

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

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

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
26/01538/FP	Change of use of part of existing agricultural barn to facilitate artisan bakery (Use Class E(a)) including replacement roof with insertion of rooflights, alterations to fenestration and external cladding.	Agricultural Building Ashwell Road Newnham Hertfordshire SG7 5JX

Submitted Plan Nos

LG 01 LG 02 LG 03 LG 04 LG 05 LG 06 LG 07 LG 08

1.0 Policies

1.0 **Local and National Policy**

1.1 **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024)**

Section 2 – Achieving sustainable development
Section 6 – Building a strong, competitive economy
Section 9 – Promoting sustainable transport
Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places
Section 14 - Meeting the challenges of climate change, flooding and coastal change
Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
Section 16 – Conserving the historic environment

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 D3 – Protecting living conditions
Policy HE1 – Designated heritage assets
Policy HE3 – Non-designated heritage assets
Policy NE2 - Landscape
Policy T1 – Transport Assessment
Policy T2 – Parking

1.3 **Supplementary Planning Document**

Vehicle Parking at New Development SPD

2.0 **Relevant Site History**

2.1 None.

3.0 **Representations**

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

3.2 **Caldecote & Newnham Parish Council** – None received.

3.3 **Highway Authority** – No objection subject to conditions.

3.4 **Ecology** – No objection.

3.5 **Environmental Health (Air Quality, Noise & Nuisance)** – No objection.

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

4.1.1 The application site comprises agricultural building located alongside Ashwell Road and to the east of Hall Barn. Newnham Hall and Newnham Hall Cottage both Grade II listed buildings lie to the west of Hall Barn. Whilst more modern buildings lie to the northwest and to the east is open countryside.

4.1.2 The site lies within the Newnham Conservation Area and is situated within the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt.

4.1.3 The building is included on North Hertfordshire's Register of Buildings of Local Importance (BLI) for Newnham, adopted on 24th April 2008. The entry describes the building as:

"An elongated, single-storey 19th-century building constructed in gault brick with a later corrugated roof. Indicated on the 1877 First Edition Ordnance Survey map."

The reason for its inclusion on the Register is stated as:

"A building of local architectural interest which performs a particularly important role in the street scene and acts as the 'gateway' building into the Conservation Area when approaching from Ashwell."

4.2 **Proposal**

4.2.1 Change of use of part of existing agricultural barn to facilitate artisan bakery (Use Class E(a)) including replacement roof with insertion of rooflights, alterations to fenestration and external cladding.

4.2.2 The application is supported by a Planning Statement prepared by Tom Donovan of Peter George Town Planning and is dated June 2026.

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 the proposed development would have on the character and appearance of the Newnham Conservation Area.
- The impact of the proposed development would have on the BLI.
- 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 building 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 is:

- d) Relates to an existing rural building and;
- e) Is a modest proposal for rural economic development or diversification.

4.3.3 Policy CGB4 of the Local Plan sets out three broad typologies (a-d incl) of development considered acceptable in Rural Areas beyond the Green belt which in this case is:

b) Any existing building to be converted for re-use does not require major extension or reconstruction;

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

4.3.4 Policies CGB1 and CGB4 exist which seek to support the re-use of existing rural buildings. In addition, given the building is identified as a non-designated heritage asset, there is a greater need to support its re-use. I therefore find the principle of the development acceptable.

4.3.5

Impact on Heritage Assets

4.3.5 Within a Conservation Area, the Council has a 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 Listed Building and Conservation Areas Act (1990). Furthermore, Section 16 of the NPPF sets out guidance relating to sustaining and enhancing heritage assets. In this regard, Policy HE1 of the Local Plan is consistent with the NPPF.

4.3.6 When considering the impact of proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset (such as a Conservation Area), the NPPF notes that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation; the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be.

4.3.7 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.

4.3.8 I am satisfied that the development is acceptable and in accordance with Policy HE1 of the Local Plan and Section 16 of the NPPF.

Impact on Non-designated Heritage Assets

4.3.9 The proposed development would make effective use of an existing building within the countryside. The proposal would secure a long-term use for an existing building that is currently underutilised, thereby preventing further deterioration and potential loss and is therefore in accordance with Policy HE3 of the Local Plan.

Use, Design and Appearance

4.3.10 The objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include those seeking to secure the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and

places (Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places). Paragraph 131 of the NPPF states that *‘Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable communities’*. In this regard, Policy D1 and D2 of the Local Plan are consistent with the objectives set out within the NPPF.

- 4.3.11 The proposed material change of use of the building would facilitate its use as an artisan bakery, thereby bringing part an existing vacant building (82sq²) back into use as a small-scale rural business.
- 4.3.12 The proposed change of use is stated as Use Class E(a), which is part of the wider Use Class E (Commercial, Business and Service). Use Class E(a) covers “The display or retail sale of goods, other than hot food, principally to visiting members of the public.” Whilst a degree of bread baking would take place on the premises, this activity would be ancillary to the primary retail function and would not alter the overall character of the use as a retail operation.
- 4.3.13 Initially the bakery would open to customers four days a week from 08.00 until 15.00 hours Wednesday to Saturday. Tuesday would function as a preparation day. Staffing levels would remain small initially employing three full-time members. Albeit the operation of the proposed bakery is stated on the application form as Monday-Friday’s 08.00 until 18.00 hours, Saturday’s 08.00 until 18.00 hours and Sunday and Bank Holidays 08.00 until 15.00 hours, this is to allow for possible future expansion of the business.
- 4.3.14 All products would be made entirely on site using locally sourced ingredients wherever possible which seeks to support the bakery’s commitment to sustainability.
- 4.3.15 Deliveries to the site would be limited and scheduled during normal business hours and would comprise of a monthly delivery of flour and a weekly delivery of fresh ingredients. Waste would be kept to a minimum, with recycling and composting used wherever possible.
- 4.3.16 In order to facilitate the proposed use, the development would involve some minor external alterations to the building including the removal of existing roller shutter door and the construction of new walls with a brick plinth at the base and black feather edge horizontal timber cladding to the upper sections. The existing roof covering would be replaced with insulated metal roof sheeting to match nearby buildings. New walls would be constructed to the northwest and southwest elevations with the latter being contained within the envelope of the existing structure. Openings would comprise of a principal entrance doorway and three windows to the northwest elevation and an exist doorway within a covered space with two roof lights.
- 4.3.17 The proposed bakery represents an acceptable use within this location and is also considered acceptable in design terms. The development would support the vitality of the local rural economy whilst remaining of an appropriate scale and character for its setting. Its design, siting and use of materials would respond positively to the historic character of the Conservation Area and the rural landscape beyond the Green Belt, ensuring that it integrates well with its surroundings. The proposal would preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and would bring a vacant BLI back into use. There would be no harmful visual impacts as a result of the proposal and as such, I find the development to be in accordance with Policies CGB1, CGB4, HE1, HE3, D1, T1 and T2 of the Local Plan and Sections 2, 6, 9, 12 and 16 of the NPPF.

Impact on Neighbouring Properties:

- 4.3.18 A core planning principle set out in 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.
- 4.3.19 No objections have been received from neighbouring occupiers, and it is not considered that the proposed development would result in any unacceptable impacts on residential amenity. Given the nature, scale and siting of the bakery, the proposal would not give rise to harmful levels of overlooking, loss of privacy, overshadowing, noise or disturbance. Furthermore, the development would not adversely affect the setting, function or amenity of adjoining buildings. Accordingly, the proposal is considered acceptable with regard to its impact on neighbouring properties and the amenities of surrounding occupiers as is in accordance with Policy D3 of the Local Plan and Section 12 of the NPPF.

Highway Impact

- 4.3.20 The site benefits from existing access arrangements and sufficient land within the curtilage to accommodate a total of eight parking bays and cycle storage for use by customers and staff. Whilst the development is expected to generate a modest level of vehicle movements associated with the use, onsite parking is provided ensuring vehicles can enter, park and leave the site safely.

4.3.21

Environmental Implications:

- 4.3.21 The Council's Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document (2024) seeks to ensure that new developments are future proofed against the challenge of climate change.
- 4.3.22 Section 14 of the NPPF sets out how the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future. The principles set out in Section 14 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.
- 4.3.23 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 compliance with Section 14 of the NPPF and Policy D1 of the Local Plan.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

- 4.3.24 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.

4.4 Conclusion

- 4.4.1 Overall the proposed bakery is considered to represent an acceptable form of development within its rural setting. The use would support the diversification of the rural economy and would operate at a scale compatible with the existing agricultural enterprise. In design terms, the proposal has been carefully considered and would

respond positively to the character of the site though its scale, appearance and use of appropriate materials. The development would preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and would not detract from the openness, rural character or visual amenities of the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt. No objections have been received from neighbouring occupiers and there would be no unacceptable impacts on residential amenity or adjoining buildings. Furthermore, the re-use and enhancement of the existing farm setting represent a suitable form of development that makes effective use of an established rural site while supporting local economic activity. Accordingly, the proposal is considered acceptable and in accordance with Policies CGB1, CGB4, HE1, HE3, D1, T1 and T2 of the Local Plan and Sections 2, 6, 9, 12, 14, 15 and 16 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 premises shall be used solely for the production, preparation, sale and distribution of baked goods as an artisan bakery falling within Use Class E(a) of The Town & Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended), and for no other purpose within Class E of that Order (or any provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking or re-enacting that Order with or without modification), without the approval of the local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the use of the premises remain compatible with the character of the Conservation Area, the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt, the rural setting of site, and to safeguard the amenities of neighbouring occupants in accordance with Policies CBGB1 and CGB4 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 and Sections 2, 12 and 16 of the NPPF 2024.

4. The bakery hereby permitted shall remain ancillary to the wider rural enterprise operating at the site and shall not be expanded beyond the floor area approved under this permission without the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the scale of the business remains appropriate to its rural location and to safeguard the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and Rural Area beyond the Green Belt in accordance with Policies CGB1 and CGB4 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan and Sections 2, 12 and 16 of the NPPF 2024.

5. Prior to the use of the development hereby permitted, a scheme for the parking of cycles including details of the design, level and siting shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be fully implemented before the development is first occupied or brought into use and thereafter retained for this purpose.

Reason: To ensure the provision of adequate cycle parking that meets the needs of occupiers of the proposed development and in the interests of encouraging the use of sustainable modes of transport in accordance with Policies 1, 5 and 8 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018).

6. No development shall commence until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, including elements of the CLOCS standards as set out in the Highway Authority's Construction Management template. Thereafter the construction of the development shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved Plan:

The Construction Method Statement shall include details of:

Access arrangements to the site.

Traffic management requirements.

Construction and storage compounds

Cleaning of site entrances, site tracks and the adjacent public highway.

Timing of construction activities (including delivery times and removal of waste) and to avoid school pick up/drop off times.

Where works cannot be contained wholly within the site a plan should be submitted showing the site layout on the highway including extent of hoarding which must be kept within the site boundary, pedestrian routes and remaining road width for vehicle movements.

Reason: In order to protect highway safety and the amenity of other users of the public highway and rights of way in accordance with Policies 5, 12, 17 and 22 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018).

7. The premises shall only operate for the approved use between the hours of 08:00 and 18:00 Monday to Friday, 08:00 and 18:00 on Saturdays and 08:00 and 15:00 on Sundays and Bank Holidays and at no other time.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of nearby residential occupiers in accordance with Policy D3 of the Local Plan and Section 12 of the NPPF.

8. The use shall not commence until the parking provision as shown on the approved plans has been provided and made available for use. The area shall thereafter be retained for that purpose.

Reason: To ensure adequate parking provision is maintained within the site for use by users of the premises in accordance with Policy T2 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 and Sections 2 and 12 of the NPPF 2024.

9. No external lighting shall be installed unless and until details have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect the rural character of the area and night time ecology in accordance with Policy NE2 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan and Section 15 of the NPPF 2024.

10. Notwithstanding the approved plans, no external storage of materials or waste shall take place outside the building unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In order to protect visual amenity in accordance with Policy D1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 and Section 12 of the NPPF 2024.

Biodiversity Net Gain

1. This development is not subject to the statutory Biodiversity Gain Plan condition because it is considered exempt under the statutory exemptions (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain-exempt-developments>) or transitional arrangements in respect of the biodiversity gain condition.

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.

Informative/s:

1. AN1) Storage of materials: The applicant is advised that the storage of materials associated with the construction of this development should be provided within the site on land which is not public highway, and the use of such areas must not interfere with the public highway. If this is not possible, authorisation should be sought from the Highway Authority before construction works commence.

AN2) Obstruction of highway: It is an offence under section 137 of the Highways Act 1980 for any person, without lawful authority or excuse, in any way to wilfully obstruct the free passage along a highway or public right of way. If this development is likely to result in the public highway or public right of way network becoming routinely blocked (fully or partly) the applicant must contact the Highway Authority to obtain their permission and requirements before construction works commence.

AN3) Debris and deposits on the highway: It is an offence under section 148 of the Highways Act 1980 to deposit compost, dung or other material for dressing land, or any rubbish on a made up carriageway, or any or other debris on a highway to the interruption of any highway user. Section 149 of the same Act gives the Highway Authority powers to remove such material at the expense of the party responsible. Therefore, best practical means shall be taken at all times to ensure that all vehicles leaving the site during construction of the development and use thereafter are in a condition such as not to emit dust or deposit mud, slurry or other debris on the highway.

Further information is available via the County Council website at:

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/business-licences/business-licences.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

Signed  Shaun Greaves Determining Officer	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Date: 7 August 2026	