although many settings may be enhanced by development, not all settings have the same capacity to accommodate change without harm to the significance of the heritage asset or the ability to appreciate it.** This capacity may vary between designated assets of the same grade or of the same type or according to the nature of the change. It can also depend on the location of the asset: an elevated or overlooked location; a riverbank, coastal or island location; or a location within an extensive tract of flat land may increase the sensitivity of the setting (i.e. the capacity of the setting to accommodate change without harm to the heritage asset's significance) or of views of the asset. This requires the implications of development affecting the setting of heritage assets to be considered on a case-by-case basis."

Relevant National Guidance i.e. Historic England:

Other relevant documents (Please specify):

CONCLUSION:

The scheme is deemed supportable for the reason stated in the summary section and will cause less than substantial harm at the lowest level.

OFFICER: Tricia Craggs

DATE: 9 October 2025