

Planning Statement for Change of Use of Barns 13 and 14 At Waterhall Farm, Hitchin, SG4 8AF

This statement has been prepared to accompany an application for Prior Notification for the **Change of Use from Agricultural Buildings to Flexible Use (B8)**.

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

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

1.0 Waterhall Farm

1.1 Location

Waterhall Farm is located to the north of the village of Whitwell. Whitwell is to the east of Luton and southwest of Stevenage. The farm buildings are roughly parallel to the High Street. There is an access via The Valley to the west and via an Waterhall Farm Lane off the B651 Hitchin Road. There is a network of rural lanes surrounding Waterhall Farm which connect the site to the wide area. Codicot is to the south east and Breachwood Green to the north west. There is access to the national grid of motorways and A roads to the east, A1(M) and Stevenage.

The site is outside the Green Belt.

1.2 Site and Setting

The site is part of a large group buildings of mixed uses, including agricultural, retail and equine. The site is an established agricultural holding/unit. The redundant barns relevant to this application are to the north of the agricultural cluster of buildings and are generally accessed via the eastern access. The barns were previously numbered as 13 and 14 but have been renamed as units 1, 2a and 2b.

The barns are single storey and are orientated in a line with existing access openings to the south. The site area (defined by the red line) is approximately 0.08ha (755m²). The plan area of the buildings for which change of use is sought is approximately 180m².

1.3 Proposal Summary and Class R Principles

The proposal is for a change of use of the redundant barns to flexible use (storage B8) use. The government have encouraged the diversification of underutilised agricultural buildings in order to provide new amenities to support rural communities and to reduce the need for new construction for a wider sustainability benefit. Class R was introduced through 'The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015' to encourage the diversification of the rural economy in areas where development would normally be considered inappropriate under the 'National Planning

Policy Framework' (NPPF). Class R is permitted development legislation that allows the change of use of an existing agricultural building and land within its curtilage into flexible commercial use.

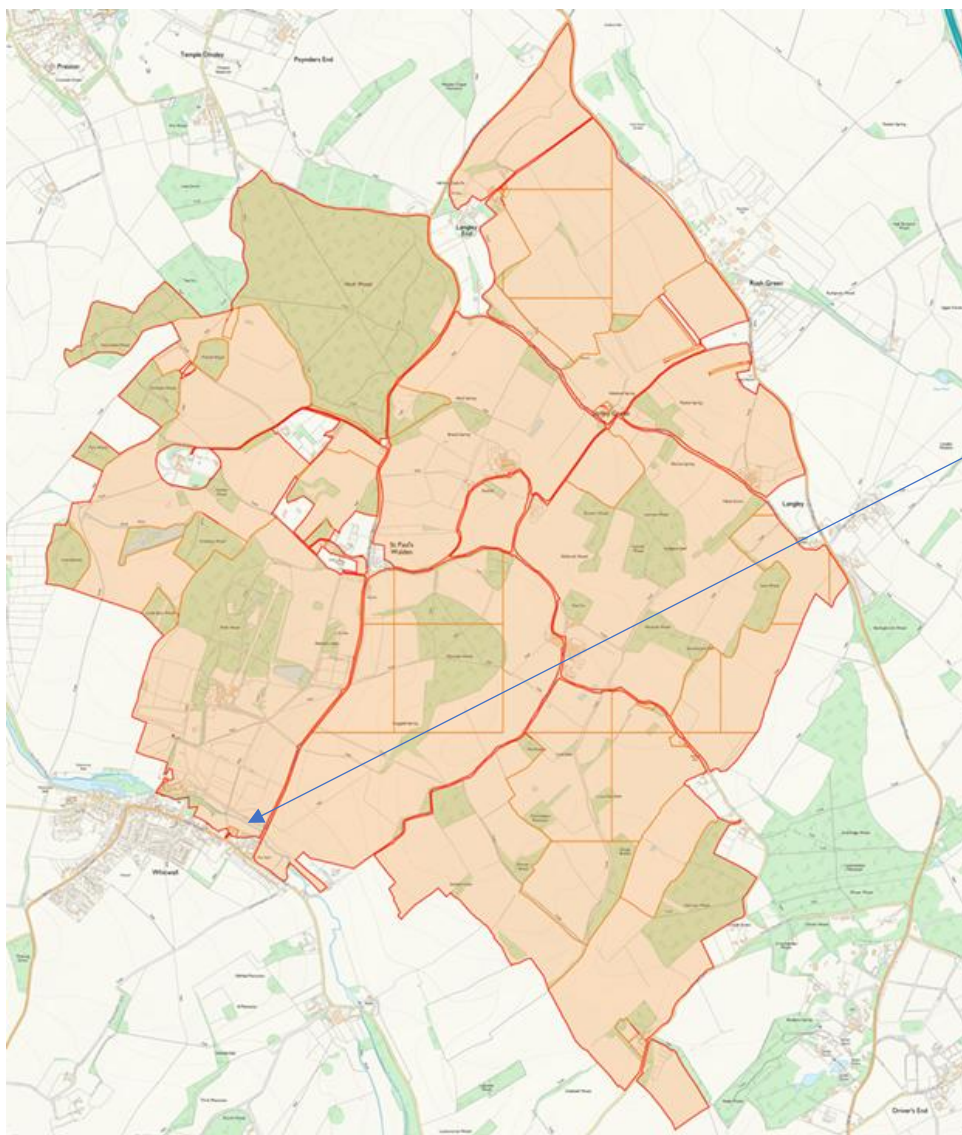
Barn 13 (units 2a and 2b) – 2 units 7.3m wide x 7.0m deep

Barn 14 – (unit 1) – 9.6m wide x 6.6m deep

2.0 Site Plans

2.1 Farm Estate

NTS – see planning documents for full size scaled map



Waterhall Farm

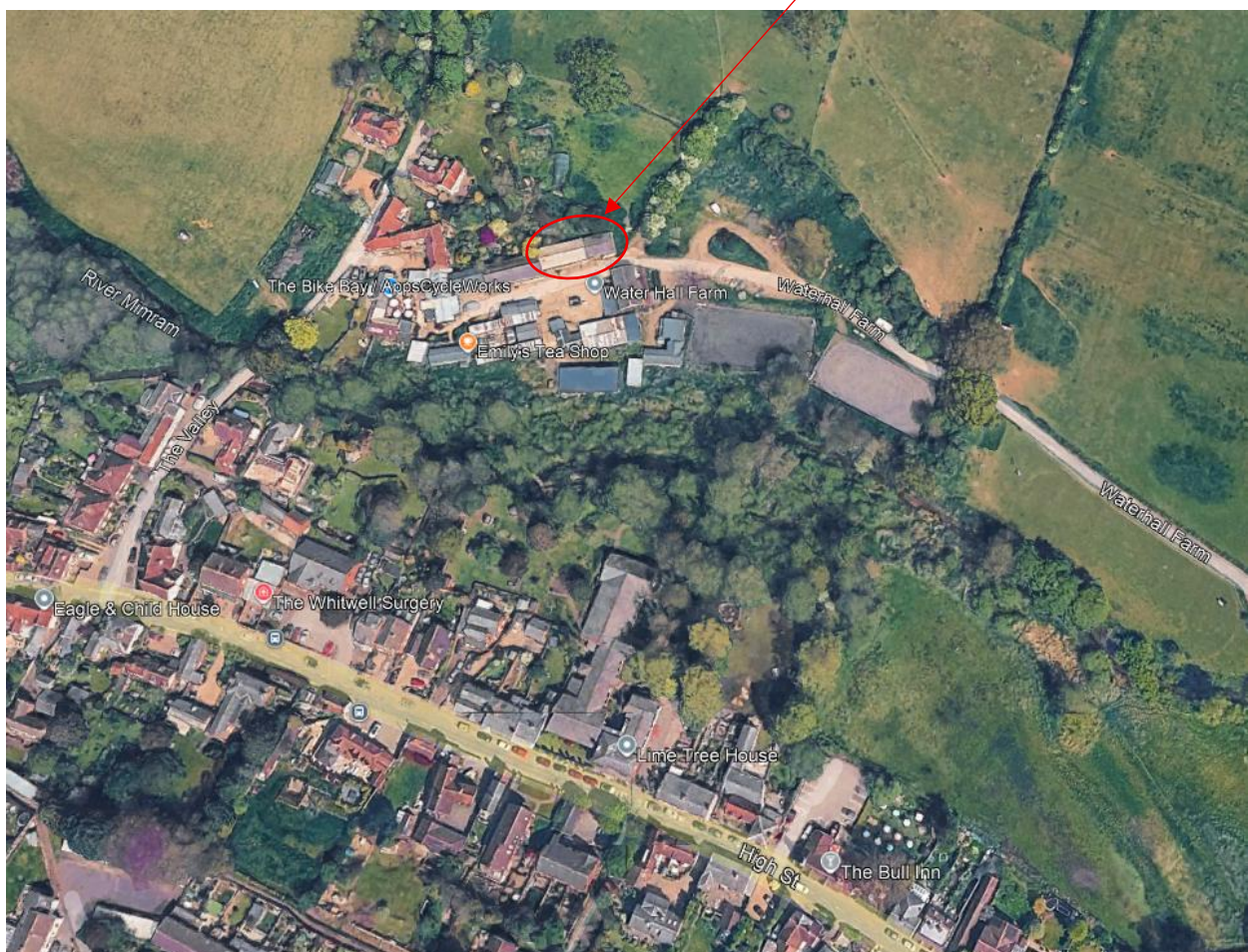
2.2 Site Plan (NTS)

See drawing 2026/405/01



3.0 Aerial Photograph

Existing Units 1, 2a and 2b



4.0 GPD – Schedule 2, Part 3, Class R Criteria

The proposed change of use complies with the requirements of Class R, as shown in the table below:

<u>R.1 DEVELOPMENT NOT PERMITTED</u>	
(a) the building was not used solely for an agricultural use as part of an established agricultural unit— (i) on 3rd July 2012; (ii) in the case of a building which was in use before that date but was not in use on that date, when it was last in use, or (iii) in the case of a building which was brought into use after 3rd July 2012, for a period of at least 10 years before the date development under Class R begins;	Complies - The building has been used solely for agricultural purposes since it was built (well before 3 July 2012).
(b) the cumulative floor space of buildings which have changed use under Class R within an established agricultural unit exceeds 1000 square metres;	Complies – The building has a GIA of 163 m². There have been no other buildings converted on the agricultural holding by virtue of Class R.
(c) the site is, or forms part of, a military explosives storage area;	Complies - The site is not and does not form part of a military explosives' storage area.
(d) the site is, or forms part of, a safety hazard area; or	Complies - The site is not and does not form part of a safety hazard area.
(e) the building is a listed building or a scheduled monument.	Complies - The building is not listed or a scheduled monument.

5.0 Class R Conditions

R.2 – (1) Development is permitted by Class R subject to the following conditions –

R.2 Conditions	
(a) a site which has changed use under Class R may, subject to paragraph R.3, subsequently change use to another use falling within one of the use classes comprising the flexible use; The proposal will comply with these conditions.	The proposal will comply with this condition.
(b) for the purposes of the Use Classes Order and this Order, after a site has changed use under Class R the site is to be treated as having a sui generis use;	The proposal will comply with this condition.
(c) after a site has changed use under Class R, the planning permissions granted by Class E of Part 7 of this Schedule apply to the building, subject to the following modifications— (i) “curtilage” has the meaning given in paragraph X (interpretation) of this Part; (ii) any reference to “office building” is to be read as a reference to the building which has changed use under Class R.	The proposal will comply with these conditions.

R.3 – (1) Before changing the use of the site under Class R, and before any subsequent change of use to another use falling within one of the use classes comprising the flexible use, the developer must:

R.3 CONDITIONS – PRIOR APPROVAL	
a) where the cumulative floor space of the building or buildings which have changed use under Class R within an established agricultural unit exceeds 150 square metres, it is necessary to apply to the local planning authority for a determination as to whether the prior approval of the authority will be required as to — i. transport and highways impacts of the development; ii. noise impacts of the development; iii. contamination risks on the site; and iv. flooding risks on the site,	The floor space of the agricultural building is 163 m² (i) the proposed change of use is unlikely to have an adverse impact on highway safety. The existing agricultural vehicle movements comprising tractors, trailers, farm machinery and including HGV's (grain lorries) associated with the building will be replaced by vehicles associated a new flexible use within Class B8. (ii) the intended uses will be low key operators within Class B8 (storage or distribution). There will be no adverse noise impact resulting from change of use. In fact, there may be less noise as currently tractors with trailers, agricultural machinery and HGV grain lorries operate within the yard. iii) the site does not fall within any historic landfill zones. The buildings have been kept clean. There are no building works involved. There is unlikely to be any risk to the proposed storage users from contamination.

	(iv) The farmyard is located within Flood Zone 1 – with ‘very low’ risk of flooding. Please see flood risk section below (8.0) and Flood Map for Planning issued with the planning documents. There will be no increase in hardstanding or hard surfaced area and therefore no increased risk of flooding caused by the proposal.
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5.0 – Transport and Highways Impact

The units have been in use for general agricultural purposes and agricultural storage. In order to facilitate their use in the past various sizes of vehicle have required access. There is adequate access, parking and turning on the site for large vehicles as well as turning. The units remain part of a quiet agricultural yard. The size of the units will generally restrict their usage to small commercial vehicles, generally smaller than have used the buildings in the past. **No adverse transport or highways impacts are anticipated.**

The estate intends, and will market, the units as low intensity activity spaces.

6.0 Noise Impacts of the Development

As noted above, the intended use for the units is low intensity storage spaces and **no adverse noise impact resulting from the change of use is anticipated.** There nearest residents are 30m from the units. There are other activities nearer to the residential properties which will provide a greater noise impact, for example a café and bicycle repair shop. The closest residential properties are let properties owned by the farming estate with a clear complaints’ policy/procedure relating to noise impacts.

7.0 Contamination risks on the site

The site does not fall within any historic landfill zones. The buildings have been kept clean and have concrete slab floors. There will not be any building works involved in the change of use. There has been no past evidence of contamination and it is **unlikely that the proposed storage users will be at any risk of contamination.**

8.0 Flood Risks

<https://check-long-term-flood-risk.service.gov.uk/risk>

The farmyard is in Zone 1. There is no evidence of flooding from rivers, seas or surface water. See below and also Environment Agency Flood Map for Planning issued with the planning documents. There is no increase in hardstanding as part of the proposal.

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](#)

Other flood risks

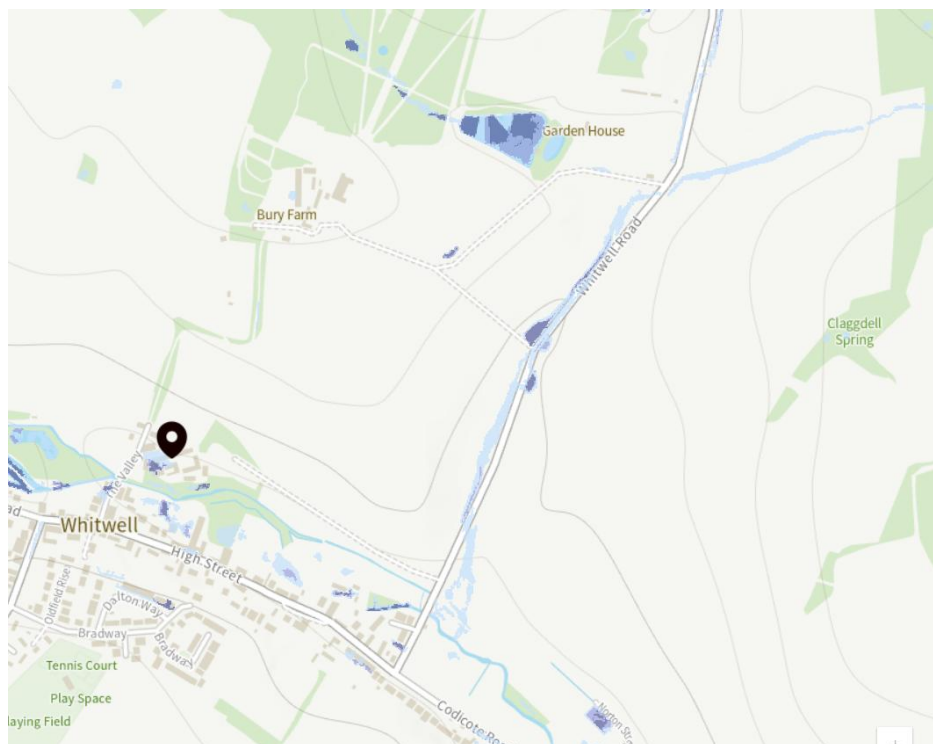
[More about groundwater and reservoirs](#)

Groundwater

Flooding from groundwater is unlikely in this area.

Reservoirs

Flooding from reservoirs is unlikely in this area.



Surface water map

Yearly chance of flooding

☒ Flood area (extent)

High chance

Medium chance

Low chance

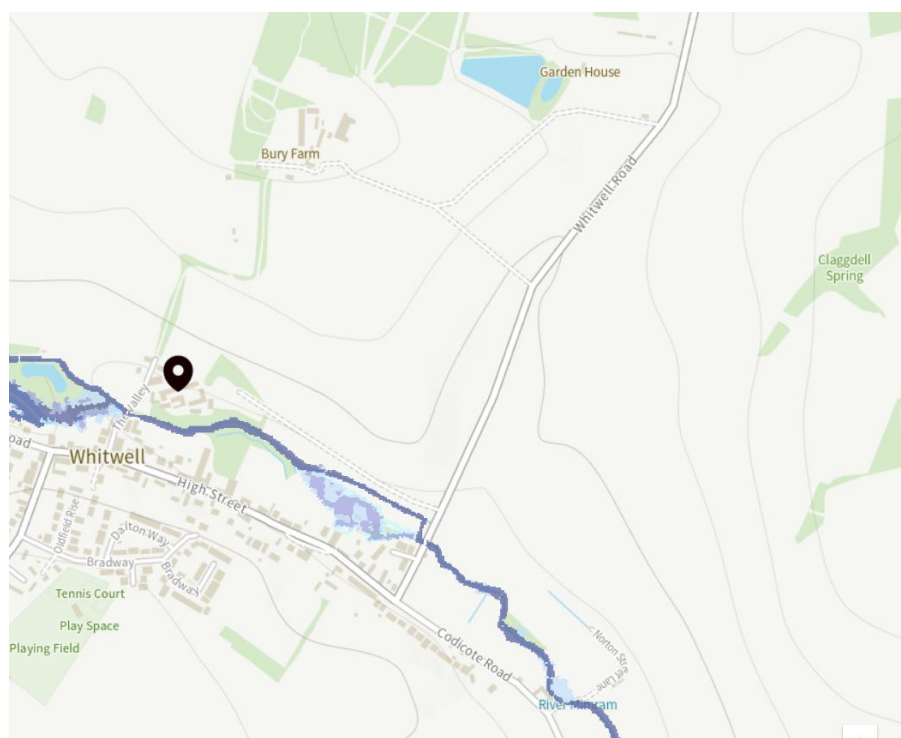
Yearly chance of flooding between 2040 and 2060

☐ Flood area (extent)

Map details

☒ Show flooding

☒ Selected address



Rivers and sea map

Yearly chance of flooding

☒ Flood area (extent)

High chance

Medium chance

Low chance

Very low chance

Yearly chance of flooding between 2036 and 2069

☐ Flood area (extent)

Map details

☒ Show flooding

☒ Selected address

Conclusion

The Planning Statement sets out the criteria for Class R Permitted Development and illustrates the compliance.

On consideration of the information provided, I trust that you will find the proposal acceptable and that the change of use from agricultural to a flexible use within Class B8 can proceed as permitted development by virtue of Schedule 2, Part 3, Class R of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).

Appendix A – Photographs



Unit 1

Unit 2a



Unit 2b



Unit 1



Unit 2a



Unit 2b

