



Planning Statement

Permission in Principle (PiP)

Erection of three dwellings

Land adjacent to Model Farm, Village Street, Hexton
SG5 3JE

Ref: 2622

March 2026

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1.0 Background

1.1.1 This Statement relates to an application for Permission in Principle for the erection of up to three dwellings at Land adjacent to Model Farm, Village Street, Hexton SG5 3JE.

1.2.0 Scope

1.2.1 This document comprises an overarching Planning Statement. Sections 2 to 4 consider the physical, economic, social and historical context of the site, identifying the relevant local, regional and national planning policy framework; Section 5 sets out the details of the proposal. All these sections inform the evaluation of the proposal in Section 6 against the identified planning policy framework. The overall conclusions are set out in Section 7, and which are summarised below at paragraph 1.3.0.

1.3.0 Summary

- The site lies within the defined settlement boundary of Hexton, a Category A village, where Policy SP2 supports general development. The site is therefore an appropriate and sustainable location for new housing.
- It is currently accepted by the Council that they cannot demonstrate a five-year housing land supply. It is thus the case that the planning balance shifts in favour of the grant of permission for residential development, with permission to be refused only if any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. It is considered that there would be no such adverse impacts on this occasion.

2.0 SITE & CONTEXT ANALYSIS

2.1.0 Location

- 2.1.1 The application site is located on the eastern side of Mill Lane in the linear village of Hexton. The village may be described as an estate village associated with Hexton Manor. The site is situated within a historic frontage, reflective of the village's past.



Figure 1: Location of the Application Site

2.2.0 Application Site

- 2.2.1 The site comprises an approximately rectangular parcel of undeveloped grassland extending to around 0.2 hectares. The frontage to the road is defined by five established trees located behind traditional metal estate railings, which are currently in a state of disrepair. The northern boundary is enclosed by hedgerow and shrub planting, while the eastern boundary is defined by dense, mature trees and vegetation. Vehicular access to the site is currently taken from the south via Village Street.

2.3.0 Context

- 2.3.1 To the north of the site lies Hexton Village Hall, beyond which are several residential dwellings. To the east, the site is bounded by the Hexton Manor Registered Park and Garden (RPG), which extends along the north-eastern and eastern edges of Hexton and beyond. Immediately to the south of the site is a recently completed development comprising two four-bedroom dwellings arranged in a courtyard / barn-style form.

2.4.0 **Proposals Map Notation**

2.4.1 Following the adoption of the Local Plan 2011 – 2031 the site is within the Category A village of Hexton, inset from the Green Belt. The site is also located within the Hexton Conservation Area and the Chilterns National Landscape Area. The site is not within flood zones 2 or 3.

2.5.0 **Local Services & Accessibility**

2.5.1 The site lies in the centre of Hexton and has good access to village facilities, including a primary school, a small village local food store, and a range of leisure opportunities. Barton-le-Clay which is approximately 3.4km from the application site and accessed along the Hexton Road, offers a doctor, dentist, and pharmacy. Higher order services are available in Hitchin, around 7km to the east.

2.5.2 A bus stop is located on Barton Road which is approximately 325m away from the application site. This bus stop provides daily services which go to the nearby villages of Barton-le-Clay, Pegsdon, and Meppershall. This service also goes to the town of Hitchin. Harlington Train Station, which is approximately 8.5km from Hexton provides direct services into London and Brighton. Alternative train services are available from Hitchin Station (10.6km east of Hexton), into London and Horsham, together with Cambridge, Kings Lynn and Peterborough.

3.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

3.1.0 Application Site

3.1.1 There is no relevant planning history for the application site.

3.2.0 Other Relevant Sites

3.2.1 Two planning applications for residential development have been approved at Model Farm, which adjoins the application site to the south and is within the same ownership:

- 21/02300/FP – Change of use of existing barns to create two residential dwellings (1 x 3-bed and 1 x 4-bed) together with associated car parking and detached car barn. Provision of single storey extensions to courtyard elevations and part replacement and extension of east wing. Approved on 13th October 2021.
- 22/02775/FP – Erection of two attached 4-bed dwellings following demolition of existing barns together with associated car parking, detached car barn and relocated vehicular access. Approved on 27th February 2023.

4.0 POLICY CONTEXT

4.1.0 National Policy / Guidance

4.1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024, sets out the Government's planning policies for England. The following sections are considered directly relevant:

- Section 2: Achieving Sustainable Development
- Section 5: Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
- Section 8: Promoting healthy and safe communities
- Section 9: Promoting sustainable transport
- Section 11: Making effective use of land
- Section 12: Achieving well designed places
- Section 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

4.1.2 The National Planning Policy Guidance contains detailed guidance on the application of the NPPF. Account is also taken of the National Design Guide - Planning practice guidance for beautiful, enduring and successful places, which aims to illustrate how well-designed places that are beautiful, healthy, greener, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice.

4.2.0 Development Plan

4.2.1 Of relevance to this application are the following policies in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 (November 2022).

Policy No.	Title
SP1	Sustainable development in North Hertfordshire
SP2	Settlement Hierarchy and Spatial Distribution
SP6	Sustainable Transport
SP8	Housing
SP9	Design and Sustainability
SP11	Natural resources and sustainability
SP12	Green infrastructure, landscape and biodiversity
D1	Sustainable design
HE1	Designated heritage assets
HE4	Archaeology
D3	Protecting living conditions
T1	Assessment of transport matters
T2	Parking
HS3	Housing Mix
NE2	Landscape
NE4	Biodiversity and geological sites

4.3.0 **Supplementary Planning Guidance / Documents**

4.3.1 The following LPA guidance is relevant to the application proposal:

- Vehicle Parking at New Development Supplementary Planning Document (September 2011)
- Design Supplementary Planning Document (July 2011)
- Sustainability SPD 2024

5.0 DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

- 5.1.0 The proposal seeks approval for the erection of up to three residential dwellings on the application site. An illustrative plan has been provided to demonstrate how the dwellings could be accommodated on the site in a linear arrangement. The detailed layout would be determined at the second stage of the process should Technical Details Consent be sought.
- 5.1.1 Matters relating to appearance and scale are also reserved for the Technical Details Consent stage. However, a concept sketch has been prepared for illustrative purposes to demonstrate a potential design approach. The sketch indicates the potential for two-storey dwellings arranged in a modest terrace form.
- 5.1.2 The illustrative design shows dwellings with pitched roofs incorporating front gables and modest dormer windows set within the roof slope. This approach reflects the traditional cottage forms and roofscape that characterise the surrounding street scene.
- 5.1.3 Access to the site is proposed from Village Street, with the finalised access arrangements to be confirmed at the Technical Details Consent stage. The access would be designed to ensure appropriate visibility splays and safe vehicular access, turning and parking.

6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Based on the analysis set out in Sections 2 to 5, I consider that the application proposal raises the following issue, which I will consider below:

1. Principle

6.1.0 Issue No 1: Principle

6.1.1 Permission in Principle (PiP)

The permission in principle consent route is an alternative way of obtaining planning permission for housing-led development which separates the consideration of matters of principle for proposed development from the technical detail of the development. The permission in principle consent route has 2 stages: the first stage (or permission in principle stage) establishes whether a site is suitable in-principle and the second ('technical details consent') stage is when the detailed development proposals are assessed.

6.1.2 This application is for Stage 1 so what falls to be considered is the location of the proposed housing development and whether housing in this location as outlined on the enclosed drawing is acceptable in principle. The permission in principle route is designed to establish the acceptability of the proposed use, location and amount of development only.

6.1.3 The proposal is for a minor development of up to three dwellings on a site that is less than 1ha and as such can be considered under the PiP process.

6.1.4 Provision of Housing

6.1.5 *Location and Land use*

Policy SP2 of the Local Plan states that in Category A villages, general development will be allowed within the defined settlement boundaries. Hexton is a Category A village and following the adoption of the Local Plan in 2022, the site is now within the settlement boundary. As such, the site is considered sustainable and appropriate for new housing development, in accordance with Policy SP2.

6.1.6 The NPPF makes it clear that the Government's objective is to significantly boost the supply of homes with a sufficient amount and variety of land to come forward where it is needed. Paragraph 73 of the NPPF stipulates that small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area and are often built relatively quickly.

- 6.1.7 To this end, account is taken of the acknowledged and significant shortfall of housing land in the district. Local planning authorities should identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing against their housing requirement set out in adopted strategic policies, or against their local housing need where the strategic policies are more than five years old.
- 6.1.8 In the event that an LPA cannot demonstrate a 5-year supply, NPPF paragraph 11 states that the development plan is considered to be out of date. In such circumstances it requires that the presumption in favour of sustainable development be applied, and permission granted unless:
- i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
 - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.*
- 6.1.9 It is currently accepted by the Council that they cannot demonstrate a five-year housing land supply. The Council's Five-Year Housing Land Supply Update (November 2025) identifies a supply of only 2.66 years against the adopted housing requirement, including the relevant 5% buffer. It is thus the case that the planning balance shifts in favour of the grant of permission for residential development, with permission to be refused only if any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. It is considered that there would be no such adverse impacts on this occasion.
- 6.1.10 *Amount*
- The application seeks a PiP for up to three dwellings. The site lies within a Conservation Area and National Landscape and is in proximity to listed buildings, with a Registered Park and Garden adjoining the eastern boundary. In light of this, a low-density form of development is considered appropriate in this context. The proposed quantum of development represents a modest scale of development that could easily be accommodated within the site. Matters relating to layout, design, scale and appearance will be addressed at the Technical Details Consent stage.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

7.1.0 Background

7.1.1 This report relates to an application for Permission in Principle for the erection of three dwellings at Land adjacent to Model Farm, Village Street, Hexton SG5 3JE. The proposal is promoted in the following circumstances:

- The site lies within the defined settlement boundary of Hexton, a Category A village, where Policy SP2 supports general development. The site is therefore an appropriate and sustainable location for new housing.
- It is currently accepted by the Council that they cannot demonstrate a five-year housing land supply. It is thus the case that the planning balance shifts in favour of the grant of permission for residential development, with permission to be refused only if any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. It is considered that there would be no such adverse impacts on this occasion.