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| <b>DELEGATED FILE NOTE</b> |
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**CASE OFFICER:** ...Mark Simmons.....

| APPLICATION<br>REFERENCE | BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF<br>DEVELOPMENT                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | APPLICATION SITE                                                                                               |
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| 25/00426/LBC             | Internal alterations to create access to existing loft space to facilitate conversion into dressing room. Insertion of two additional conservation rooflights. Replace two fixed rooflights with openable conservation rooflights, and convert existing glazed ceiling panel into glazed openable hatch. | Gannock Green Farm House<br>Gannock Green<br>Gannock Road<br>Sandon<br>Buntingford<br>Hertfordshire<br>SG9 0RH |

**Submitted Plan Nos**

2420.01 2420.08A 2420.11 2420.12 2520.15

HE1 Designated heritage assets

SECN16 Conserve + enhance historic environment

## 2.0 Site History

2.1 Please see file for full planning history but the following is the most relevant:

**10/03003/1LB** - Retrospective application for insertion of a serving hatch between the dining room and kitchen, removal of a modern (plasterboard) ceiling and reinstatement of a new ceiling at higher level in the family/breakfast room and insertion of a new opening and door between the bathroom and bedroom at first floor.  
**CON 27.01.2011**

**12/01554/1LB** - Enlarging of ground floor french doors; insertion of new first floor window; addition of ensuite to second floor including new door opening; removal of lath and plaster on second floor and insertion of two new windows.  
**CCON 20.09.2012**

**13/00989/1HH** - Single storey rear extension.  
**CP 08.07.2013**

**13/00990/1LB** - Single storey rear extension with alterations including opening up between kitchen and extension, enlarging french door opening from existing lean-to and repositioning existing first floor bathroom window. Insertion of two rooflights into existing lean-to roof.  
**CCON 08.07.2013**

## 3.0 Policies

3.1 Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 – 2031 is relevant as are the following paragraphs of Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (Dec 2024):

- ☐ **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*).

## 4.0 Representations

- 4.1 **Sandon Parish Council – No objections.**

**Press and site notices – No comments received.**

5.0 **Planning Considerations**

5.1 **Site & Surroundings**

- 5.1.1 Gannock Green Farmhouse is grade II listed and is situated on a rural road that runs between the A505 Royston to Baldock road, and the A10 at Buckland. The list entry reads as follows:

***Large house. C16 origins. Remodelled early C18. Extended and altered C19. Red brick with some timber framing probable, all roughcast. Machine tiled hipped roof. Originally an L-shaped plan perhaps reflecting an earlier hall and cross wing, additions in angle of L to form a square block. 2 storeys and attics. 3 broadly spaced bays to front. Central entrance, 2/3 glazed and 1/3 panelled door, recessed with early C19 surround, pilastered jambs, dentils to shallow pediment all in a C20 gabled porch. High plinth, 2 plat bands. Ground floor: 2 tripartite glazing bar sashes in reveals, first floor central glazing bar sash, flanking tripartite sashes. Boxed eaves. Central gabled dormer. Left gable end C18 red brick stack. Plinth and plat bands continue on left end with 2 small sashes. Roof hipped to right return, 2 broadly spaced bays. C19 gault brick ground floor canted bay windows with slate roofs. First floor flush frame tripartite sashes. On ridge to centre is a large C16 axial stack with 6 conjoined octagonal flues. Roof hipped to rear with ground floor French windows. To rear inside angle of L are C19 lower 2 storey gault brick and knapped flint additions, a hipped wing to rear and a gable end to left with kitchen entrance. Interior: early C18 staircase with alternate fluted column and vase balusters, fluted newel posts, moulded handrail.***

5.2 **Proposal**

- 5.2.1 The proposal is described as '***Internal alterations to create access to existing loft space to facilitate conversion into dressing room. Insertion of two additional conservation rooflights. Replace two fixed rooflights with openable conservation rooflights and convert existing glazed ceiling panel into glazed openable hatch***'.

5.3 **Key Issues**

- 5.3.1 The key issue is to consider the proposal in terms of the impact upon the special character of this grade II listed building.
- 5.3.2 The submitted Design & Access and Heritage Statements describes the farmhouse's significance as follows:

***Significance and impact on the Listed building***

***The proposals are within the most significant part of the property, it being the older part that was remodelled in the 18th Century. As the loft space is large with a raised eaves plate it is possible to convert the loft space without altering or removing any historic fabric. Just sympathetic linings are required. However, to access the loft it is necessary to remove approximately 3m2 of ceiling above the existing walk-in cupboard/dressing room as well as a 20th century timber tie. Whilst these have some significance, they are believed to be relatively low compared to the more historic surrounding elements. Therefore, removing them does not cause significant harm. The proposals do not change the layout of the existing rooms within the house and simply provide additional space for the property. There is no impact externally other than the addition of two small conservation rooflights which face into the valley. These will only be visible from a distance down the garden.***

- 5.3.3 The submitted Design & Access and Heritage Statements states that the loft “*sits above what was originally the rear wing of the farmhouse which was remodelled into its current state in the 18th Century*”. At a site visit conducted on 15 April 2025, the raised eaves plate to the loft space and the considerable internal volume of the space was noted. It is also noted that the outward facing walls are brick and flint whilst the wall which was subsequently consumed by the C19 extension is all timber framed.
- 5.3.4 Whilst the staircase will require the removal of approximately 3m<sup>2</sup> of ceiling above the existing walk-in cupboard/dressing room as well as a C20 timber tie, the staircase would not impact upon the special character of the bedroom to which it relates and historically staircases were often positioned against the chimney stack. Utilising part of the roof void in the way suggested would serve to optimise the space available and once exposed the construction of the cupboard ceiling could be recorded. It is understood that when the C20 timber tie is removed, the structural integrity of the roof structure will be maintained by introducing an inverted goal post frame that will be hidden in the built-up dressing room floor. It is advised that both the recording and roof strengthening works are addressed by condition.
- 5.3.5 The type of roof light proposed for the dressing room is the CR14-2 (viewable dimensions (W) 517mm x (L) 1133mm) and whilst a slightly smaller roof light would be desirable i.e. the CR10-2 (viewable dimensions (W) 517mm x (L) 980mm), as stated at 5.3.2 above, these roof lights face into a valley and will only be visible from a distance down the garden. Therefore, considering their discrete location and not generally visible from ground level, what has been proposed is considered unobjectionable. A smaller alternative from the same product range has therefore not been sought.
- 5.3.6 The replacement of two existing fixed rooflights with openable conservation rooflights will not harm the listed building’s special character and are also unobjectionable.
- 5.3.7 Finally, converting the existing glazed ceiling panel into a glazed openable hatch to provide access to the remaining unconverted loft space for storage, requires only minor adjustment and is unobjectionable.

## 5.4 Conclusion

- 5.4.1 Although the condition and type of cupboard ceiling construction is unknown and whilst the submitted Design & Access and Heritage Statements states that the removal of the cupboard ceiling will not cause ‘significant harm’, there is likely to be a very small degree of less than substantial harm. This is, however, countered by making a more effective use of a voluminous roof space and the staircase will not interfere with the special character of the bedroom to which it relates. The other works described above are also considered acceptable and will not occasion harm. On balance and subject to a recording condition, the proposed works would satisfy the provisions of Section 16(2) 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 the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 - 2031.

## 5.5 Alternative Options

- 5.5.1 Non-applicable.

## 5.6 Pre-Commencement Conditions

- 5.6.1 Non-applicable.

6.0 **Recommendation**

6.1 That Listed Building Consent be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

1. The work to which this consent relates shall be begun by not later than the expiration of the period of 3 years from the date of this notice.

Reason: To comply with the provisions of Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. Prior to removal, the cupboard ceiling construction shall be exposed and recorded either by photographs or metric scale drawings or both and the details shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority following which the dismantling works may commence on site.

Reason: To secure and safeguard the provision for inspection and recording of matters of architectural and/or historical importance associated with the building that may be lost in the course of works.

3. Details of the structural works required to provide support once the C20 tie chord in the roof void is removed or modified shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of that part of the development hereby consented. Thereafter, the strengthening works shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved structural details.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to protecting the special architectural and historic interest and integrity of this grade II listed building under Section 16(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 - 2031.

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| <p>Signed</p><br><br><br><p>Shaun Greaves<br/>Determining Officer</p> | <p>Development Management<br/>North Hertfordshire District Council<br/>Council Offices<br/>Gernon Road<br/>Letchworth<br/>Herts<br/>SG6 3JF</p> |
| <p><b>Date:</b> 23 April 2025</p>                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                 |

