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Design & Access Statement

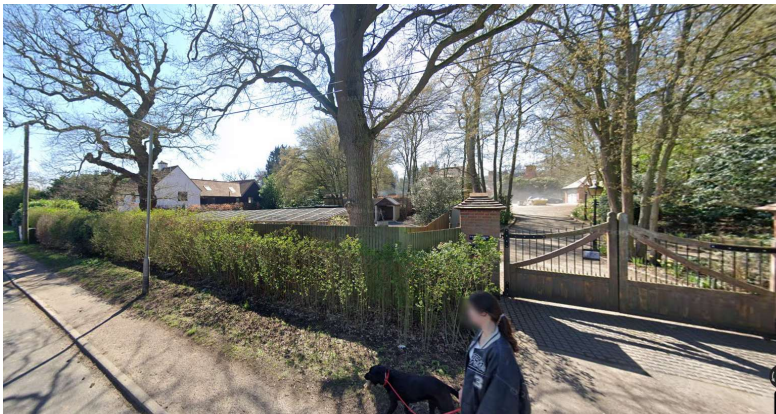
Full Planning Application

For

Erection of one detached three-bedroom dwelling with detached double garage, associated landscaping and ancillary works.

At

Land within the curtilage of No. 77 Park Lane, Knebworth, SG3 6PP.



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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This application seeks full planning permission for the erection of a detached three-bedroom dwelling and detached double garage with associated landscaping and ancillary works on land within the residential curtilage of 77 Park Lane, Old Knebworth.
- 1.2. The proposal follows positive pre-application discussions with North Hertfordshire Council (Ref. 26/00489/PRE). The Council concluded that the principle of residential development on the site could be supported, subject to detailed design considerations and the submission of a full planning application.
- 1.3. The application follows the refusal of a previous outline application (Ref. 23/02675/OP). Since that decision, national Green Belt policy has evolved through the introduction of Grey Belt within the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024). The pre-application assessment recognised that the site could reasonably be considered Previously Developed Land and accepted that the proposal could reasonably be considered a form of limited infill within an established residential frontage.



Google Map Satellite Photograph of the site

2. Site & Context

- 2.1. The application site forms part of the residential curtilage of No. 77 Park Lane and occupies land between the existing dwelling and Park Lane.
- 2.2. The site is enclosed by established residential development together with mature boundary planting and fencing, creating a contained parcel of land that is visually separated from the wider countryside.
- 2.3. Existing development within the site comprises permanent blockwork outbuildings together with a lightweight greenhouse, served by an established vehicular access from Park Lane. These permanent structures contribute towards the site's suggested status as Previously Developed Land.

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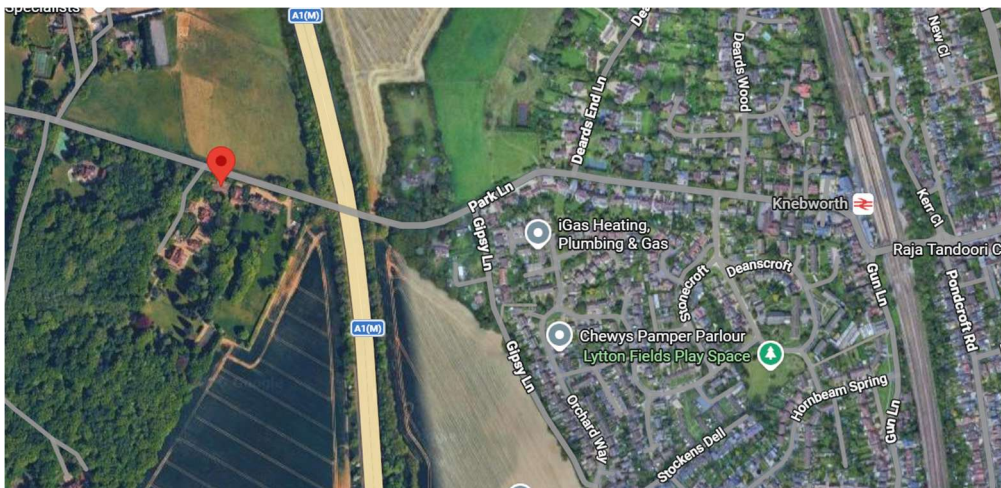


Photographs of existing structures on site



Street view of entrance to site

- 2.4. The site lies approximately 1 kilometre from Knebworth railway station and is within walking and cycling distance of village services, schools, public transport and local facilities, representing a sustainable location for modest residential development.
- 2.5. Although the site lies within the wider gap between Old Knebworth and Knebworth, its enclosed character, existing residential context and defined boundaries mean that it does not function as an open parcel of countryside contributing significantly to the wider separation between settlements.



Google Map Satellite Photograph

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3. Principle of Development



North Herts Planning Map - Green Belt

- 3.1. The site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt. However, the site also displays several characteristics that distinguish it from open Green Belt land:
 - Forms part of an established residential curtilage.
 - Contains permanent buildings and structures.
 - Could reasonably constitute Previously Developed Land.
 - Is enclosed by existing residential development and Park Lane.
 - Does not extend development into open countryside.
 - Contains no designated heritage assets or landscape designations.
- 3.2. The Council's pre-application assessment recognised that the site could reasonably be considered Previously Developed Land and concluded that it may reasonably be regarded as Grey Belt.
- 3.3. The proposal also represents a logical form of limited infill within an established residential frontage. The development occupies a contained parcel between existing residential properties and would not materially alter the wider openness or strategic function of the Green Belt.
- 3.4. The Council further concluded that the proposal would not fundamentally undermine the remaining purposes of the Green Belt and acknowledged the significant weight afforded by the Council's current housing land supply position.
- 3.5. Having regard to the Council's pre-application conclusions, the principle of residential development is therefore considered acceptable and accords with the updated provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) together with the relevant policies of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan (2011-2031).

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4. Proposed Development

- 4.1. The proposal comprises a detached three-bedroom dwelling together with a detached double garage, associated parking, landscaping and access arrangements.



Proposed Site Plan

- 4.2. The dwelling has been designed to respect the established character of Park Lane, adopting a traditional scale, form and proportions that reflect neighbouring development.
- 4.3. Following the Council's pre-application advice, the garage has been repositioned further forward within the site to create a stronger building line, improve the overall layout and increase the amount of usable rear garden space.
- 4.4. The development provides:
- Two-storey detached family dwelling.
 - Detached double garage.
 - Private rear garden.
 - Off-street parking.
 - Secure cycle storage.
 - Refuse storage.
 - Electric vehicle charging.
 - Biodiversity enhancements.
 - Retention of existing boundary vegetation wherever practicable.
- 4.5. The proposed dwelling has been designed to meet the Nationally Described Space Standards and provide a practical, high-quality family home.

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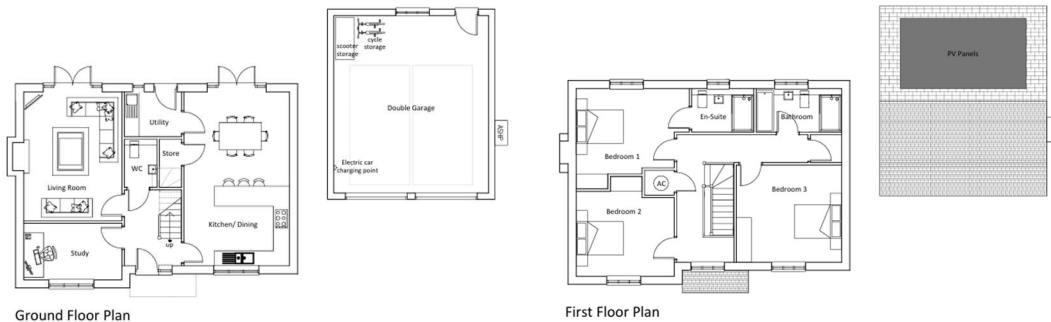
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- 4.6. The ground floor comprises a separate living room with direct access to the rear garden, a dual-aspect kitchen/dining room also opening onto the garden, a dedicated study, utility room, downstairs WC and integrated storage.
- 4.7. The first floor provides three double bedrooms, including two with en-suite shower rooms, together with a family bathroom.
- 4.8. The detached double garage provides secure parking and dedicated storage for bicycles and scooters, supporting sustainable travel and the day-to-day needs of a family home.



Proposed Floor Plans

- 4.9. The front forecourt provides sufficient space for vehicle manoeuvring, allowing cars to safely enter and exit the site and access the detached double garage. The layout also incorporates space for a dedicated visitor parking space, ensuring adequate parking provision without compromising the overall appearance of the frontage.

5. Design

- 5.1. The dwelling has been designed to reflect the established residential character of Park Lane through its scale, proportions and traditional architectural form.



- 5.2. The proposed ridge height, massing and building line closely reflect neighbouring properties, ensuring the development integrates comfortably within the surrounding streetscape.
- 5.3. The proposed external materials have been selected to complement the established character of Park Lane and reflect the local vernacular. The dwelling will be constructed using red facing brickwork with a red clay tiled roof and white-framed windows. A brick upstand at ground floor level provides visual interest and helps define the building's proportions, creating a traditional, high-quality appearance that complements the surrounding residential development.

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Proposed Elevations

- 5.4. The dwelling is accessed via the existing vehicular entrance from Park Lane. A level approach is provided to the principal entrance, with the internal ground floor arranged to provide convenient access to the principal living accommodation. Parking, cycle storage and refuse facilities are located close to the dwelling to ensure ease of use.

6. Impact Assessment

- 6.1. **Green Belt:** The proposal makes efficient use of a contained parcel of land with characteristics consistent with Previously Developed Land, including existing permanent structures within the site. Whilst introducing a dwelling, the development remains visually contained and would not materially affect the wider openness or strategic purposes of the Green Belt.
- 6.2. **Character:** The proposal represents a natural continuation of the established frontage along Park Lane and is compatible with the prevailing pattern, scale and form of surrounding residential development.
- 6.3. **Residential Amenity:** The proposed layout provides appropriate separation distances, generous private amenity space and avoids unacceptable impacts upon neighbouring properties in respect of privacy, outlook or daylight.
- 6.4. **Highways:** The proposal utilises the existing vehicular access. Adequate parking, turning space, cycle storage and refuse provision are incorporated within the site in accordance with adopted parking standards. High-level vehicle tracking has been undertaken to demonstrate that vehicles can safely enter, manoeuvre within the site and access the proposed double garage.
- 6.5. **Ecology and Landscaping:** Existing boundary vegetation will be retained where practicable and supplemented with additional planting where appropriate. The layout has been designed to retain established trees and minimise the removal of existing planting wherever practicable, helping to preserve the site's green character and soften the appearance of the development. A Landscape Plan accompanies the application, together with ecological enhancements, including the provision of bird and bat boxes where appropriate, to provide biodiversity benefits in accordance with Policy NE4 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan (2011-2031).

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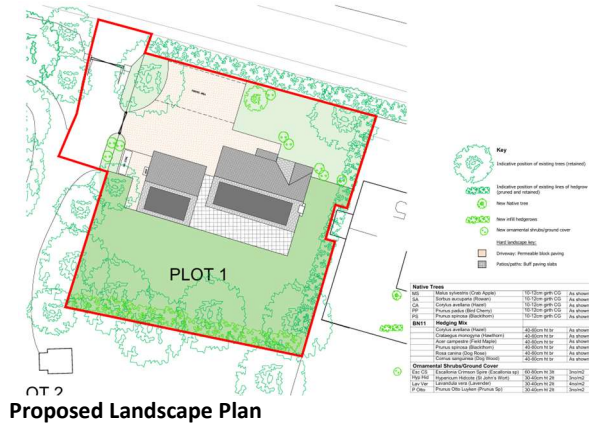
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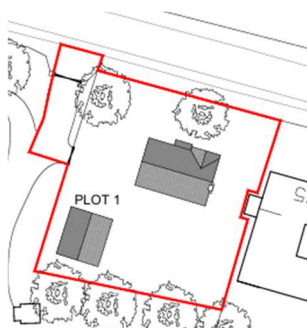
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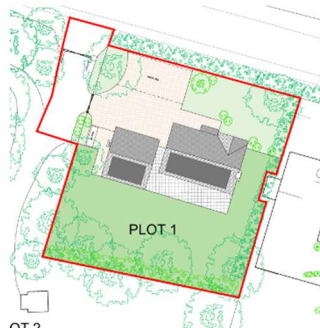
6.6. **Sustainability:** The dwelling has been designed to incorporate sustainable construction principles, including electric vehicle charging infrastructure, integrated photovoltaic (PV) panels to the south-facing roof slopes of the dwelling and garage, an air source heat pump (ASHP), water-efficient fittings and a fabric-first approach to energy efficiency, in accordance with the Council's Sustainability SPD. These measures will reduce operational energy demand, improve carbon performance and support the Council's objectives for sustainable development.

7. Response to Pre-Application Advice

- 7.1. North Hertfordshire Council issued positive pre-application advice (Ref. 26/00489/PRE), concluding that the principle of development is capable of being supported.
- 7.2. The application has been amended to respond directly to the Officer's recommendations, including:
- The detached garage has been moved forward within the site to create a stronger frontage and improve the overall layout.
 - The Design and Access Statement has been updated to reflect the Council's conclusions regarding the site's potential status as Previously Developed Land and Grey Belt.
 - The proposal has been assessed against the updated Grey Belt provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024).
 - Biodiversity enhancements, ecological and sustainability measures have been incorporated.
 - Cycle parking, refuse storage and electric vehicle charging are now identified within the proposals.
 - Landscaping proposals have been developed to retain existing vegetation wherever possible while strengthening biodiversity.



Pre-App Proposed Site Plan



Planning Proposed Site Plan

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7.3. The application is therefore considered to fully address the recommendations contained within the Council's pre-application response.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1. The proposal represents a modest and well-designed residential development on a contained parcel of land within an established residential frontage. The Council's pre-application advice recognised that the site could reasonably be considered Previously Developed Land, may have the potential to be regarded as Grey Belt, and that the principle of residential development is capable of being supported, subject to detailed considerations.
- 8.2. The proposal also responds directly to the recommendations contained within the pre-application response, most notably through the repositioning of the detached garage to improve the overall site layout and strengthen the building line along Park Lane.
- 8.3. The proposal would deliver a high-quality family dwelling that meets the Nationally Described Space Standards, respects the character of the area, safeguards neighbouring amenity, enhances biodiversity and makes efficient use of a contained site with characteristics consistent with Previously Developed Land, without undermining the wider function of the Green Belt.
- 8.4. It is therefore considered that the proposal accords with the National Planning Policy Framework, the North Hertfordshire Local Plan (2011-2031) and the objectives of the Knebworth Neighbourhood Plan (2019-2031), and planning permission is respectfully sought.
- 8.5. A detailed assessment of the planning merits of the proposal is set out within the accompanying Planning Statement, which should be read alongside this Design and Access Statement.

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