

CONSERVATION TEAM CONSULTATION APPLICATION RESPONSE

APPLICATION REF:	25/02885/OP
CASE OFFICER:	Anne Macdonald
APPLICATION SITE:	Land At Mill Lane London Road St Ippolyts Hitchin SG4 7NN
DESCRIPTION OF WORKS:	Erection of up to 41 dwellings with associated infrastructure and open space (all matters reserved except means of access).

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:

n/a

SHORT SUMMARY:

Pre application was given under 24/01424/PRE which raised concerns regarding the setting of nearby designated heritage assets namely Pound Farm (GVII) located immediately to the east of the Site. The proposed development site is part of the agricultural setting of this farmhouse and therefore identified as making a positive contribution and a component part of the significance of the designated heritage asset.

Mill Farm which is located on the north side of Mill Lane given its location, setting and character and the proposed development to the south will have already diminished its agricultural setting and therefore this proposal will again be on the less than substantial harm at the lower end of that spectrum.

Views to the Grade I listed Church of St Ippolyts are not prominent and therefore not identified as key views and this development is not considered to have a harmful impact.

Subsequent to the pre application advice given, this application has demonstrated that the area of the plot immediately opposite Pound Farm i.e. and to the south (see image below taken from submitted Planning Statement) will be free from development.



The proposal in my view is considered to cause less than substantial harm at the lower end of that spectrum due to the fact that this previously open landscape will now see development. However, the confirmation of the south part of the site will be free from development is in sufficient mitigation to mitigate that harm and remove any previous objections.

Site Context:

The site is located within the district of North Hertfordshire and is located to the southern edge of Hitchin. It comprises two parcels of land connected by a narrow strip, with Sloe Hill Residential Home inset into the northern boundary, effectively separating the two fields. The total area extends to 3.37 hectares and the land slopes gently to the south.

To the east, across London Road, is a small group of dwellings, including the Grade II listed Pound Farmhouse.

To the north of the site on the northern side of Mill Lane is the Grade II listed Mill Farm.

From the eastern area of the Site there are distant views to the tower of the Grade I listed Church of St Ippolyts.

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:

[Please see summary section above.](#)

OFFICER: Tricia Craggs

DATE: 13 February 2026