

Design and Access Statement incl. Heritage Statement

The Pump Barn at Hill End Farm

Langley, Hitchin

SG4 7PT

This statement has been prepared to accompany an application for the ‘**retrospective retention of the recladding of walls/roof and re-roofing including the alteration of the roof profile from ridged to mono-pitch – revised scheme - and reduced footprint to separate the structure from a listed building**’.

Applicant: St Pauls Walden Bury Estate, The Calf House East and Calf House West, Easthall Farm, St Pauls Walden, Herts SG4 8DJ

Agent: Dorli Newbery, Shingle Hall, Ongar Road, Dunmow, CM6 1JB

1.0 The Pump Barn at Hill End Farm

1.1 Location

Hill End Farm is located in rural North Hertfordshire to the West of Stevenage and South of Hitchin. The Pump Barn building is part of a former farm yard accessed by a no-through road; Hill End Farm Lane. The site is now in mixed use with some residential properties as well as light industry and offices.

The plan area of the building as present is 53m². The development site including access to the highway is 0.05ha.

The site is outside the Metropolitan Green Belt in ‘Rural Land Beyond the Green Belt’.

1.2 Site and Surroundings – see maps and aerial photographs below

The Pump Barn is a lean-to structure relying on a wall between 2 listed buildings. The barns are part of a cluster of buildings circa 1922 by E L Lutyens. These are red single storey brick buildings with clay tiled roofs. The two listed barns are situated to the north-west and south east of the Pump Barn. The building to the north-west is a former dairy attached to a pair of cottages – Nos. 1 and 2 Hillend Farm Cottages.

The barn subject to the previous applications (as per planning history below) was attached to the barn to the south east, known as The Loft. This was considered to cause harm to the listed building and its setting. The building has now been altered to be a separate structure with a separation distance of 560mm from the Loft resulting in a decrease in footprint of 2.7m².

The cottages are in residential use. The former dairy and modern extension to its east are in agricultural use. The Loft has been converted and altered and is now in mixed commercial use. There are other agricultural buildings surrounding the courtyard including modern barns and silos, all in agricultural use.

The courtyard is used as communal parking to the Loft, Dairy and Pump Barn.

1.3 Current Planning Status

The previous planning applications and Listed Building Consent applications have been refused. As such the building is a non-regularised building and a further application has been invited by the Enforcement Team. This is therefore a retrospective application.

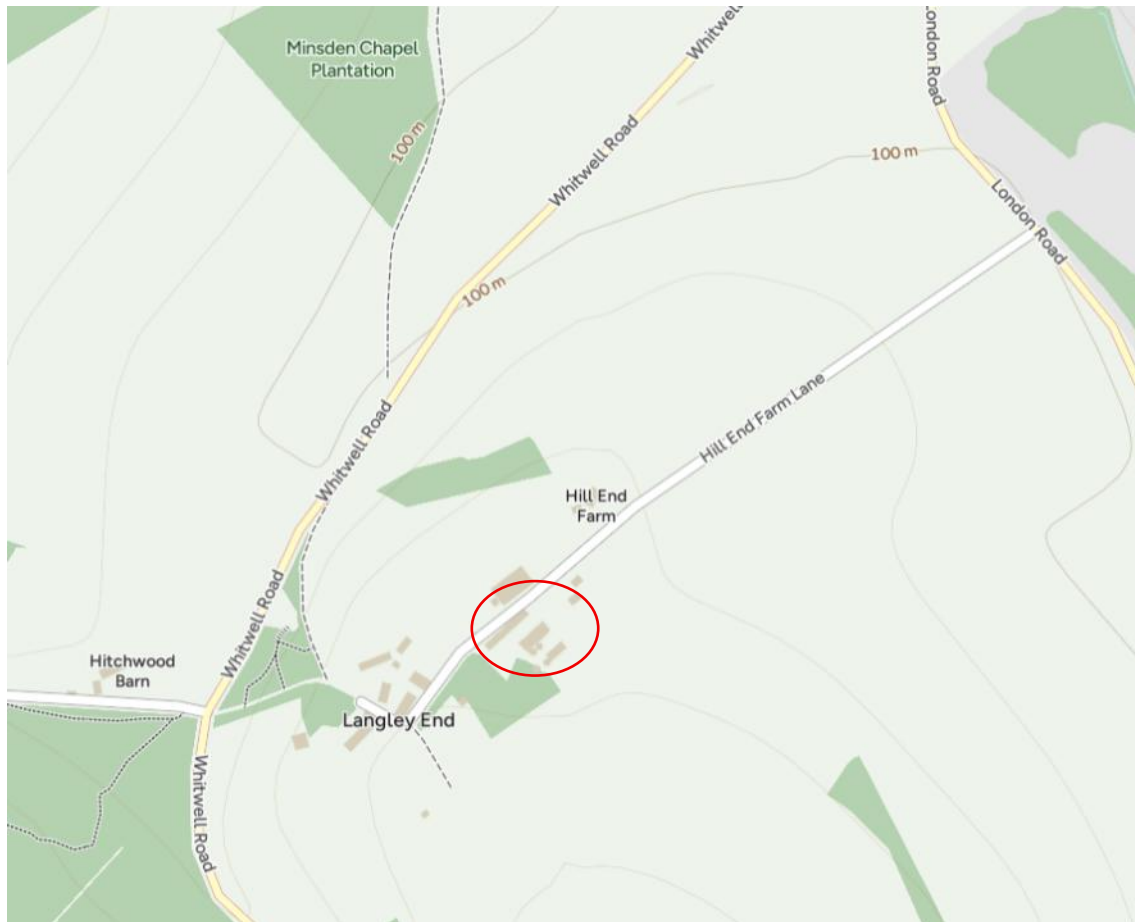
1.4 Purpose of New Application

The building owner has taken on board all the comments made at the planning stages. The comments of the Senior Conservation Officer and Enforcement Officer have been at the centre of the efforts to come to a solution which does no harm to the listed buildings and their setting, whilst enabling the continued safe use of the borehole housed by the Pump Barn. The work has already taken place to provide separation between the listed building (The Loft) and the Pump Barn. It has been noted by the Conservation Officer that if there is no physical connection between the listed building and the structure referred to as The Pump Barn, then listed building consent is not required.

2.0 Site Plans

2.1 Location maps – OS mapbox/PROW map

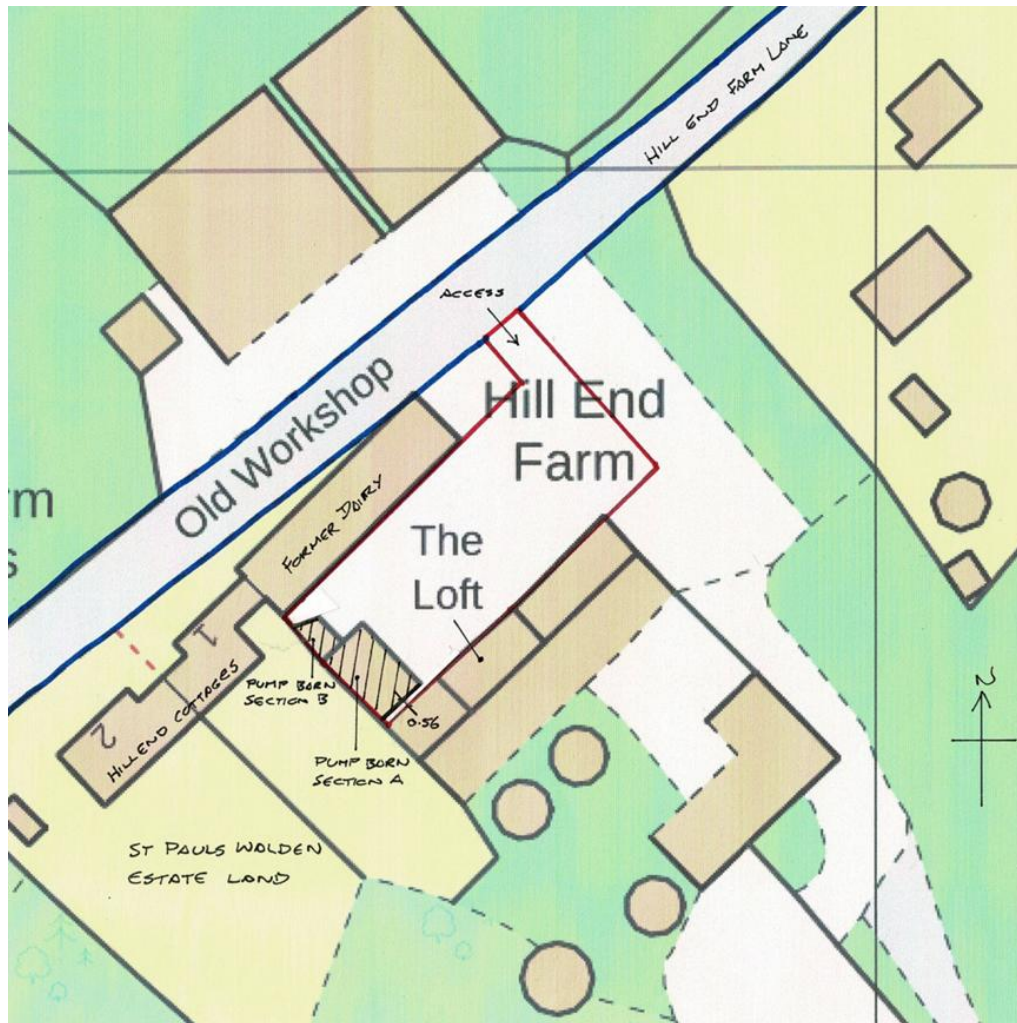
NTS – see planning documents for full size scaled map



The Pump Barn – 2 sections A and B

2.2 Site Plan (NTS)

See drawing 2026/421/01



3.0 Aerial Photographs – google earth pro imagery 2026/Google street 2010

Hillend Cottages and attached former dairy – Grade II listed

The Pump Barn

The Loft – Grade II listed



The original pump shed as present in 2010 – poor condition and aesthetically poor. Attached to the listed Loft building

4.0 The Pump Barn

4.1 Use

The Pump Barn is an essential requirement for housing the borehole plant and storage tank which supplies the cluster of buildings. The water supplied by the borehole is the only supply available in this location and is tested annually as required as NHDC Environmental Health Department.

4.2 Amount/Footprint Justification

The building in its current state is in 2 sections, a rectangular section (section A) measuring 8.6m x 5.0m externally, and a trapezoidal section (section B) with a maximum width of 4.1m and a maximum width of 4.1m. The total footprint of the 2 sections is 53m².

Max roof height = 2.3m (front of section A – trapezoidal section (B) lower)

Min roof height = 1.9m

The footprint has been reduced from the previous applications in order to create a separation between the structure and the listed building. The remaining footprint is all in essential use. The bore hole requires a large amount of pumping equipment, including a back-up system and storage tank. The above ground plant includes:

Pressure System Plant

- Pressure vessel (300 litres)
- Pressure switch or pressure transducer
- Pressure gauge
- Isolation valves
- Drain valve

Electrical Controls

A large control panel with:

- Pump starter
- Motor protection
- Dry-run protection
- Overload protection
- Low-water cut-out
- Level monitoring (if required)
- Alarm indicators
- Timer or variable speed drive (larger systems)

Water Treatment

The water is tested and needs plant for water treatment to ensure quality:

- Sediment filter
- Carbon filter (if required)
- Iron and manganese removal unit
- Water softener (where hardness is high)
- UV steriliser

- Sampling tap

Other equipment:

- Storage tank (2,000 litres) – see photos
- Booster pump
- Telemetry/remote monitoring
- Water meter
- Flow meter
- Generator connection point for power outages
- Frost protection – insulation as per the photos

In addition, there is some general storage required including spare parts, emergency hose and pumping kit.

The plant room (Pump Barn) provides protection for the electrical equipment and water treatment apparatus from adverse weather, frost and accidental damage. As it has multiple users it is imperative that continued operation of the private water supply is provided. Housing the equipment within an enclosed structure reduces visual clutter by containing pipework, control equipment and associated infrastructure within a single building rather than dispersing individual items across the site. As this is an existing system the pipe work is already in place and it represents a working and historic system. If the footprint were further reduced it would require expensive alterations which would require shutting down the system resulting in an alternative water source being brought to site. This is not an environmentally friendly proposal.

The proposed building now represents the minimum practical size necessary to accommodate the required plant safely and efficiently.

4.3 Design/Location

The building is of limited scale, simple agricultural design and unobtrusively sited. The exact location of the building is restrained by the location of the borehole and associated plant. This footprint has been used for this purpose for a shelter to the borehole for approximately 50 years, possibly longer.

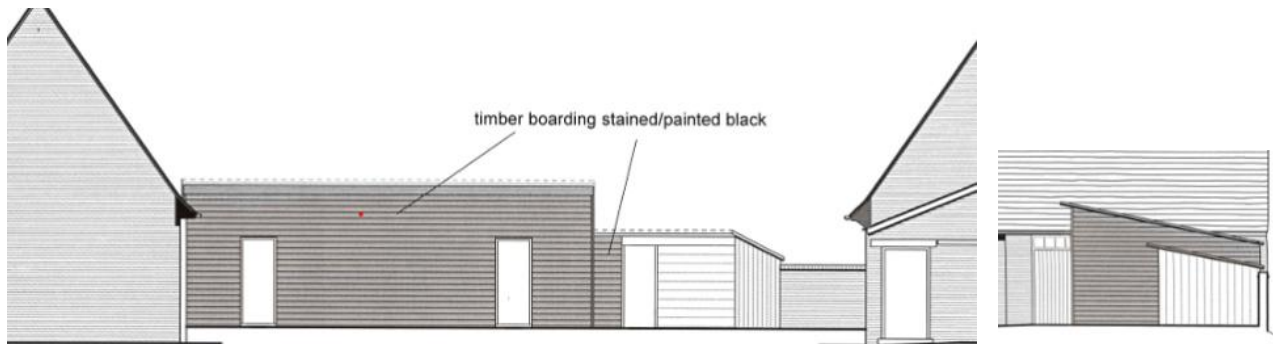
The street view from 2010 shows that the previous structure was of poor construction using a variety of materials, including metal sheeting and plywood. The structure was in poor condition and was neither weatherproof or fit for purpose.

The 'as altered' building in its current state has been designed in a typical agricultural style of black featheredge weatherboarding (timber) with a galvanised corrugated metal sheet roof. The doors are also timber weatherboarded.

4.3 Timeline of Materials/form

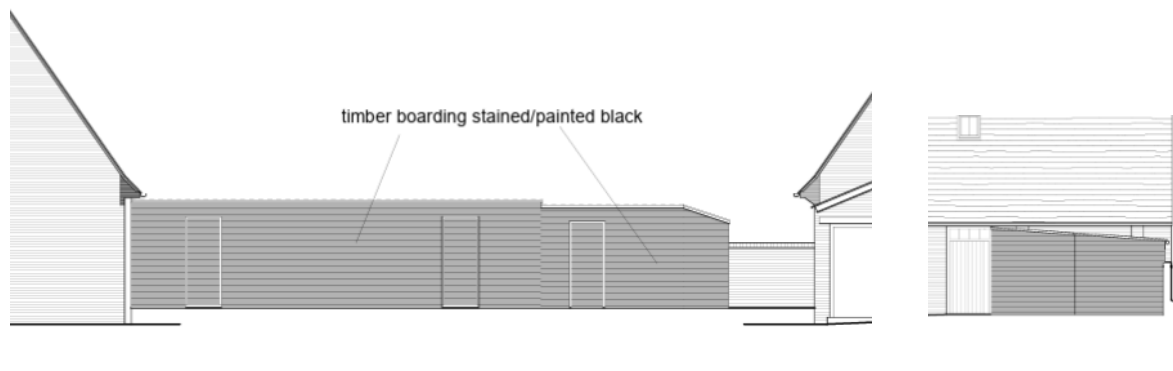
Original building – dual pitched ridge to main rectangular section, mono-pitched roof to metal sheet roof, various elevations materials,

2019 – works carried out to alter section A of the building – mono-pitch roof (metal sheet) and black weatherboarded front and doors. Section B remaining in original state. Retrospective planning - 20/00198/LBC and 20/00197/FP - refused

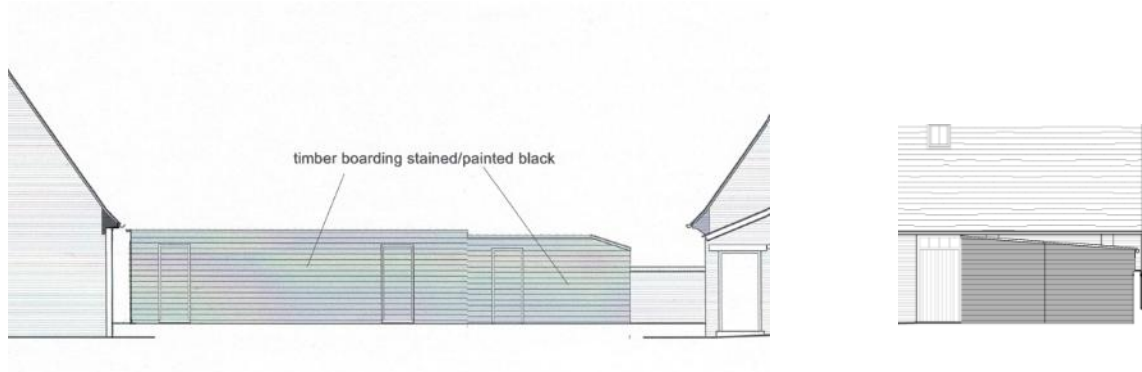


2020 – roof reduced to below eaves of The Loft. Section B clad and roofed to match.

Retrospective planning - 20/02853/LBC and 20/02852/FP - refused



2026 – left hand section removed to form a separation of 560mm between The Loft (listed building) and the Pump Barn. No changes to materials from previous application.



5.0 Heritage Statement

5.1 Listed Buildings Present

The nearest building to the Pump Barn, and the building it was previously attached to is known as The Loft. Although had been altered, it was Grade II listed in 1977 for the group value. The other barns in the group consist of a pair of farm cottages and the attached (and extended) old dairy. The buildings were circa 1911 and are examples of agricultural architecture designed by E L Lutyens.



BARN AT HILL END FARM

Heritage Category: **Listed Building**
Grade: **II**
List Entry Number: **1347460**



HILL END FARM COTTAGE, 1 AND 2, AND ADJOINING DAIRY

Heritage Category: **Listed Building**
Grade: **II**
List Entry Number: **1307860**

The original Pump Barn was a later addition to the cluster and was not mentioned in 1977 when the barns/buildings by Lutyens were listed. It also does not appear on the 1950 OS map and was therefore constructed at a later date.

5.2 Impact and Harm

From the comments of the Conservation Officer in the previous 2 retrospective applications, it is clear that they had concerns about the harm to the Lutyens buildings by the Pump Barn being attached to the listed building known as The Loft as well as the group value.

The applicant took on board the comments from the first application which were mainly related to the height and impact of the mono-pitched roof, the structure being attached to the listed building and the impact of the large front elevation between the 2 listed buildings. In order to mitigate the harm, the roof was lowered significantly and its maximum height was below the eaves of the listed building. The second application was refused.

The comments received by the conservation officer relating to the second application also expressed concerns relating to the structure being attached to the listed building.

“...if there is an opportunity to remove that part of the building abutting the Lutyens building i.e. perhaps removing at least 500mm, then I will reconsider and thus will also mean that LBC is not required.”

These have been taken on board and the structure has been altered to provide a separation of 560mm between the listed building and the flank elevation. This allows the entire brick elevation of The Loft to be visible without reducing the size of the Pump Barn so as not to be fit for purpose.

It is noted that the ‘original building’ was definitely not present in 1950 and was not mentioned in the 1977 listing and therefore required planning permission and listed building consent prior to its construction. All applications since that time have therefore sought to regularize this structure. The main objection has been the impact and harm to the listed assets and the removal of the physical attachment means that the listed building is not impacted by the structure apart from in terms of setting. The structure has a purpose and if were not permitted to be retained would require another structure to be constructed in its place.

It should be noted that the view from the garden of Hillend Cottages is much improved from the ‘original structure’ and initial re-roofing to mono-pitch and no complaints have been received.

Regarding the harm to cluster of listed buildings, the Pump Barn is of typical local vernacular agricultural form and appearance. The original building had a metal corrugated roof and external timber cladding, which is the same style as this current iteration. The mixed use of the cluster of buildings has resulted in a congested courtyard with parking for cars and vans. There are not clear views of the collection of buildings forming the courtyard. We do not feel that, since the separation, that the Pump Barn as presently built presents any harm to the setting of the listed buildings.

The borehole Pump Barn is a modest ancillary utility structure whose scale, design, materials and location preserve the significance and setting of the listed buildings. Consequently, the proposal accords with Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan and with the heritage objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework.

6.0 Access

5.1 Vehicle Access

There is vehicular access to the structure for maintenance to the building and bore hole plant. Access is not a consideration in this application.

5.2 Parking

There is communal parking between the listed buildings and in front of the Pump Barn. Parking is not a consideration in this application.

7.0 Planning Policy

7.1 National Policies NPPF 2024 (Dec) – Summary of most relevant

1. Delivering Sustainable Development

- Paragraph 11 – Presumption in favour of sustainable development.
 - Confirms that planning decisions should support sustainable development where proposals accord with the development plan.

2. Achieving Well-Designed Places

- Paragraph 135
 - Requires development to be visually attractive, sympathetic to local character, and create places that function well over their lifetime.
The Pump Barn is considered to be modest in scale and appropriate in appearance.
- Paragraph 139
 - States that poor design should be refused, while good design should be supported.
The simple, functional agricultural design of the structure helps satisfy this requirement.

3. Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

These are the key heritage paragraphs for your proposal.

- Paragraph 205

- Requires local planning authorities to identify and assess the significance of heritage assets affected by a proposal.
- Paragraph 206
 - Requires applicants to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting.

See the Heritage Statement above – since the re-modelled barn does not touch the listed building it is considered that a Listed Building consent is not required however consideration must be given to the setting alongside the listed buildings and the historical cluster.
- Paragraph 208
 - Requires decision-makers to take account of:
 - the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets;
 - the positive contribution that conservation makes to sustainable communities;
 - the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- Paragraph 209
 - States that where a proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, that harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

Owing to its limited size, simple agricultural design and unobtrusive siting, the Pump Barn preserves the character and appearance of the site and results in no harm, or at most less than substantial harm at the very lowest end of the spectrum, which is clearly outweighed by the public benefit of maintaining an essential water supply to the property.

4. Rural Economy (if applicable)

- Paragraph 89
 - Supports a prosperous rural economy, including the sustainable growth and expansion of rural businesses.

The borehole serves an agricultural holding, domestic properties and rural businesses. There is no mains water to this cluster of buildings and therefore the bore hole is supporting the rural economy. It is essential for the quality and consistent supply of water that the plant be housed in a suitable, weathertight building.

7.2 Local Policies – North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011–2031

Policy SP5: Countryside and Green Belt

We support the principles of the Green Belt and recognise the intrinsic value of the countryside. Green Belt and Rural Areas Beyond the Green Belt are shown on the Policies Map. We:

d) Will operate a general policy of restraint in Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt through the application of our detailed policies.

The application site is located within the rural area where Policy SP5 seeks to protect the intrinsic character, beauty and openness of the countryside while supporting development that is appropriate to its rural setting.

The proposal does not introduce a new use of the land, intensify existing activities or generate additional traffic, parking demand, noise or external lighting. As a consequence, it has no material adverse effect on the character or appearance of the countryside or the setting of the adjacent listed buildings.

The retention of the Pump Barn therefore represents an appropriate and proportionate form of ancillary development that supports the continued operation of the existing property without undermining the objectives of Policy SP5. Accordingly, the proposal is considered to comply with the requirements of Policy SP5 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan.

Policy D1: Sustainable design

Planning permission will be granted provided that development proposals:

- a) Respond positively to the site's local context;
- c) Have regard to the Design SPD, and any other relevant guidance;

The proposed retention of the borehole Pump Barn accords with Policy D1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan. The building is a modest ancillary structure designed solely to accommodate essential water supply infrastructure. Its limited footprint, low ridge height and simple functional form ensure that it remains subordinate to the surrounding buildings and does not appear visually intrusive within the rural setting.

The barn has been historically sited adjacent to the borehole and associated services to minimise the length of pipework and electrical connections, and to move the Pump Barn would create unnecessary ground disturbance and costly new infrastructure.

The development generates no additional traffic, parking, noise or external lighting and has no adverse impact on neighbouring amenity. By protecting essential pumping equipment from weather and vandalism, the building contributes to the long-term resilience of the site's private water supply while maintaining the character of the area. Accordingly, the proposal represents high-quality, sustainable design in accordance with Policy D1.

Policy HE1: Designated heritage assets

Planning applications relating to Designated heritage Assets or their setting shall be accompanied by a Heritage Assessment/Justification Statement that:

- i. Assesses the significance of heritage assets, including their setting;
- ii. Justifies and details the impacts of any proposal upon the significance of the designated heritage asset(s); and

- iii. Informs any necessary measures to minimise or mitigate against any identified harms.

Planning permission for development proposals affecting Designated Heritage Assets or their setting will be granted where they (as applicable):

- a) Enable the heritage asset to be used in a manner that secures its conservation and preserves its significance;
- b) Incorporate a palette of materials that make a positive contribution to local character or distinctiveness, where it is appropriate and justified; and
- c) Will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset, and this harm is outweighed by the public benefits of the development, including securing the asset's optimum viable use.

Where substantial harm to, or loss of significance, of a designated heritage asset is proposed the Council shall refuse consent unless it can be demonstrated that the scheme is necessary to deliver considerable public benefits that outweigh the harm or loss.

The application relates to the retention of a modest borehole Pump Barn that provides essential infrastructure for the site's private water supply.

The Pump Barn shed is clearly ancillary in scale and function to the principal listed buildings. It has a limited footprint (which has been further reduced in order to provide separation from a listing building), low overall height and a simple, utilitarian design that reflects its operational purpose. The use of subdued materials and its discreet siting ensure that it does not compete with the architectural or historic interest of the listed buildings or interrupt important views within their setting.

The proposal preserves the significance of the designated heritage assets by maintaining their historic character and allowing the listed buildings to remain the dominant features within the site. The development introduces no change to the historic fabric of the listed buildings, does not alter their form or appearance, and does not adversely affect the way in which their significance is experienced.

The borehole Pump Barn provides essential infrastructure required for the continued operation and management of the property. Its retention ensures the resilience of the site's private water supply without giving rise to material harm to the significance or setting of the adjacent listed buildings.

Accordingly, the proposal preserves the significance of the designated heritage assets and their setting and is considered to comply with the requirements of Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan, the statutory duty under Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and the heritage objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework.

7.3 - Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

The decision-maker should have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building, its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest.

The proposal does not involve any alteration to the listed buildings or the loss of historic fabric. It does not interrupt important views, diminish the appreciation of the heritage assets or erode the historic character of their surroundings. The Pump Barn represents a discreet ancillary service building, appropriate to a rural setting/building that require essential utility infrastructure to support its ongoing use.

The retention of the Pump Barn secures the continued operation of the site's private water supply while preserving the character and appearance of the listed buildings and their setting. The proposal therefore satisfies the statutory duty under Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as it preserves the significance of the designated heritage assets and causes no harm to their special architectural or historic interest or to the contribution made by their setting.

8.0 Summary

8.1

This application seeks retrospective planning permission for the retention of a small borehole Pump Barn located within the setting containing listed buildings in North Hertfordshire. The barn has been altered since the refused retrospective application in 2020 to remove harm to a listed building.

8.2

The development is modest in scale, occupying a limited footprint and remaining clearly subservient to the principal buildings on the site. The structure has been historically sited in this location. The use of appropriate materials and its revised low-profile form, with separation from the listing building ensure that the building sits comfortably within its rural surroundings.

8.3

The proposal does not alter the use of the land, increase activity at the site or create additional traffic, parking demand, noise or external lighting. It therefore has no adverse impact on the character of the countryside or the amenities of neighbouring occupiers.

8.4

The development has been evaluated in relation to the nearby listed buildings. Due to its modest scale, discreet location and ancillary function, the Pump Barn preserves the significance and setting of the designated heritage assets. It does not affect the historic fabric of the listed buildings, interrupt important views or detract from their architectural or historic interest. The proposal therefore satisfies the statutory duty under Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and accords with the heritage objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan.

8.5

The proposal complies with Policy D1 by illustrating a well-designed and proportionate form of development that responds appropriately to its rural context, and with Policy SP5 by providing essential ancillary infrastructure without harming the character, appearance or openness of the countryside.

9.0 Conclusion

Overall, the retained borehole Pump Barn is a necessary and proportionate piece of infrastructure that enables the continued operation of the site's private water supply while preserving the significance of the listed buildings and respecting the character of the surrounding rural landscape. The proposal accords with the relevant provisions of the Development Plan, the National Planning Policy Framework and the statutory duties relating to designated heritage assets. Planning permission should therefore be granted.

Appendix A – Photographs – present day



Pump Barn – Section A



Pump Barn – Section B

