

Design and Access Statement

Ancillary Carparking at Easthall Farm,

St Paul's Walden, Hitchin

SG4 8DL

This statement has been prepared to accompany an application for the **‘Formation of an additional shared car parking area to serve the existing B2 and B8 commercial units and existing school including a new access onto a private road, new school drop-off zone and associated surfacing, hedge planting, drainage and landscaping. Change of use from grazing land to carpark and access’**.

Applicant: St Pauls Walden Bury Estate, The Calf House East and Calf House West, Easthall Farm, St Pauls Walden, Herts SG4 8DL

Agent: Dorli Newbery, Shingle Hall, Ongar Road, Dunmow, CM6 1JB

1.0 Easthall Farm

1.1 Location

The East Hall Farm is located within the Parish of St Pauls Walden and Ward of Hitchwood, in a rural part of North Hertfordshire. It is within the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt. The site is approximately 1km to the east of the B651 and approximately 1km west of the B656. The address is associated with the nearby town of Hitchin. The site is outside the Metropolitan Green Belt in ‘Rural Land Beyond the Green Belt’.

1.2 Site and Setting

The site is adjacent to a large group building of mixed uses, including agricultural, former agricultural, stabling, a domestic dwelling and a SEN school. The dwelling and stables have a separate access and are part of a separate tenancy. The dwellinghouse is Grade II listed East Hall Farmhouse, which dates from the early 18th Century. There is an associated listed stable and listed barn. All the buildings on the site are under the ownership of the applicant.

The buildings nearest the site, and which the site will service are in B8 and B2 use. There is currently concrete hardstanding to the north of the industrial/storage units which is used for parking to the units and also East Hall School.

The land identified for the proposed car park is currently in agricultural use as grazing land. The proposal would therefore result in the change of use of a defined area of land presently used for grazing.

The proposed car park has been positioned to minimise its impact on the wider agricultural holding and would be contained within a defined area rather than resulting in the loss of the wider grazing land. The remainder of the grazing land would continue to be available for its existing agricultural use.

The proposal is associated with the established employment uses at the site and would provide dedicated parking to serve those uses. It would not result in the introduction of HGV traffic, with vehicle movements limited principally to cars and smaller commercial vans.

The proposal therefore represents a contained and proportionate use of land within the existing developed farm/estate context, while allowing the majority of the existing agricultural land to remain in its established grazing use.

1.3 Access

There is a network of rural lanes surrounding East Hall Farm which connect the site to the wider area. There is access to the national grid of motorways and A roads to the east, including the A1(M). St Pauls Walden & Whitwell are located to the west and south-west respectively. There are few residential properties accessed off the rural lanes of Bulluck's Hill and Norton St Lane which have a low level of traffic movements.

1.4 Proposal

With the addition of the East Hall School and its recent extension, the amount of parking for use by the tenants of the mixed-use units is not adequate. Summary:

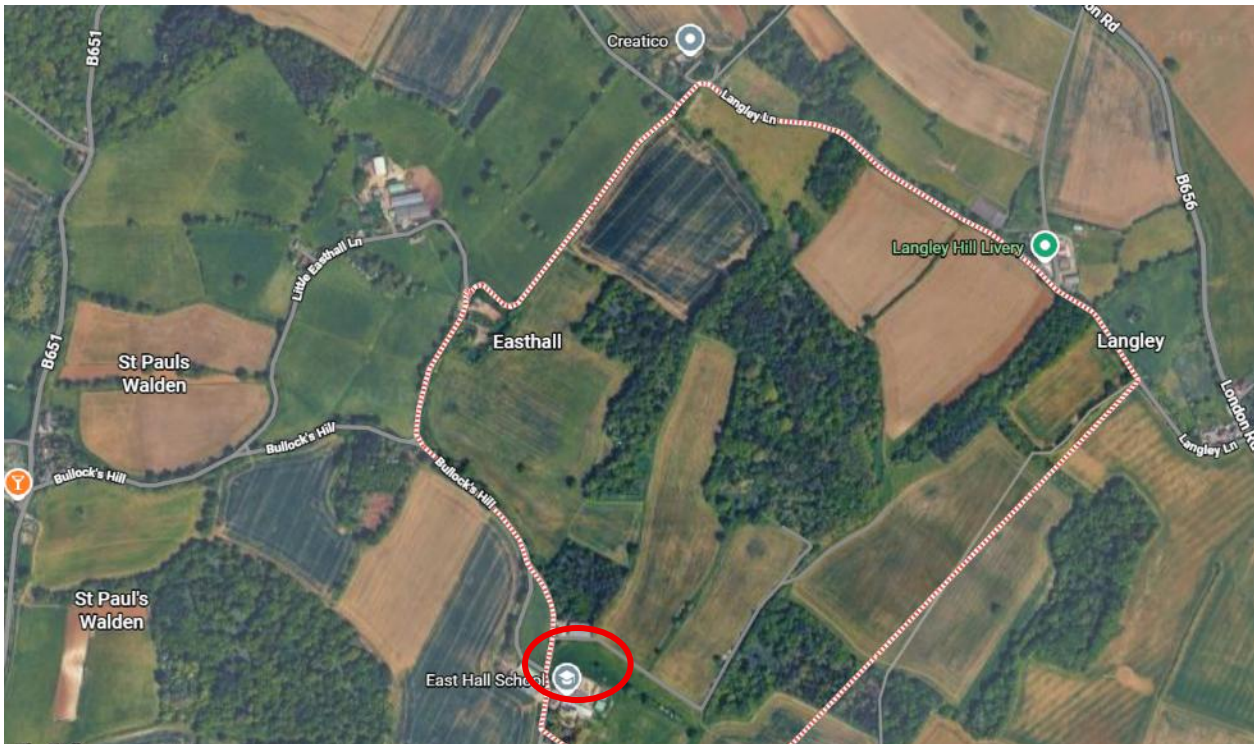
- the Class B2/B8/F1 use already exists
- there is no new B2, B8 or F1 use
- there is no additional commercial floorspace
- the parking is ancillary to the existing uses
- the parking is needed to provide appropriate facilities for the existing employment use
- it is being provided as shared ancillary parking
- the new access is on a private road not directly onto a highway
- the parking is not intended to operate as an independent business
- the land is within the established farm estate
- it is physically associated with the existing farm-estate commercial operation
- the school drop off will provide a safer arrangement

The site area is 1834m² (0.18ha). The surface will be permeable asphalt with new fencing installed around the external perimeter. The new car park will lead into the existing carpark; it will effectively be an extension to the existing carpark. The new access will be used for all traffic associated with the B2/B8/F1 users (with the exception of the farm sawmill which will continue to use the existing access point directly off the highway – for safety reasons).

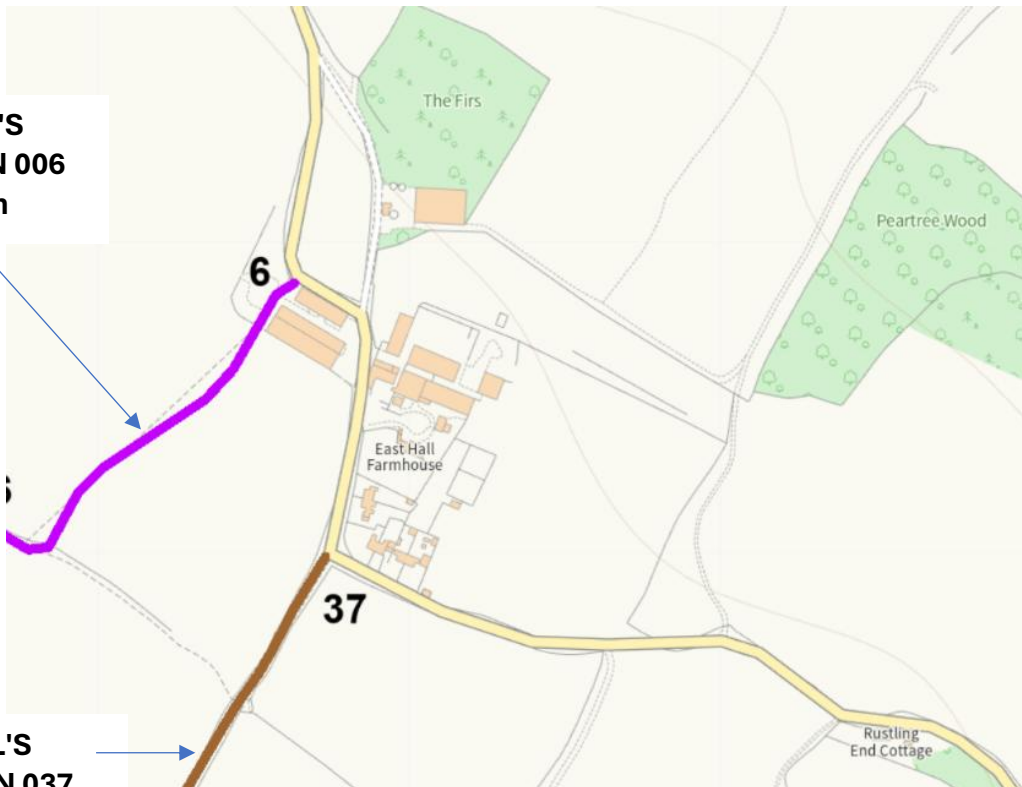
2.0 Site Plans

2.1 Location maps – Googlemap 2026/Herts PROW definitive map

NTS – see planning documents for full size scaled location map



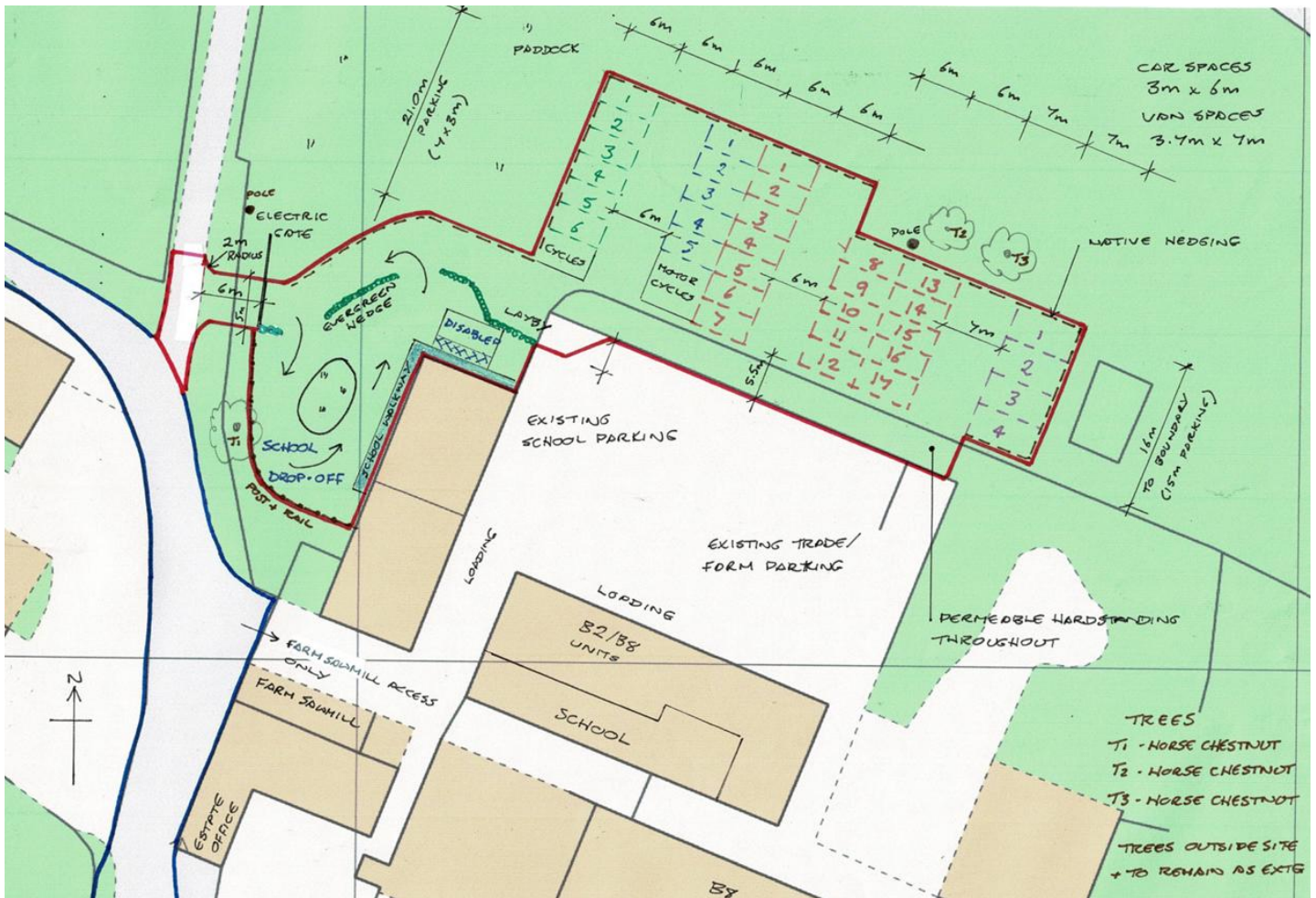
**ST PAUL'S
WALDEN 006
Footpath**



**ST PAUL'S
WALDEN 037
Byway**

2.2 Site Plan (NTS)

See drawing 2026/423/02



3.0 Aerial/Street Photographs – google earth pro imagery July 2026/Google street 2024



Significant trees near site to all remain



Large horse chestnut to remain

Small diseased horse chestnut due for removal

Private farm road



Highway – Bullock's Hill

4.0 Car Parking

4.1 Use

To provide additional and safer parking for users of the B2 and B8 tenants and a safe drop off area for the school.

There are currently 13 units, 7 in B2 use and 6 in B8 use. In addition, the parking is used for visitors to the school and the farm.

4.2 Current Area/spaces

The area formerly allocated to the B2/B8 users was reduced by 5 spaces as a result of the approved expansion of East Hall School, which requires staff parking and large disabled spaces for drop off and collection. **The current trade/visitor parking accommodates approximately 18 car spaces and 7 van spaces (total 25).** The current arrangement often leads to parking conflict and cars/vans being blocked in. In order to provide safe parking, all vehicles should have enough space and turning to be able to enter and leave the site independently and in a forward gear.

4.3 Proposed Area/spaces

The trade (with the exception of a farm sawmill), visitor and school drop off traffic will enter and leave the site via the new dedicated access onto the private farm road. The farm sawmill will continue to use the existing access point directly off the highway. The new parking bays and circulation areas are designed for light traffic comprising cars and small commercial vans.

The additional car park will provide:

- 6- visitor parking spaces
- 5 – school staff spaces
- 17-trade unit users car spaces
- 4-trade unit users van spaces - **32 spaces in total**
- Dedicated area for motorcycles – **6 motorcycle spaces**
- Dedicated area for bicycles – **10 bicycle spaces**
- Circular drop off for school users
- Disabled space in drop-off for disabled school users - **1 disabled space**

The design of the car park and drop off has been based on:

- safe circulation into and within the car park
- ability to exit the site in a forward gear
- to separate the farm/trade traffic from school drop-off
- to enter and leave spaces easily
- to prevent stacking of cars within the site or on the private road/highway at busy times

Car Spaces – 3m x 6m

Van Spaces – 3.7m x 7m

Disabled Space – 3m x 6m with 1.2m zone to side

Motorcycles zone – 5m x 6m to comfortably accommodate 6 motorcycles

Bicycles zone – 3m x 6m to accommodate 10 bikes

5 Sheffield stands - Each stand accommodates 2 bicycles

Total = 10 bicycles - approximately 1.0 m between stands 1.5 m clear access aisle in front of the stands.

4.4 Manoeuvring Areas/Priority

The parking aisle between the visitors parking and trade/farm parking is 6m in accordance with North Herts Highways guidance. The parking aisle between the car and van parking is 7m to allow domestic vans to more easily manoeuvre.

The access road within the site is 5.5m and a layby has been provided to allow cars/vans to wait off the main access to allow vehicles to enter the site via the electric gates. Signage will be provided to ensure priority is given to vehicles entering the site. Only one vehicle to pass through the gate at a time. This is to ensure a flow of traffic into the site without stacking on the private track or highway. The layby has been sighted to prevent any conflict with the school drop-off flow.

See drawing 2026/423/03 for position of following signs:

A – Private Road 10mph

B - Farm Traffic Only 10 mph

C – Priority to vehicles entering the site - see Appendix D for sign illustrations

4.4 Car Park/Access Specification

The proposed car parking area will be constructed using a permeable asphalt surface over an open-graded crushed-stone sub-base. The proposed construction will avoid the use of conventional fine-rich Type 1 material within the permeable pavement structure, thereby allowing rainfall to pass through the surface and be temporarily stored within the underlying stone reservoir before infiltrating into the ground. A permeable geotextile separator will be incorporated between the sub-base and formation to prevent migration of fine material. The parking area will be designed for use by cars and smaller commercial vans only and will not accommodate HGV parking or HGV circulation.

Car park:

- 40 mm porous/permeable asphalt wearing course
- 60 mm open-graded binder course
- 200 mm Type 3 or equivalent clean, open-graded sub-base
- suitable geotextile/geogrid where ground conditions require it

- compacted formation

Access:

- 50 mm asphalt wearing course
- 70 mm binder course
- 250 mm Type 3 sub-base
- suitable geotextile/geogrid where ground conditions require it
- compacted formation

4.5 Drainage/Flooding

Rainfall falling onto the parking surface will pass through the permeable asphalt into the open-graded crushed-stone sub-base, where it will be temporarily stored before infiltrating into the underlying ground.

The site is not in Flood Zone 2 or 3 and is of very low risk of flooding from rivers, sea, surface water etc. See flood risk information in Appendix C and Flood Map for Planning provided with the planning documents. The proposed carpark and access will be a permeable design and will not contribute to surface water flooding on site or elsewhere.

4.6 Edges and Kerbs

Due to the rural farm-estate setting conventional concrete kerbing is not considered suitable within the car park and access road. It is proposed to have flush concrete edging to the new car park, access road and between the existing and proposed car parks. This would prevent a raised kerb interfering with surface-water infiltration and traffic flow.

The new entrance bell mouth will have a raised concrete kerb to prevent traffic overrunning the kerb.

4.7 Environmental Impacts

Noise – the proposed facilities are to facilitate a safer and more convenient area for the existing users. No increase in school numbers or commercial/farm activities are planned as a result of the proposal. As such no noise impacts are expected. The site is not residential and the nearest dwelling is approximately 180m from the proposed development site.

Lighting – no additional lighting is planned

Open-space – the locality of farmland and this proposal does not introduce any new built form into the landscape. No protected view impacts are anticipated.

5.0 New Vehicular Access

5.1 Existing Access

The existing vehicular access to the car parking area is via a keypad-controlled gate. The gateway is approximately 6m wide (fully open) and suitable for emergency/wide vehicles. The access is shared between East Hall School, farm estate visitors and trade unit users.

5.2 Proposed Access

It is proposed the school, visitor, farm and trade traffic enters the carparking via the new access. This access will re-use the electric gates currently on the existing access. The existing access gates will be replaced with a standard gate without keypad and will be for the use of the farm sawmill.

5.3 Proposed Access Specification Summary

Private road existing width - 3.2m

New entrance – 5m

Internal car park access width – 5.5m

Access bell mouth – 8m

Bellmouth corner radius – 2m (single file traffic - speed reducing – onto private road)

Drainage – contained in site

Surface – fully bonded with no loose material able to track onto the private road. Porous asphalt proposed to same specification as the car park – see above.

5.4 Junction with the private road

A 5.0 m entrance will accommodate cars, vans, refuse vehicles and delivery vehicles. The entrance will have a curved bell mouth with raised kerbs to prevent vehicles overrunning the verge. The junction is between a private road and private car park and therefore North Herts Highways standard sightline requirements are not required. Visibility is important for safe use and sightlines are illustrated on drawing 2026/423/03.

5.5 Junction with Highway

The proposed access is onto an existing private road on land under the applicant's control and does not form a new junction with the adopted highway. The existing private access road is retained in its current form and operates at a very low speed. Visibility at the proposed access is considered adequate for vehicles using the private road, with the access arrangement allowing drivers to observe approaching vehicles before entering the private road. All traffic must stop before entering the highway and adequate sightlines on the highway junction are illustrated. The highway is a single-track road which has a low speed due to its historic route and no road markings.

6.0 Biodiversity and Trees/ Boundary Treatment

6.1 Biodiversity

The current use of the land is closely managed/poor quality grassland with occasional cattle grazing use. The farm is a very large estate with ample cattle grazing – see Estate Map therefore there is no animal care issue in developing this area.

In Biodiversity Net Gain terms, poorly managed, intensively grazed, or heavily fertilized grass is classified as Modified Grassland (specifically under the UKHab Classification category g4). It is a low distinctiveness habitat of poor condition. It carried a very low baseline biodiversity unit value. The site is below the 0.2 ha threshold for requiring a BNG Metric and management plan illustrating the 10% uplift.

6.2 Trees

No trees will be felled to facilitate this development. There are 2 large horse chestnut trees adjacent to the site – see drawing 2026/423/02 – which will be retained. There is smaller horse chestnut in the location of the proposed new entrance which has already been identified as diseased and scheduled for removal shortly. It is ivy choked and suffering from Bleeding Canker and must be removed to avoid infection of nearby trees. This work is due to be carried out within the next 2 weeks.

6.3 New Hedging/Boundary Treatment

To mitigate the loss of the poor managed grassland approximately 136m of native hedging is proposed along the north/east boundary. A mixture of Hawthorn, Field Maple, Dog Rose, Dog Wood, Wild Pear, Hornbeam, and Hazel. Low evergreen hedging is planned to define the school drop off area. Approx 25m length – **see separate Planting Schedule Document.**

Note: where new hedging borders a grazing area there will be standard timber/wire stock fencing along the boundary with the hedging to the inside, and a temporary electric fence erected on the paddock side while cows graze the land until the hedge is established.

Where post and rail fencing is indicated on the drawing 2026/423/02 it will consist:

Fencing and Retaining Boards

Fencing consists of 2 no. 175mm x 75mm timber fence posts at corner positions and 75mm x 125mm infill posts at 1.8m centres (6 ft to allow standard rail lengths to be used). Posts extend 1.5m above the finished surface. 3 horizontal rails added as infill. Horizontal rails to be min 100mm x 38mm. Approx 28m length.

7.0 Planning Policy

7.1 National Policies NPPF 2026 (August) – Summary of relevant policies

NPPF policy	Relevance
E2 – Meeting the need for business land and premises	Very high – supports infrastructure enabling established businesses to operate effectively
E4 – Rural business development	Very high – supports sustainable rural businesses and appropriately located rural development
TR4 – Street design, access and parking	Very high – directly addresses parking provision and access
TR3 – Locating development in sustainable locations	High – highway safety and transport impacts
DP3 – Key principles for well-designed places	High – appearance, landscape and relationship with the farm estate
CC3 – Adaptation to climate change	Moderate/high – drainage and permeable surfacing
N2 – Improving the natural environment	Moderate – mitigating the loss of low quality grazing land with natural hedging

7.2 Local Policies – North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011–2031

7.2.1 Primary Policies Relevant to Application

Policy SP3 – Employment

SP3 states that North Herts will proactively encourage sustainable economic growth and support new and existing businesses. It supports B-class employment uses in appropriate locations outside designated employment areas.

The proposal supports the continued operation of established B2 and B8 businesses by providing appropriate shared parking infrastructure. It does not result in an increase in commercial floorspace or the introduction of additional employment uses, but instead facilitates the effective operation of the existing businesses. It will improve the safety of traffic movements in the site and reduce parking conflicts. The school drop off which is separate to the trade/farm parking is an improvement to the current situation.

Policy T1 – Assessment of Transport Matters

The policy is concerned with unacceptable transport impacts or highway safety problems.

The proposed parking will remove the need for vehicles associated with the existing businesses to park informally within the farm estate, potentially reducing conflict between parked vehicles, commercial servicing movements, school and agricultural traffic.

The existing parking is inadequate, therefore the proposal seeks to improve the site's transport arrangements, rather than creating a new transport problem.

See separate Transport Statement.

Policy T2 – Parking

This policy is concerned with the provision of parking.

This is the North Herts adopted Local Plan parking policy, but should be considered in addition to the Vehicle Parking at New Development Supplementary Planning Document.

The proposed parking provision has been determined having regard to the existing floorspace, staffing levels and operational requirements of the B2 and B8 businesses, the farm and the school, together with the existing parking provision available within the estate.

Policy D1 – Sustainable Design

The sustainable design policy in this case applies to the impact of new physical development in a rural farm-estate setting. D1 applies to matters including visual impact, landscaping and site design. D1 states that planning permission will be granted provided that development proposals:

a) Respond positively to the site's local context

The proposed new access and car park have been designed to respond positively to the parking requirement for existing users:

- landscaping – the topography in this area is relatively flat and therefore the carpark will not have an impact to the wider views of the land. The access is off a private road which means there will not be a public impact on the view of a highway.
- boundary treatment – there will be native hedging around the new car parking area and low evergreen hedging within the site to delineate the school drop off area
- lighting - none
- visual impact – minimal due to the lack of built form
- integration with the existing farm estate – it will appear and extension to the existing parking area and will provide a more orderly and safe parking facility

7.2.2 Other Relevant Policies

Policy NE4 – Biodiversity

“Planning permission will only be granted for development proposals that appropriately protect, enhance and manage biodiversity in accordance with the hierarchy and status of designations and features listed in Policy SP12.”

The site is below the 0.2 ha threshold for requiring a BNG Metric and management plan. The existing land is poor quality managed grassland (classified as Modified Grassland under the UKHab Classification category g4).

In order to mitigate the grassland loss, the proposal is for approximately 136m of native hedging.

Policy NE8 – Sustainable Water Management

“Planning permission for development will be granted provided that:

- a) The most appropriate sustainable drainage solution is used taking into account technical, viability and design issues to reduce the risk of surface water flooding, enhance biodiversity, water quality and provide amenity benefits;
- b) It aims to mimic the natural drainage patterns and processes as far as possible; and
- c) Drainage solutions follow the SuDS hierarchy”.

The proposal has been designed to minimise surface-water runoff and is consistent with North Herts' sustainable drainage objectives. The entire surface of the carpark will be permeable and therefore rain will drain to ground as per the existing case. There will be an increase in surface water run-off or increase in flooding elsewhere.

The recently adopted **North Herts Design Code SPD** (adopted 29th June 2026) is also relevant and has been consulted.

8.0 Planning Summary

8.1- Planning Summary and Planning Balance

The proposal seeks planning permission for a 29-space car park and dedicated school drop off zone to serve the established commercial activities operating from the wider site. The existing uses comprise B2, B8, F1 activities operated by separate businesses. The proposal is therefore intended to provide dedicated parking associated with existing employment uses rather than introducing a new commercial use or creating additional employment units.

The proposal would make more efficient and orderly provision for vehicles associated with the existing businesses. It would provide dedicated off-road parking within the site and reduce the potential for vehicles to park informally within the wider estate or interfere with existing site operations.

8.2 - Agricultural Land and Grazing

It is recognised that the land proposed for the car park is currently in active grazing use. The proposal would therefore result in the loss of a defined area of grazing land. This is acknowledged as an impact of the development and has been taken into account in the design of the scheme.

The car park has been confined to a defined area in order to limit the extent of land removed from agricultural use. The majority of the existing grazing land will remain in agricultural use, allowing the established grazing activity to continue.

The proposal also incorporates approximately 136 metres of new native species hedgerow planting. This substantial new planting will establish a strong landscape boundary around the development, assist in integrating the car park into its rural surroundings and provide additional habitat, shelter, foraging opportunities and ecological connectivity. The hedgerow planting therefore provides meaningful landscape and ecological mitigation for the change in land use, while the retention of the majority of the grazing land ensures that the agricultural function of the wider holding is maintained.

8.3 Access and Highway Considerations

The site is served by an existing 3.2m-wide private single-track road. The proposed car park will not create a new access onto the adopted highway. The proposed entrance will be designed to provide an appropriate transition between the existing private road and the car park, with sufficient width and radii to allow cars and light commercial vehicles to enter and leave safely. The internal layout will provide appropriate vehicle circulation and manoeuvring for the proposed use. The development will not accommodate HGV traffic, with vehicle movements principally comprising cars and smaller commercial vans. The proposal will therefore provide a dedicated parking facility without requiring significant alteration to the existing private road or creating a new junction with the public highway.

8.4 Parking and Site Function

The provision of 32 car/van spaces is intended to meet the operational requirements of the established businesses. The spaces will be laid out to provide appropriate dimensions and circulation, with sufficient manoeuvring space within the site. All vehicles will be able to leave the site in a forward gear.

The addition of a dedicated school drop off will provide a safe and more effective method of getting the SEN pupils into a school setting. There is also a disable space in this area allowing a longer drop off/collection without holding up the car/mini-bus traffic associated with the school

The car park will improve the functionality of the existing employment site by providing a clearly defined area for visitor parking. It will also help separate vehicle parking from other agricultural and commercial activities taking place within the wider site.

8.5 Landscape, Biodiversity and Drainage

The proposed 136 m of native hedgerow represents a significant landscape enhancement and will help establish a defensible and visually appropriate boundary to the car park.

The proposal will also incorporate appropriate surface-water management. Permeable surfacing and a suitable sub-base can be used where appropriate, so that surface water is managed within the site rather than discharged uncontrolled onto the private road or neighbouring land.

The proposal should therefore be considered in the context of the Council's objectives for green infrastructure, biodiversity and landscape. Policy SP12 seeks to protect, enhance and manage biodiversity networks and seek opportunities for biodiversity net gains, while SP9 addresses design and sustainability

8.6 Overall Planning Balance

The proposal involves a limited and defined change from grazing use to parking use, and the loss of the grazing area is therefore acknowledged. However, the majority of the existing grazing land will remain in active agricultural use.

Against this, the proposal provides a practical parking solution for established B2/B8/F1 employment activities, avoids the need for HGV access, makes use of the existing private access arrangement and provides appropriate internal vehicle circulation.

The scheme incorporates approximately 136 metres of new native hedgerow, providing substantial landscape and ecological mitigation and helping to integrate the development into its rural setting.

The proposal represents a contained and proportionate improvement to an established employment site. The development would retain the majority of the existing agricultural use, provide dedicated parking for existing businesses, avoid significant highway

alterations and deliver a substantial new hedgerow boundary. These considerations should be weighed alongside the limited loss of grazing land when assessing the overall planning balance.

9.0 Conclusion

The proposed car park is ancillary to and directly supports established B2, B8 and F1 employment uses. It does not facilitate an increase in floorspace or the creation of additional commercial units. The proposal provides an appropriate and safe parking arrangement for existing businesses, whilst improving the organisation of vehicular movements within the farm estate. The proposal accords with Policies SP3, T1, T2, SP9 and D1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011–2031 and the relevant environmental policies.

Planning Documents Provided:

1. Covering letter
2. Design and Access Statement
3. Transport Statement
4. Estate Boundary Map
5. Planting Schedule
6. Flood Map for Planning
7. Sustainable Drainage Statement
8. Location Plan – 2026/423/01
9. Proposed Block Plan - 2026/423/02
10. Access showing sightlines, turning and signage - 2026/423/03
11. Build-up and Specification - 2026/423/04
12. Swept Path Analysis
13. Planning forms

Appendix A – Photographs – present day

Private farm track



Highway



Private farm track



Proposed ancillary parking
site and school drop-off



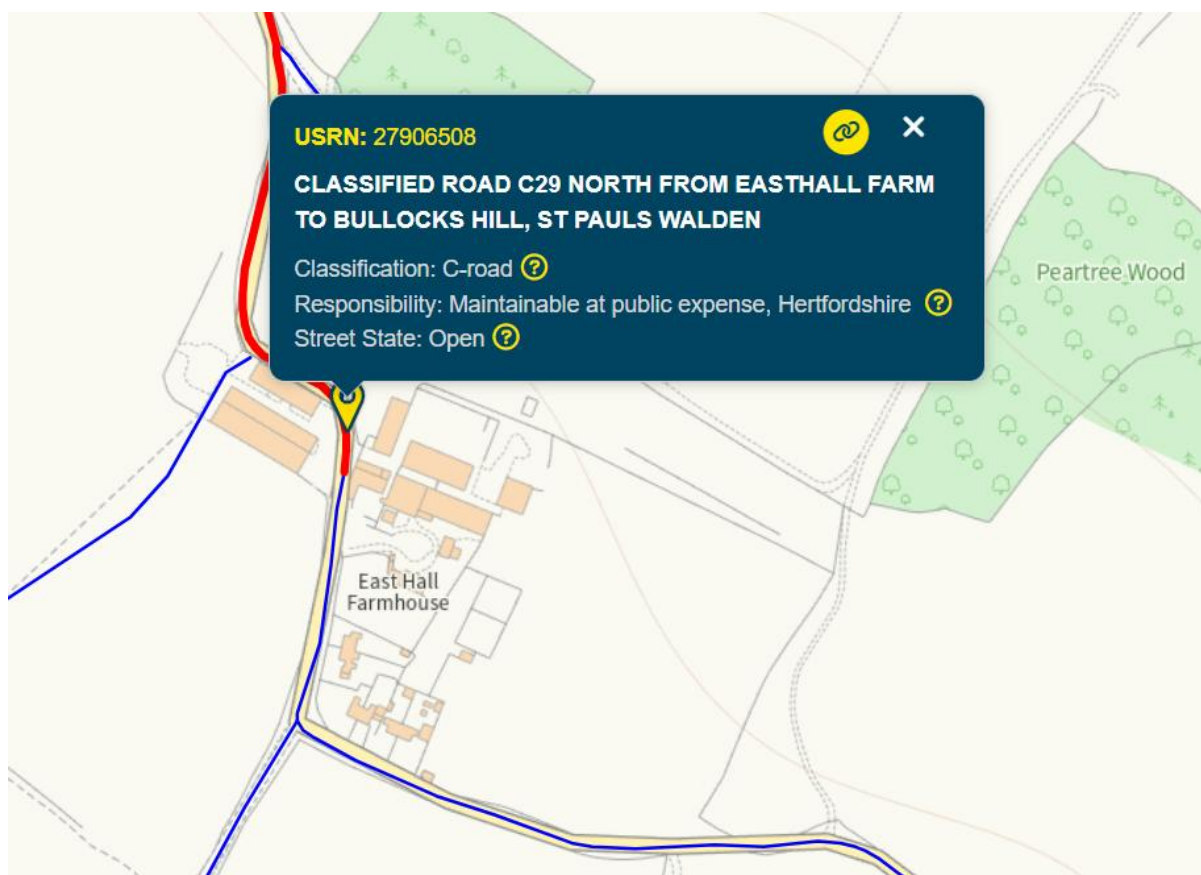
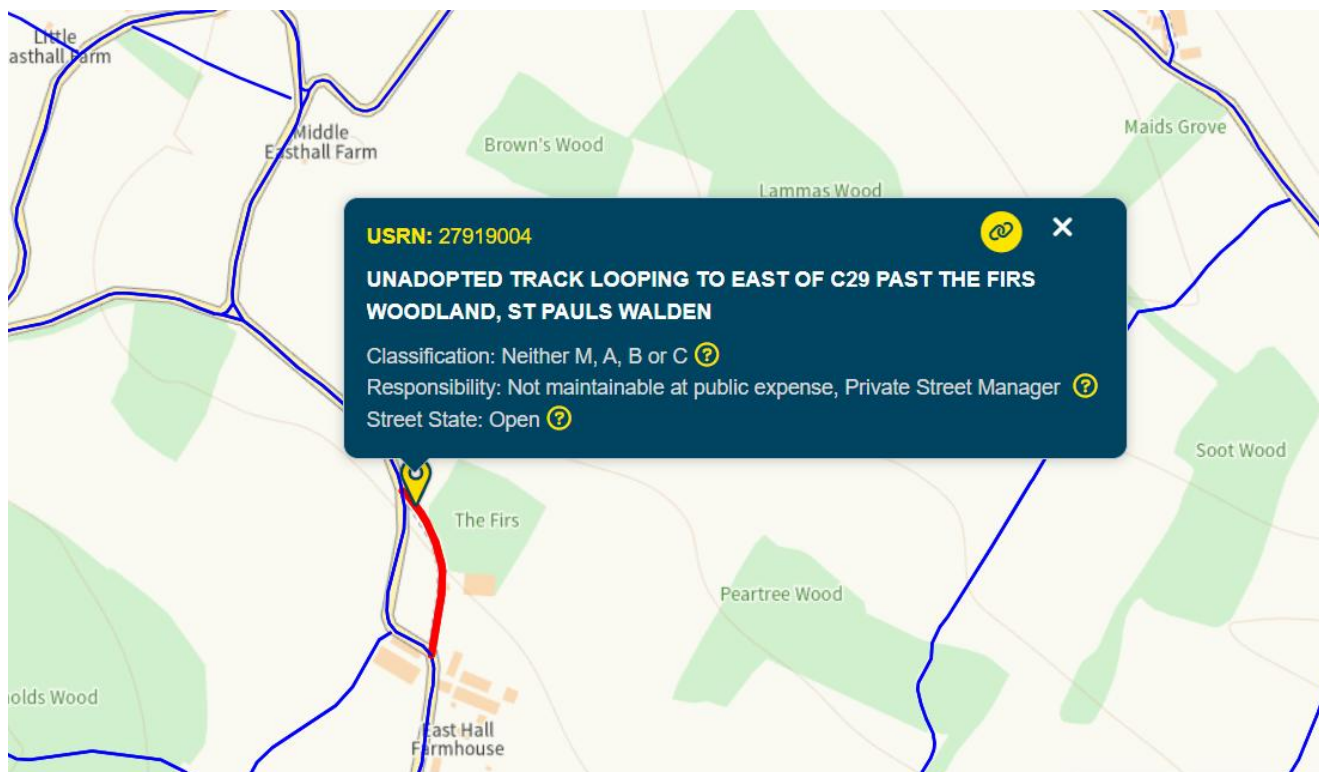
Bullocks Hill - Highway

General photos of units an existing parking



Proposed ancillary
parking site

Appendix B – Road Classification



Appendix C – Flood Risk - <https://check-long-term-flood-risk.service.gov.uk/risk>

Surface water

[More about your surface water flood risk](#)

Yearly chance of flooding

Very low Low Medium High

Yearly chance of flooding between 2040 and 2060

Very low Low Medium High

What surface water is

Surface water flooding is sometimes known as flash flooding. It happens when rainwater cannot drain away through normal drainage systems.

► [Why surface water flooding is a problem](#)

Rivers and the sea

[More about your rivers and sea flood risk](#)

Yearly chance of flooding

Very low Low Medium High

Yearly chance of flooding between 2036 and 2069

Very low Low Medium High

What makes rivers and sea flooding more likely

Low-lying areas that are close to rivers or the sea are more likely to flood when water levels rise.

This information takes into account any flood defences.

► [Why flood defences cannot completely prevent flooding](#)

Groundwater

[More about your groundwater flood risk](#)

We use groundwater flood alert areas to check the risk of flooding from groundwater.

This location is outside of a groundwater flood alert area.

► [What this means](#)

What groundwater is

Groundwater is the water that is usually held in rocks and soil underground.

Groundwater flooding happens when this water rises and flows above the surface.

Flooding from rivers is more likely when groundwater levels are high.

Reservoirs

[More about your reservoir flood risk](#)

Flooding from reservoirs is unlikely in this area.

What a reservoir is

A reservoir is a large natural or artificial lake that is designed to collect and store water.

They are usually formed by building a dam across a river, or by building a large tank or surrounding embankment. If one of these dams or embankments fails, then water could escape from the reservoir. This would result in land or properties being flooded.

Appendix D – Road Signs

A



B



C



Dimensions

A – 400mm x 500mm

B – 400mm x 600mm

C – 700mm x 400mm