

Your ref: PP-14568909
 Our ref: TSB/LJN/JB
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 Date: 19 December 2025

North Herts Council
 PO Box 10613
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Dear Sirs,

**PROPOSED NEW AGRICULTURAL ACCESS TRACK
 LAND AT WALNUT BARN, BALLSLOUGH HILL, GUSTARD WOOD AL4 8LA**

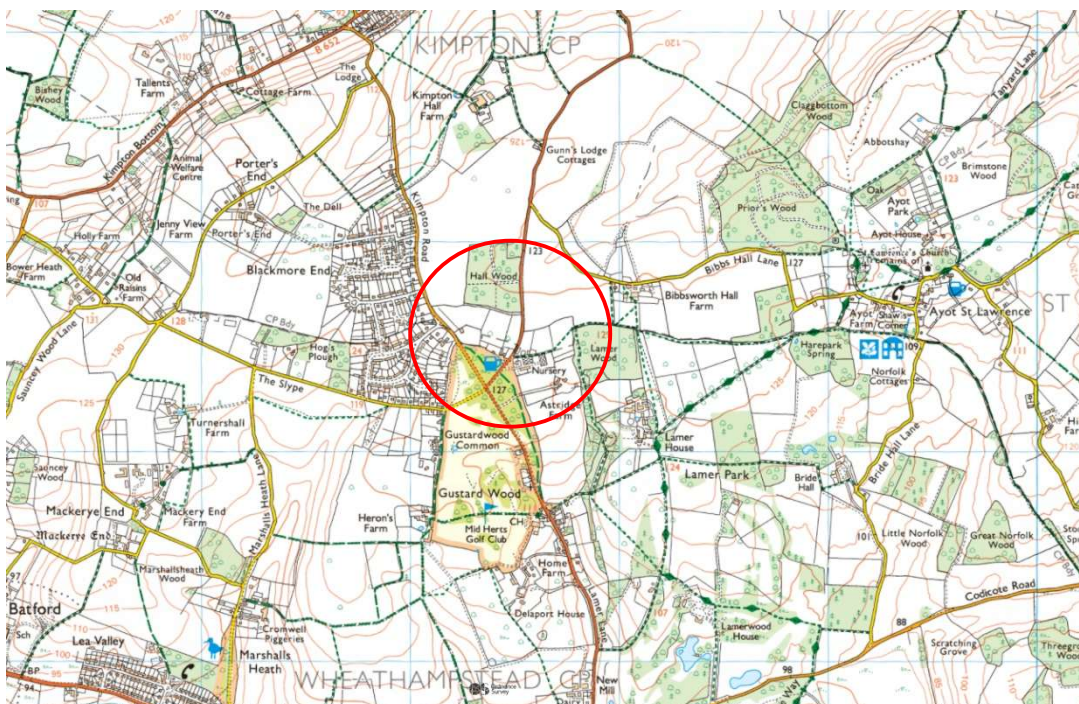
Please find enclosed a Prior Notification under Part 6 Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) for a proposed agricultural access track which is reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture at the Land at Walnut Barn herein known as “the Holding”.

The application is submitted online via the Planning Portal (Ref: PP-14568909).

The Site

The Holding is located on the edge of the village of Gustard wood, between the settlements of Kimpton, Mackeyre End and Ayot St Lawrence, as shown in Figure 1 below. The Holding is located situated 9.82 kilometres (6.1 miles) to the southeast of Luton, 15.45 kilometres (9.6 miles) to the southwest of Stevenage, and 10.62 kilometres (6.6 miles) to the northwest of Welwyn Garden city.

Figure 1 – OS map extract showing the location of the Land at Walnut Barn



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The Holding extends to approximately 9.02 hectares (22.29 acres) and comprises predominantly grassland with smaller areas of scrub and woodland. The land has been farmed for many years, with farming operations primarily comprising of hay making and livestock grazing.

Proposal and Agricultural Justification

The Holding is located adjacent to Kimpton Road and Ballslough Hill (a classified B- road). At present, roadside access is available via an existing gated access and unmade agricultural track to the south-western boundary (off Kimpton Road) and a gated entrance from Ballslough Hill that sits in the middle of the holding.

Access to the agricultural barn located within the agricultural land of the Holding is currently limited. The building does not currently have a formal or established permanent means of sustainable access. Access is currently gained by passage over the permanent grassland that surrounds it to the east and west.

The sole purpose of the agricultural barn is for storage of hay, which is used for feeding livestock, particularly during the winter months to help supplement the grass available on the pastureland. During these months that see a more intensive use of the barn, the land becomes sodden, and this has led to extensive damage being caused to the land, which has resulted in the need for regular reseeding of these areas of the pasture. Access at present, without a permanent means of access, is difficult for all vehicles.

The ABC Agricultural Budgeting and Costing Book notes that the establishment costs for grass are in the region of £371 per hectare and so for a small agricultural business such as that found here, the additional annual costs for having to reseed this area puts additional pressure on the farm's finances, especially when compounded with the loss of produce for the poached areas.

The existing access onto the single lane public highway, Ballslough Hill, is a very narrow, single width gateway. The single-track lane and the narrow gateway mean that access for long and wide agricultural vehicles can be very difficult and poses a danger to other road users.

Therefore, the farm requires a more fit-for-purpose accessway that provides a permanent, year-round means of access to the agricultural building and something that will improve access from the public highway and avoid poaching of the fields during the regular visits to the site to feed and tend to the livestock

The Location

We enclose the Site Plan which shows the proposed location and route of the track, edged red and shaded pink.

The location has been identified as being in close proximity to the existing operations and is entirely contained within the Applicant's ownership and on land associated with the ongoing agricultural operations at Walnut Barn. The proposed location will provide considerable benefits in terms of the access sustainability to the agricultural barn, will drastically improve access ability from the public highway and it will substantially improve the operational effectiveness of the agricultural unit.

It is considered that the proposed location will be of no detriment to the landscape, character or appearance of the site, being situated close to existing field boundaries, thus minimising visual impact and land loss. The new access track and hardstanding proposed under this application is to make use of an existing, alternative access from the public highway that is on the western side of the farm and provides access from Kimpton Road.

The proposal will provide a dedicated internal route for agricultural vehicles to travel along and provide an off-field turning area, therefore reducing the vehicular movements on the public roads surrounding the

property. This in turn will reduce soil and debris deposits on the highway and will improve highway cleanliness and safety.

The proposal will reduce soil compaction and prevent rutting and damage to the agricultural fields. The track will also allow for better management of hedgerows and field margins, supporting biodiversity and good agricultural practices.

The Design

The agricultural access track and area of hardstanding will be constructed of crushed concrete with a semi-permanent Geotextile membrane beneath and a top layer of road plainings.

The proposed design is considered to be appropriate for the use of the track and hardstanding and is in keeping with the accessways typically used for agricultural use.

The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) – Part 6 Class A

Part 6 Class A allows for:

“The carrying out on agricultural land comprised in an agricultural unit of 5 hectares or more in an area of

(a) works for the erection, extension or alteration of a building; or

(b) any excavation or engineering operations,

Which are reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture within that unit”.

It has been demonstrated above that the proposal is reasonably necessary (and arguably essential) for the purposes of agriculture on the agricultural unit. The proposal fully complies with the criteria set out within Part 6 Class A, as set out in Table 1 below.

DEVELOPMENT IS NOT PERMITTED BY CLASS A IF -	CRITERIA COMPLIANCE
(a) the development would be carried out on a separate parcel of land forming part of the unit which is less than 1 hectare in area;	The parcel of land within the unit subject of the proposal exceeds 1 hectare. The accompanying Land at Walnut Barn Plan shows the Holding to extend to 9.02 hectares.
(b) it would consist of the erection or extension of any building on an established agricultural unit (as defined in paragraph X Part 3) where development under Class Q or S of Part 3 (changes of use) of this Schedule has been carried out within a period of 10 years ending with the date on which development under Class A(a) begins;	No such permitted development rights have been implemented within the unit.
(c) it would consist of, or include, the erection, extension or alteration of a dwelling;	The proposal does not consist of, or include the erection, extension or alteration of a dwelling.

(d) it would involve the provision of a building, structure or works not designed for agricultural purposes;	The track and hardstanding have been designed entirely for agricultural purposes, as demonstrated above.
(e) the ground area which would be covered by— (i) any works or structure (other than a fence) for accommodating livestock or any plant or machinery arising from engineering operations would exceed 1,000 square metres; or (ii) any building erected or extended or altered by virtue of Class A would exceed 1,500 square metres,	The proposed area of the track and hardstanding is 1,009.03 square metres.
(f) the height of any part of the building, structure or works within 3 kilometres of the perimeter of an aerodrome would exceed 3 metres;	The proposal does not propose to erect a new agricultural building, and the proposal is not within 3 kilometres of the perimeter of an aerodrome.
(g) the height of any part of the building, structure or works not within 3 kilometres of the perimeter of an aerodrome would exceed 12 metres;	This proposal does not propose to erect a new agricultural building.
(h) any part of the development would be within 25 metres of a metalled part of a trunk or classified road;	The proposal does not fall within 25 metres of a metalled part of a trunk or classified road. The proposed track will begin 25 metres from the edge of Kimpton Road (as identified on the accompanying plan) and will span to the agricultural building across land owned by the Applicant.
(i) it would consist of, or include the erection or construction of, or the carrying out of any works to, a building, structure or excavation used or to be used for the accommodation of livestock or for the storage of slurry or sewage sludge where the building, structure or excavation, or would be, within 400 metres of the curtilage of a protected building;	The proposal is for an agricultural access track and hardstanding and is not for the housing of livestock.
(j) it would involve excavations or engineering operations on or over article 2 (4) land which are connected with fish farming;	The application does not relate to fish farming.
(k) any building for storing fuel or waste from a biomass boiler or an aerobic digestion system –	The application does not relate to the storing of fuel or waste for biomass or anaerobic digestion systems.

(i) would be used for storing waste not produced by that boiler system or for storing fuel not produced on land within the unit, or (ii) is or would be within 400m of the curtilage of a protected building.	
(l) the erection or extension of a building would be carried out on land or a building that is, or is within the curtilage of, a scheduled monument	The proposal does not involve the erection or extension of a building on land within the curtilage of a scheduled monument.

Summary

There is an essential requirement for the provision of a new agricultural track and hardstanding at Land at Walnut Barn to ensure that the access to the Holding is sustainable and can allow access to the agricultural building situated centrally within the Holding, at all times of year and in all weather conditions. The current access arrangement presents a seasonal accessibility issue and also future accessibility issues as vehicles continue to grow longer and wider.

The provision of a new access track and hardstanding will significantly enhance farming operations, benefit the internal access around the farm and provide a safe, and sustainable access between the agriculture shed within the Land at Walnut Barn and Kimpton Road.

The current access arrangement presents health and safety concerns with large vehicles travelling along narrow lanes.

The proposal fully complies with all of the criteria set out under Part 6 Class A, as demonstrated within this statement and it is considered prior approval should therefore be granted for the proposal.

Application Documents

The application is submitted online via the Planning Portal and comprises the following documents:

- Application Form
- Covering Letter and Statement
- Site Plan
- Block Plan

If you wish to arrange a site visit or require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,



Tom Stewart-Blacker BSc (Hons) MRICS
Rural Surveyor