

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...Vicki Wood.....

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
26/01896/FPH	Two storey side extension and single storey front. Installation of solar panel array to rear roofslope.	7 Homefield Hinxworth Baldock Hertfordshire SG7 5RX

Submitted Plan Nos

HALL/26/01 HALL/26/02 HALL/26/03 HALL/26/04

1.0 Policies

1.0 **Local and National Policy**

1.1 **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2026)**

Chapter 4 Achieving sustainable development

Policy S3: Presumption in favour of sustainable development

Policy S4: Principle of development within settlements

Chapter 5 Meeting the need of climate change

Chapter 14 Achieving well-designed places

Policy DP3: Key principles for well-designed places

Chapter 19 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Policy N1: Improving the natural environment

Chapter 20 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Policy HE4: Securing the conservation of heritage assets

Policy HE5: Assessing effects on heritage assets

Policy HE6: Proposals affecting designated heritage assets

Policy HE7: Decisions on non-designated heritage assets

Policy HE9: Conservation areas

Policy HE10: Loss or removal of heritage assets

1.2 **North Hertfordshire Draft Local Plan (2011-2031)**

Strategic Policies

Policy SP1 Sustainable Development in North Hertfordshire

Policy SP2 Settlement Hierarchy and Spatial Distribution

Policy SP5 Countryside and Green Belt

Policy SP9 Design and Sustainability

Policy SP13 Historic environment

Development Management Policies

Policy CGB1 Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt

Policy CGB4 Existing buildings in the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt

Policy D1 Sustainable design

Policy D2 House extensions, replacement dwellings and outbuildings

Policy D3 Protecting living conditions

Policy HE1 Designated heritage assets

Policy HE4 Archaeology

Policy NE2 Landscape

1.3 **Supplementary Planning Design (SPD)**

NHC Sustainability (2024)

2.0 **Relevant Site History**

2.1 None.

3.0 **Representations**

3.1 **Press, Site and Neighbouring Notification** – None received.

3.2 **Hinxworth Parish Council** – No objection.

3.3 **HCC Historic Environment (Archaeology)** – No objection.

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

4.1.1 The application site is located within Homefield, a small residential estate situated on the north-eastern side of Hinxworth. Access to the estate is obtained from the High Street to the south. Hinxworth is identified as a Category C village under Policy SP2 of the Local Plan, where limited infilling within the built core of the village is generally supported in principle. The site lies within the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt and is also located within the Hinxworth Conservation Area.

4.1.2 The property comprises a two storey detached dwelling with a detached double garage located to the southeast of the dwelling. A modest front garden is provided, with a larger garden to the rear of the dwelling.

4.2 **Proposal**

4.2.1 Planning permission is sought for the construction of a two storey side extension and single storey front extension together with the installation of a solar panel array to the rear roof slope.

4.3 **Key Issues**

4.3.1 The key issues for consideration are as follows:

- Whether the proposed development would be inappropriate development in the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt for the purposes of the National Planning Policy and Local Development Plan.
- The impact of the proposed development on the environment.
- The impact that the proposed development would have on the living conditions of nearby neighbouring properties.

Principle of Development in the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt

4.3.2 The property lies within the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt, this is an area of countryside which lies outside of the Green Belt though considered important and valuable land where it is still necessary to impose restraints on development to prevent inappropriate schemes. Policy CBG1 of the Local Plan sets out six broad typologies (a-d incl.) of development considered acceptable in Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt which in this case the relevant typology is:

d) Relates to an existing rural building.

4.3.3 Policy CBG4 of the Local Plan sets out three broad typologies (b-d incl.) of development considered acceptable in Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt which in this case the relevant typology is:

c) The resultant building(s) do not have a materially greater impact on the openness, purposes or general policy aims of the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt than the original building(s).

4.3.4 Whilst there is an inconsistency with Policies SP2 and CGB1 of the Local Plan, Chapter 4 Policy S5 of the NPPF supports the principle of development outside settlements where the proposal is for an extension to an existing dwelling where the extension would not result in a disproportionate increase in the size compared to the existing building.

4.3.5 In this regard, I find the principle of the development acceptable and in accordance with Policies CGB1 and CGB4 of the Local Plan and Chapter 4 Policy S5 of the NPPF.

Impact on Heritage Assets

4.3.6 Where development proposals are located within a Conservation Area, the Council is required to have special regard to preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area, in accordance with Sections 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Chapter 20 of the NPPF relates to the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets which is reflected in Policy HE1 of the Local Plan.

4.3.7 Within a Conservation Area, the Council has a statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area, in accordance with Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. National planning policy relating to the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment is set out in Chapter 20 of the NPPF. In this regard, Policy HE1 of the Local Plan is consistent with the NPPF.

4.3.8 Chapter 20 of the NPPF seeks to conserve and enhance the historic environment by protecting heritage assets in accordance with their significance and ensuring that any harm is fully justified and weighed against the public benefits of development.

4.3.9 The proposed development would not have any significant impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area. The proposed design and materials are considered sympathetic to the locality and to the conservation area and there would not be any harm to the heritage significance of the conservation area.

4.3.10 Therefore, I am satisfied that the development is acceptable and in accordance with Policy HE1 of the Local Plan and Chapter 20 Policies HE4, HE5, HE6 and HE9 of the NPPF.

Archaeology

4.3.11 Chapter 20 Policy HE10 of the NPPF recognises archaeological remains as an irreplaceable part of the historic environment and seeks to ensure that their significance is properly understood before planning decisions are made. Development proposals affecting sites of archaeological interest should be supported by appropriate information proportionate to the asset's significance, and where harm cannot be avoided, suitable measures for investigation, recording, preservation and public benefit should be secured. The overarching aim is to conserve archaeological heritage in a manner appropriate to its significance whilst enabling sustainable development.

4.3.12 Policy HE4 of the Local Plan reflects the objectives of the NPPF by seeking to ensure that development proposals appropriately conserve and, where possible, enhance the significance of archaeological heritage assets. Accordingly, any potential impact on

archaeological remains must be carefully assessed and weighed against the public benefits of the proposal

4.3.13 The Historic Environment Advisor (Archaeology) has reviewed the proposed development and advises no objection.

4.3.14 The proposal is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy HE4 of the Local Plan and Chapter 20 Policies HE4, HE5, HE6, HE7 and HE10 of the NPPF.

Impact on the Landscape

4.3.15 Chapter 19 of the NPPF requires planning decisions to protect and enhance the natural environment by conserving biodiversity, designated sites, landscapes, geodiversity and green infrastructure. It places a strong emphasis on nature recovery, biodiversity enhancement and environmental improvements. In this regard, Policy NE2 of the Local Plan is consistent with the objectives set out within the NPPF.

4.3.16 The proposed extension would be modest in scale and would remain subordinate to the host dwelling with the addition of solar panels being minor. As such, it would not appear incongruous within its setting and would preserve the character and appearance of the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt. The proposal would therefore be in accordance with Policy NE2 of the Local Plan and Chapter 19 of the NPPF relating to the conservation and enhancement of landscapes.

Design, Appearance & Sustainability

4.3.17 Chapter 4 of the NPPF sets out the Government's approach to achieving sustainable development through the planning system. It establishes the economic, social and environmental objectives of sustainable development and confirms that these objectives should be pursued in a mutually supportive way. This chapter also reinforces the presumption in favour of sustainable development, requiring planning decisions to support development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan and contribute positively to sustainable development.

4.3.18 Chapter 14 of the NPPF promotes high-quality, sustainable and attractive development, recognising that good design is a fundamental aspect of sustainable development. Planning decisions should ensure development is visually attractive, responds positively to local character and creates places that function well for existing and future users.

4.3.19 Policies D1 and D2 of the Local Plan are consistent with the objectives set out in the NPPF.

4.3.20 The proposed extension would constitute a modest addition to the side and front of the dwelling providing additional habitable accommodation in the form of a WC and utility at ground floor level and an en-suite at first floor level. Whilst an existing window is present within the south side elevation of the dwelling, as a result of the development, a new window would be installed. Although the new window would be closer to the shared boundary to the south, there would not be any direct overlooking over and above what was previously the case therefore I do not consider this window needs to be made obscure and/or non-opening. The design of the extension is sympathetic to the host dwelling and would be constructed using materials that match, or closely complement, those of the existing building, thereby ensuring a cohesive appearance and an appropriate visual relationship with the existing dwelling.

4.3.21 In addition to the proposed extension, the application includes the installation of an array of solar panels to the rear roof slope of the dwelling. Given the rear roof slope of

the dwelling faces in a southeastern direction, this is the most suitable place for the siting of panels and is acceptable.

- 4.3.22 By virtue of its modest scale the proposed extension and installation of solar panels would not result in visual harm to the street scene and would preserve the character and appearance of the dwelling and its rural surroundings. As such the proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policies D1, D2 and D3 of the Local Plan and Chapters 4 Policy S5 and Chapter 14 Policy DP3 of the NPPF.

Impact on Neighbouring Properties:

- 4.3.23 A core planning principle set out in Chapter 14 of the NPPF is to always seek to secure a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings. This principle is reflected in the provisions of Policy D3 of the Local Plan.
- 4.3.24 No objections have been received from neighbouring occupiers, and I am satisfied that the proposed extension, by virtue of its position on the property and its relationship to existing built form, together with the siting of solar panels would not impact existing residential amenity to any significant degree and would be in accordance with Policy D3 of the Local Plan and Chapter 14 Policy DP3 of the NPPF.

Highways and Parking

- 4.3.25 The dwelling is served by sufficient off-street parking spaces which would remain unaffected by the proposed development.

Environmental Implications:

- 4.3.26 The Council's Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document (2024) seeks to ensure that new developments are future proofed against the challenge of climate change.
- 4.3.27 Chapter 5 of the NPPF sets out how the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future. The principles set out in Chapter 5 are reflected in Policy D1 of the Local Plan, which sets out that development proposals should take all reasonable opportunities to reduce energy consumption and waste, retain existing vegetation and propose new appropriate planting, and future proof for changes in technology and lifestyle.
- 4.3.28 Based on the details submitted, the proposed development, is unlikely to have any significant implications for the local environment in terms of carbon emissions and therefore would be generally in accordance with Policy D1 of the Local Plan and Chapter 5 of the NPPF.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

- 4.3.29 The development is not subject to the statutory biodiversity gain condition, as it falls within one of the exemptions set out in paragraph 17 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024 (as amended).

4.4 Conclusion

- 4.4.1 The proposed rear extension represents a modest and sympathetic addition to the dwelling as does the siting of solar panels. Therefore, I am satisfied that the development would preserve the character and appearance of the host dwelling and its

rural setting. Accordingly, the proposal is considered acceptable and in accordance with Policies CGB1, CGB4, D1, D2, D3 and NE2 of the Local Plan and Chapters 4, 5, 14, 19 and 20 of the NPPF.

4.5 **Alternative Options**

4.5.1 N/A

4.6 **Pre-Commencement Conditions**

4.6.1 N/A

5.0 **Recommendation**

5.1 That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out wholly in accordance with the details specified in the application and supporting approved documents and plans listed above.

Reason: To ensure the development is carried out in accordance with details which form the basis of this grant of permission.

3. The extensions hereby permitted shall be built in external materials to match the existing dwellinghouse unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect the visual amenities of the locality and to comply with Policies D1 and D2 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 to 2031.

Proactive Statement:

Planning permission has been granted for this proposal. Discussion with the applicant to seek an acceptable solution was not necessary in this instance. The Council has therefore acted proactively in line with the requirements of the Framework (paragraph 38) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

Signed  Shaun Greaves Determining Officer	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Date: 16 September 2026	