

St Andrews Castle 33 St Andrews Street South Bury St Edmunds IP33 3PH

North Hertfordshire District Council

Via Planning Portal: **PP-14727556**

20/03/2026

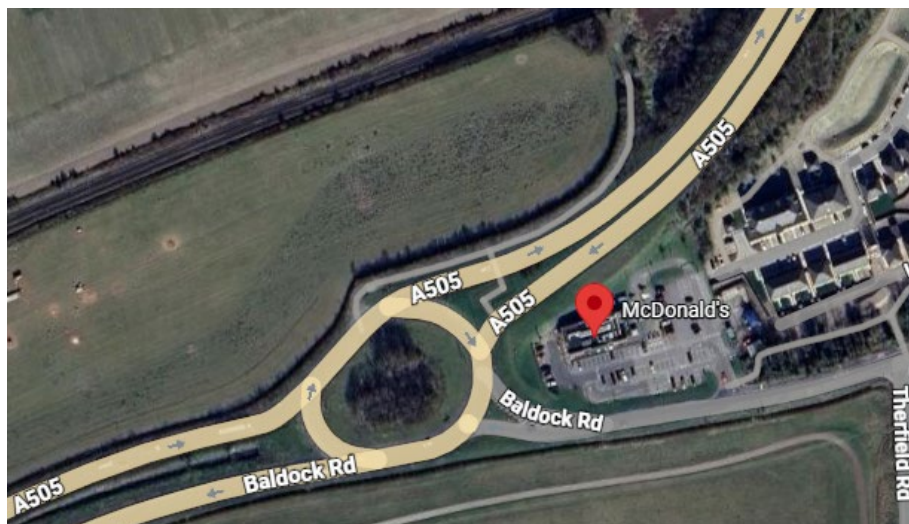
Dear Sir/Madam,

McDonald's Restaurant, Baldock Road, Hertfordshire, SG8 9NT

Refurbishment of the restaurant with changes to elevations with extensions for an additional drive thru booth to match existing for fast forward ordering. Reconfiguration and extension of the patio for the introduction of a new covered winter terrace and Play frame. New access door formed with new glazing, minor changes to parking bays and kerb lines with associated works to the site.

Please find attached a planning application relating to “ *Refurbishment of the restaurant with changes to elevations with extensions for an additional drive thru booth to match existing for fast forward ordering. Reconfiguration and extension of the patio for the introduction of a new covered winter terrace and Play frame. New access door formed with new glazing, minor changes to parking bays and kerb lines with associated works to the site.*”

The existing McDonald's Restaurant is situated adjacent to the roundabout of A505 and Baldock Road and easily accessible to the public from footpath's surrounding the site. The entrance to the site is from the service road from Baldock Road, with accessible parking situated outside the main entrance along with ample car parking bays for the site surrounding the restaurant.



Extract from Google Maps

There are no changes to the operating hours as part of this application and the site is in Flood Zone 1.

The key changes to the site relate to :

- Refurbishment of the restaurant with materials to match existing and Drive Thru (DT) booths resprayed Dark Grey RAL 7022.
- Introduction of a new Fast Forward Booth with additional collection point, with associated changes to the DT layout.
- Associated extensions for the internal amendments.
- Reconfiguration of the patio area with a new Covered Winter Terrace and New Play Frame

Fast Forward Facility

The fast forward facility is now a standard addition to all new McDonald's restaurants. It effectively forms the role of a grill bay. For example, if a customer places an order which may take slightly longer to prepare, they can be directed to the Fast Forward Booth where their order is delivered when ready. This enables the customer who would normally sit behind the car at the Presenter Booth to be served 'out of sequence'. Customers with very large or complex orders are still directed to the grill bays and their food is brought to their vehicle by a member of staff, via the new pedestrian crossing.

The benefits of the Fast Forward Booth are as follows:

- Reduces the overall time spent by vehicles in the drive thru queue. McDonald's research of stores with and without Fast Forward found that the average drive thru experience time reduced by 15%;
- Reduces the use of the grill bays. McDonald's research found that where restaurants have Fast Forward facilities, 85% of customers who had a delayed order were pulled forward with only 15% being directed to the grill bays;
- Staff do not need to leave the restaurant to carry orders to the grill bays as frequently, so they can spend more time serving other customers in the restaurant or drive thru lane;
- Staff do not need to leave the building at night which is better for staff safety.

In summary, the Fast Forward Booth would facilitate the service of these customers quicker and would help to reduce the drive thru queue length.

The changes to the building are minimal to allow the configuration of the drive thru lane and a small extension is proposed for the booth and links into the kitchen, to the southern elevation adjacent to the existing pay and collection booths.

Associated extensions and Parking

In addition to the Fast forward booth extension, there is also a small extension on the southern elevation for improvements to operations of the store, with an overall increase in GIA is 25 m² as shown on drawing P21-050-1413-300-C.

Whilst the covers have been increased within the dining are, there is only a small change in the dining area. (2m²), as shown below

AREA SCHEDULE		
	EXISTING	PROPOSED
Total Covers	73	91
Dining Area Ground	100 m ²	102 m²
Customer WC	23 m ²	23 m ²
Crew Room	14 m ²	14 m ²
Crew WC	12 m ²	12 m ²

Extract from P21-050-1413-50-C Royston-Seating Layout

The reconfiguration of the drive thru lane and the increased patio area has led the loss of parking, as shown on drawing P21-050-1413-300-C.

SCHEDULE OF PARKING	
Existing Grill Bays	2 Bays
Existing Accessible Bays	2 Bays
Existing General Bays	47 Bays
Existing Total Bays	51 Bays
Proposed Grill Bays	2 Bays
Proposed Accessible Bays	2 Bays
Proposed General Bays	39 Bays
PROPOSED TOTAL BAYS	43 Bays

Extract from P21-050-1413-300-C (NTS)

The parking guidelines set out within the North Hertfordshire District Council's Supplementary Planning Document SPD (2011) which includes maximum provision for non-residential development. Whilst the Use Class Order has changed in the interim, the relevant sections of this SPD provided reference.

A3 – Food and Drink		
Restaurants/ cafes	1 space per 5 m2 of floorspace of dining area plus 3 spaces per 4 employees	1 space per 100sqm for staff plus 1 space per 100sqm for customers
Fast food drive thru restaurants	1 space per 8 m2 gfa	
Roadside restaurants	1 space per 4 m2 of floorspace of	

Extract from North Hertfordshire District Council's Supplementary Planning Document SPD (2011)

The schedule of areas included within the supporting documents show an increase of the GIA to 347 m².

SCHEDULE OF AREAS	
Existing Site Area	0.507 ha
Existing Building (GEA / m ²) (Excluding Corral, Freezer/Chiller)	343m ²
Existing Building (GIA / m ²)	322m ²
Proposed Site Area	0.507 ha
Proposed Building (GEA / m ²) (Excluding Corral, Freezer/Chiller)	372m ²
Proposed Building (GIA / m ²)	347m ²

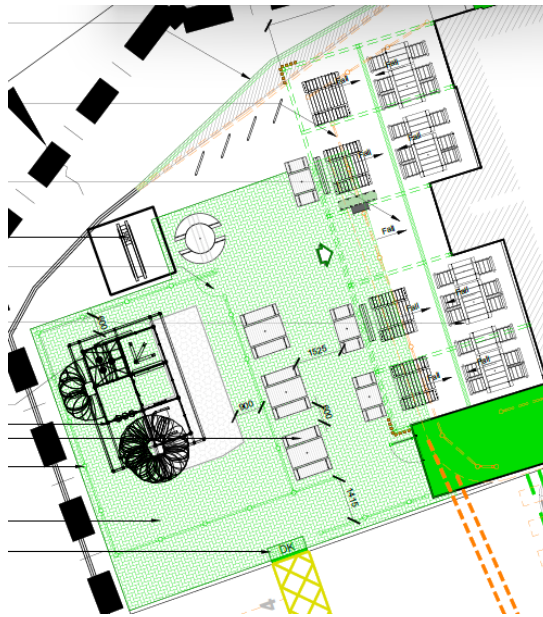
Extract from P21-050-1413-300-C (NTS)

The maximum car parking standard (includes visitor spaces) is 347 divided by 8 = 43.38 spaces, which reflects the provision included with the proposal.

The development accords with the policy T2 of the North Hertfordshire 2011-2031 (November 2022).

Reconfiguration of the Patio Area

The patio area is sited to the east of the site and the new arrangement has allowed for improvements to the available provision, with the introduction of a winter terrace and a children's playframe.



Extract from P21-050-1413-300-C (NTS)

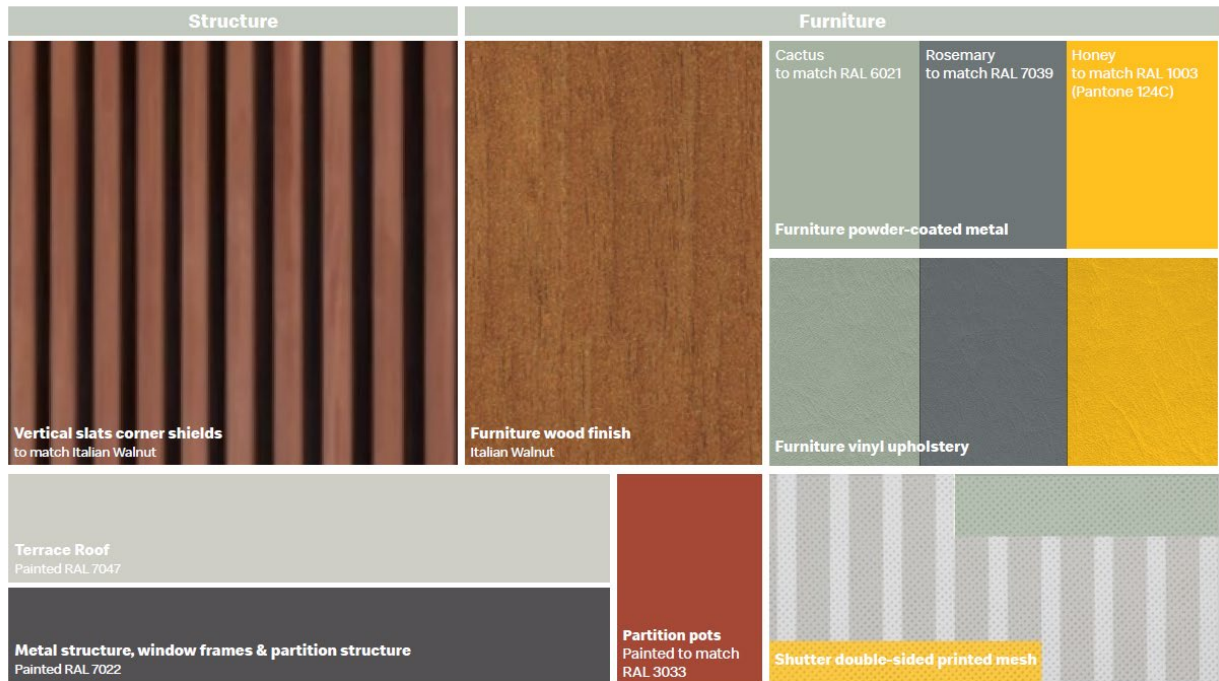
Introduction of Winter Terrace.

The introduction of the winter terrace has been trialled at other stores and includes a metal structure with braise soleil roof to allow shelter from the elements, with glazed walls to cover part of the patio area.





Inside the winter terrace



Materials Palate



Demonstration of the roof

Introduction of Children's Play Frame

A full specification of the children's play frame has been included to support the application.



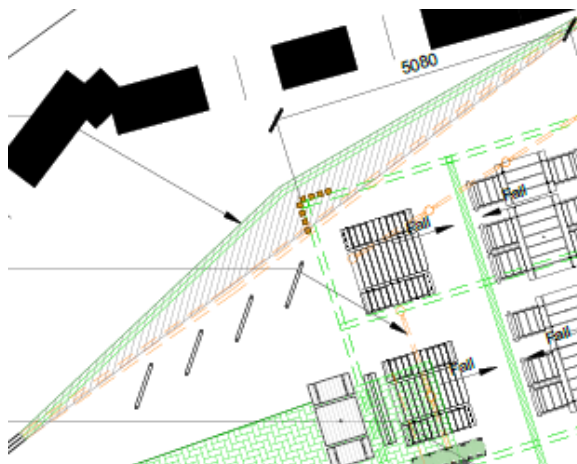
Extract from Proposed Site Plan

Associated changes to the site

The associated changes relate to the change in kerb lines and parking to ensure that all the new elements can be accommodated.

Biodiversity Exception Statement

The introduction of the winter terrace and patio reconfiguration has led to the loss of 6m² of grass at the north of the site.



Extract from P21-050-1413-300-C (NTS)

In England, BNG is mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021). Developers must deliver a BNG of 10%. This means a development will result in more or better-quality natural habitat than there was before development.”

However, BNG does apply to all development. Some development types are exempt.

The list of exemptions from the BNG requirement includes “ **Development subject to the de minimis exemption**” (Biodiversity net gain: exempt developments Last Updated 21/08/2024)

A development that does not impact a priority habitat and impacts less than:

- *25 square metres (5m by 5m) of on-site habitat*
- *5 metres of on-site linear habitats such as hedgerows*

A development ‘impacts’ a habitat if it

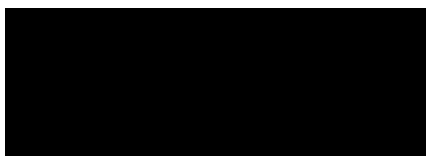
As shown in the drawings and further reviewed in this letter, there is one section of 6m² of landscaping impacted by the development, as shown in the extract above. On that basis the development would be exempted from biodiversity net gain by the de minimis exemption as:

- the development does not impact on any onsite priority habitat;
- the area impacted is below the 25 square meter threshold and there are no impacted on-site linear habitats such as hedgerows; and
- there are no other onsite habitats.

We trust that this application can be validated and we can progress to a positive recommendation to allow operations on the site to be improved.

If you have any queries relating to this application, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely



Sarah Carpenter

Planware Ltd

