

CONSERVATION TEAM CONSULTATION APPLICATION RESPONSE

APPLICATION REF: 25/02519/FPH

CASE OFFICER: VW

APPLICATION SITE: Rye End Farm, Green Lane, Codicote, Hitchin,
Hertfordshire SG4 8SU

DESCRIPTION OF WORKS: Installation of courtyard including steps and surfacing.

RECOMMENDATION:

Discussions on site suggested that an amended scheme will be forthcoming. However, should the scheme be determined as is, I am inclined to raise an **OBJECTION** for the following reason:

Rye End Farmhouse together with a barn and attached outbuildings are grade II listed buildings within a rural, agrarian setting that contributes to the significance of this group. By reason of the terrace with stepped access and incorporating a central 'drinking pond', the scheme will occasion a low level of less than substantial harm to the significance of this group of designated heritage assets by introducing an incongruous hard landscaped area with water feature within the existing farmyard displaying a strong agrarian character. There are no public benefits to outweigh the harm caused and the proposal fails to satisfy the provisions of Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the aims of Para 135 c) and Section 16 of the NPPF and Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031.

SHORT SUMMARY:

Harm, preserve or enhance.

There is a case to say that the proposal will occasion less than substantial harm to the setting of nearby listed buildings.

SITE CONTEXT:

Rye End Farmhouse together with a barn and attached outbuildings at Rye End Farm form two separate grade II listings and are Designated Heritage Assets for the purpose of applying the aims of Section 16 the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The list entries can be found at the following links:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1295870?section=official-list-entry>

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1102759?section=official-list-entry>

DETAILED ANALYSIS AND CONSIDERATIONS:

The key heritage issue is to consider the impact of the proposal upon the setting of nearby listed buildings and whether this affects the significance of identified heritage assets.

A site visit was arranged on 10 February 2026 and attended by myself, the case officer, the applicant and her contractor.

On 12 February I issued revised site notes to the applicant which included the following:

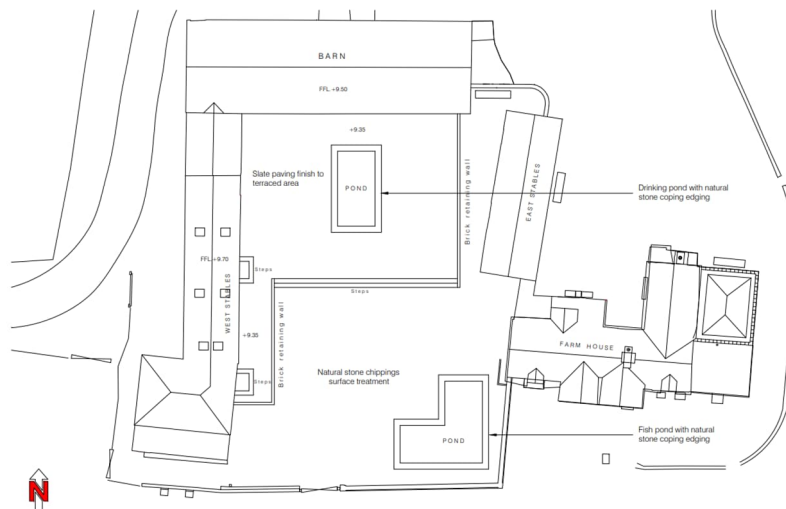
1. *SL agreed that the plans should be amended to remove steps and keep the original levels/slopes as currently exist with only one pond (location to be determined and not agreed on site).*
2. *MS/VW happy to consider either a loose or bonded gravel finish to the courtyard. To be confirmed by SL and amended drawings to be issued by SL.*

Whilst acknowledging that the agrarian use of this site has ceased with a conversion scheme underway, the setting to this barn and outbuilding group remains essentially agrarian as noted in Plate 3 of Border Archeaology's Heritage Statement.



Plate 3: General view of barn and attached outbuildings at Rye End Farm looking N

The proposed raised level (stepped terrace) with 'drinking pond' water feature would be an alien and incongruous intervention. A second water feature (a fish pond) is proposed to the south of the farmyard in what would be the right-hand corner of the image above.



HERITAGE POLICY ASSESSMENT:

Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990:
Section 66(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:

Assuming as above that a.) the applicant will be submitting an amended scheme omitting the steps and terrace and keeping the original levels/slopes as currently exist, b) introducing only one pond (ideally towards the southern end of the site) and c.) that the farmyard will hopefully receive a loose or bonded gravel finish, I am happy to await an amended scheme. Otherwise, I consider that the current proposal is **OBJECTIONABLE**.

OFFICER: Mark Simmons

DATE: 15/04/2026