

Planning Department
North Herts Council
(Submitted via Planning Portal)

21st October 2025

Project: Minor Material Amendment - Variation of Condition 2 (approved plans) and removal of Condition 8 (access details), of planning permission 23/01154/FP

Site address: Chez Nous, Harveys Hill Lane, Luffenhall, Stevenage SG2 7PX

Dear Sir / Madam,

An application for a Minor Material Amendment to vary the original planning permission (reference 23/01154/FP), is hereby submitted via the Planning Portal.

This Section 73 application seeks approval of the access details, as required by Condition 8, which also entails a slight revision to the layout of the site plan details, under approved plans Condition 2.

In regard to the plans now submitted, Drawing BAR-005 - Proposed Site Frontage Plan and Access Details, is to replace Drawing 8-23-2D, for the site plan, as a variation to Condition 2 – Approved plans. This is just for detailing on the gradient levels in connection with the access technical details, whereby the gradient details are shown on the Site Frontage Plan.

Condition 8 of the original permission requires access technical details to be submitted and approved, in conjunction with the Highway Authority. These details are submitted also on Drawing BAR-005, to replace Drawing 8-23-8A.

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The last application for this condition detail, was refused due to the details differing from the original approved plans. Hence the need now for a varied proposed site frontage plan. The Highway Authority had 3 points of objection, which are set out and addressed below.

Driveway gradient

The access plan still utilizes the existing point of access to the existing dwelling on the site. The gradient in and up to the parking area is proposed as 1:15. It is acknowledged the ideal highway requirement is a 1:20 gradient. However, in order to achieve this all the way up to the dwelling would involve a very significant excavation of the site levels, of tens of tonnes of earth material, in order to lower the whole site frontage to this extent. A 1:15 initial gradient will still involve sloping the land from the existing, but in no way to such a significant extent.

It is proposed though, to achieve the 1:20 within the site, from the parking area across to the dwelling frontage and side door entrances. This is how any disabled / restricted mobility user of the site would arrive, which would be by vehicle and then walk or wheelchair across to access the dwelling itself, or the rear garden area. These gradients are both shown and delineated on the site frontage accordingly.

Therefore, this is proposed as a sensible and practical solution, whereby the gradient is far improved from the existing, but is not to the vast extent of the initially required 1:20 gradient. This proposal still ensures pedestrian accessibility and compliance with inclusive design principles.

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Visibility splays

Turning to the visibility splays, the highway comments on the original approved scheme stated,

*"..the gate must be set back at least 6m from the back of the highway and **optimum** visibility splays achievable from the access must be provided (cutting back all the foliage along the sites frontage with Harvey Hill Lane. The applicant is required to submit to the HA detailed technical plans clearly demonstrating the optimum visibility splays".*

The applicant has purchased the highway boundary plan for the locality. This is clearly shown on the submitted drawing for highway land ownership which is all of the bank area along this part of Harveys Hill Lane, highlighted in yellow. It is noted that technically the road speed limit here is 60 mph and that usually this would need splays of 215 metres.

In this case, this is a single track rural lane, with bends in the road leading out from Luffenhall village, to just a few properties along this lane, which also terminates and is not a cut through to further destinations. As a result, vehicle speeds are significantly lower than the permitted limit, being of around 20-25 mph. One would simply not travel anywhere close to 60mph along this small rural lane.

It was on this basis that the new dwelling example at Old Stables, Luffenhall – Reference 24/01835/FP was approved, with 43 metre splays, which is that required for a 30mph road – See highway comments dated 15th January 2025. Visibility splays can be achieved of 68.7 in the south direction and 100.1 metres in the north direction. This is significantly increased from the previously submitted details.

Therefore, the splays now demonstrated are in excess of this other approved example along this same highway and, is across highway owned land only. These are the

optimum visibility distances and are considered to be more than adequate, for this actual context of a small single track rural lane.

Gates set back distance

This was shown on the previous submitted plan but is now dimensioned as 6 metres set back from the carriageway, as required by the Highway Authority. In regard to conditions, the previously required details of conditions have been approved under previous applications, which referenced the variation planning permission (Reference 24/01959/S73) for a revised parking area and slight relocation of the dwelling position.

Therefore, the new permission can refer to these previously approved condition details, for the development to be completed in accordance with these approved details.

Please contact me should you require any further information.

Yours faithfully,

James Gran

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Director

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