

PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT



2 Snailswell Lane, Ickleford SG5 3TP

December 2025





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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning, Design and Access Statement has been prepared by INTOUCH PLANNING LTD, to support an application for full planning permission for the erection of a semi-detached pair of dwellings, within the side garden area of 2 Snailswell Lane, Ickleford, Hertfordshire SG5 3TP.
- 1.2 The Statement provides an assessment of the planning policy framework relevant to the proposal, as well as other relevant material considerations and explains the design process and principles based on a contextual understanding of the site and the locality.

2. Site description

- 2.1 The site comprises the large side garden area of 2 Snailswell Lane, which is a large semi-detached dwellinghouse, which pairs with no. 1. The front and west side boundaries comprise of mature hedgerow. A mature Ash tree is near the front boundary and its canopy spreads over the Lane and front part of the site.
- 2.2 The locality has a semi-rural low density residential character, being in the north-west edge of Ickleford, where development fades into the countryside along Snailswell Lane. The site is in the Green Belt. The settlement boundary of Ickleford is a short distance to the east of the site.
- 2.3 With regard to neighbouring properties of the site itself, the closest property is No. 2 to the east, which pairs with No. 1 beyond. Then to the west is No. 3 with its side garden abutting the site boundary. The following images show the location of the site as aerial views at Figures 1 and 2, with photographs of the site and surroundings at Figures 3 to 6.





Figure 1 – The application site as red marker,
in context with the northern part of Ickleford



Figure 2 – The application site as red marker





Figure 3 - View from within site towards south-west corner



Figure 4 - View from within site towards No. 2





Figure 5 – View along site division line, with gazebo of No. 2 at rear



Figure 6 – View from within site towards front boundary



3. Planning history

- 3.1 The planning history for the site itself is a pre-application submission for a single detached dwelling in October 2024, reference 24/01858/PRE.
- Response of no objection to the principle as an infill site within the main village area of Ickleford stating 'The site for the proposed dwelling is not considered inappropriate development in the Green Belt, as it would constitute limited infilling in a village'.
- 3.2 The siting and design likely acceptable from the indicative details, materials to match the nearby dwellings. Landscaping features of the front boundary tree and hedgerow should be retained.
- 3.3 Follow up officer advice issued by email in regard to a pair of semi-detached dwellings, instead of one dwelling. Officer considered the two dwellings to still be 'limited' and could work well. Parking ideally not on frontage and to be at sides of dwellings, to retain landscaped frontages and the front boundary tree retained. This now formal application is prepared on this basis.
- 3.4 No. 2 has benefitted from previous extensions by way of a two storey side extension and a two storey rear extension. No. 1 also has the same side and rear extensions.

4. The proposal

- 4.1 The proposed development comprises erection of a pair of two storey, four bedroom semi-detached dwellings. The overall building as the pair would measure 12.8 metres in width, 11.2 metres in maximum depth, with a pitched roof ridge of 8.7 metres in height.
- 4.2 The handed layout to each dwelling would provide entrance hall, living room, kitchen / diner, utility and cloakroom at ground floor, with four bedrooms and bathrooms at first floor. Materials are proposed of white smooth render to the



elevations over a red brick plinth, with clay roof tiles. Fenestration is proposed of white aluminium frames.



- 4.3 Vehicular access to the dwellings is provided from Snailswell Lane as two new crossovers. Three parking spaces per dwelling are proposed in tandem layout to the sides of each dwelling, leaving spacious front gardens behind the retained section of front hedgerow. Amenity space is proposed to the rear of each dwelling, with cycle stores and bin storage.

- 4.4 The proposal consists of the following drawings and supporting documents:

Drawings:

2026-01 - Location and existing block plan

2026-02 - Proposed block plan

2026-03 - Proposed floor plans

2026-04 - Proposed elevations

2026-05 - Proposed section A-A and B-B

2026-06 - Proposed street scene view

Supporting documents:

Planning, Design and Access Statement

Ecological Appraisal

Ecology – BNG Metric and Condition Assessments

Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement

Arboricultural Impact Assessment - Appendices

- 4.5 The following images are extracts from the principal drawings for the development, of the proposed site plan, floor plans, elevations and street scene view.



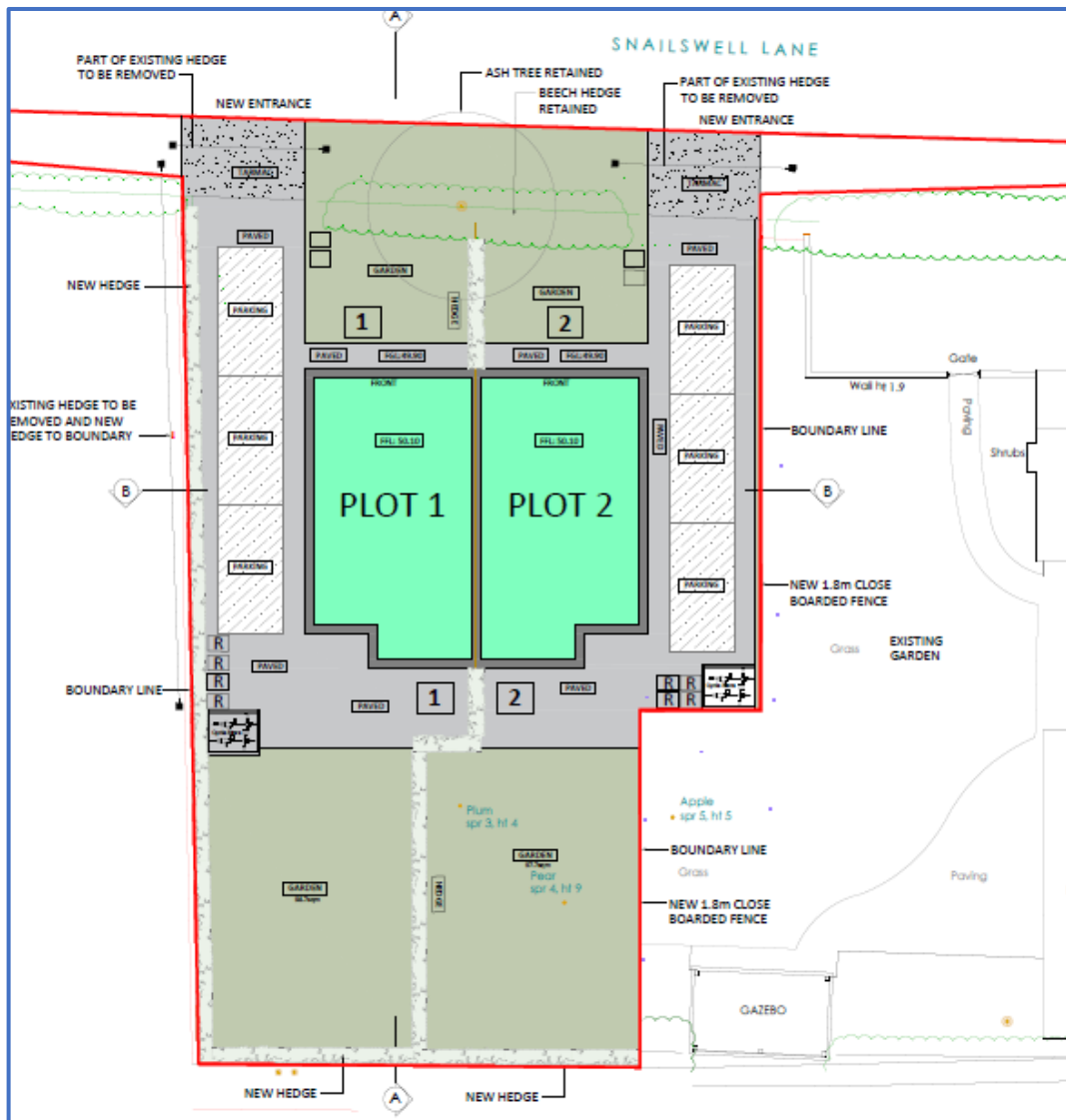


Figure 7 - Proposed site plan



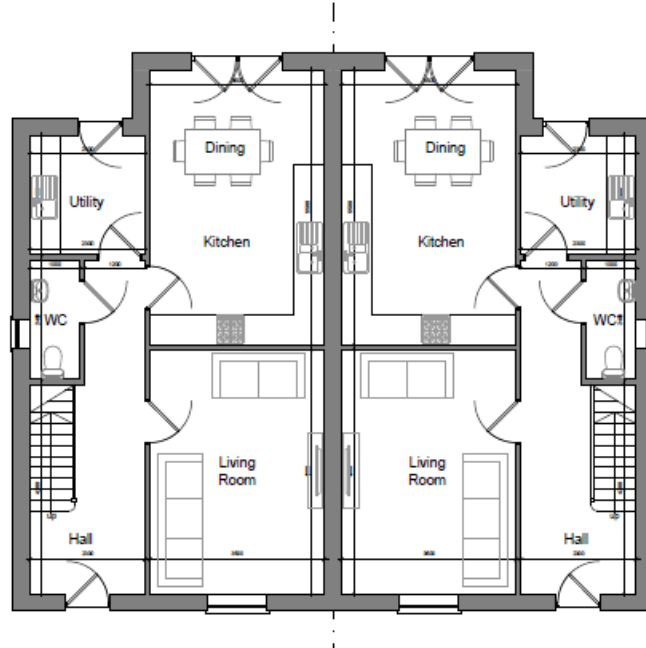


Figure 8 - Proposed ground floor plan

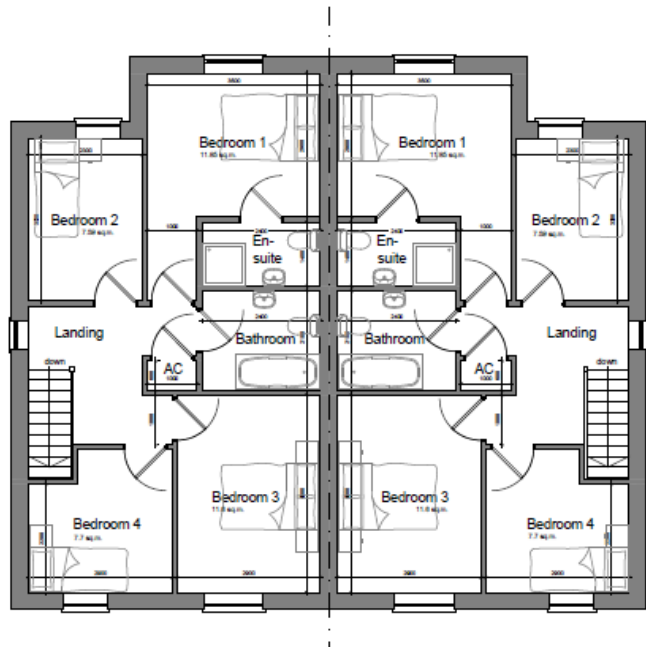


Figure 9 - Proposed first floor plan





Figure 10 - Proposed front elevation



Figure 11 - Proposed street scene view





Figure 12 - Proposed rear elevation



Figure 13 - Proposed left side elevation



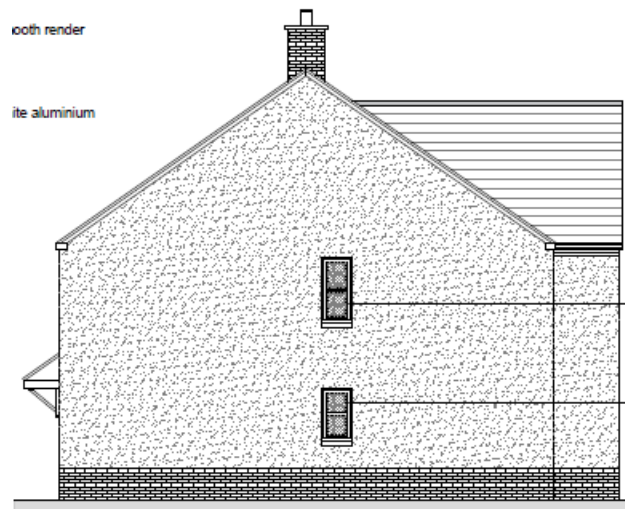


Figure 14 - Proposed right side elevation

5. Relevant planning policy

5.1 The following policies within the Local Plan and the Ickleford Neighbourhood Plan are considered to be of relevance to this application, followed by those of the NPPF:

5.2 **North Hertfordshire District 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 SP8 Housing

Policy SP9 Design and Sustainability

Policy SP12 Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity and Landscape

Development Management Policies

Policy T1 Assessment of transport matters

Policy T2 Parking



Policy D1 Sustainable design
 Policy D3 Protecting living conditions
 Policy NE2 Landscape
 Policy NE4 Biodiversity and Geological Sites

Ickleford Neighbourhood Plan 2024

Policy E2: Protecting the Landscape
 Policy E3: Rural Character
 Policy E4: Biodiversity
 Policy SD3: High Quality Design
 Policy SD4: Provision of Energy Efficient Buildings
 Policy MTT2: Car Parking

5.3 **Supplementary Planning Documents**

Design
 Sustainability
 Vehicle Parking at New Development

5.4 **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

Section 2. Achieving sustainable development
 Section 4. Decision-making
 Section 5. Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
 Section 11. Making effective use of land
 Section 12. Achieving well-designed places
 Section 13. Protecting Green Belt land
 Section 15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
 Section 16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

The relevant planning considerations in this case are discussed in the following sections.



6. Principle of residential use

- 6.1 In regard to the principle of development for these two dwellings in this location, the proposal is considered to be infill development in a village in the Green Belt, and not inappropriate development, in accordance with 154 e) of the NPPF. This states,

*“154. A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:
..e) limited infilling in villages;”.*

- 6.2 In addressing this policy wording, the development of two dwellings would indeed be ‘limited’. The site is part of the garden and curtilage of a dwelling and shares a boundary with another dwelling, No. 3, with both Nos. 2 and 3 visible from the site. Both of these neighbouring dwellings are considered sufficiently close to the development to constitute infilling. This was agreed on the pre-application scheme for one dwelling and indeed, the follow up view for a pair of semi-detached dwellings.

- 6.3 With regards to whether the site is within a village, Nos. 2 and 3 and the site are located on Snailswell Lane, a road that contains residential development within the Ickleford settlement boundary to the east, and continues west outside of the boundary with less dense residential development in a more rural setting. The Ickleford village boundary is considered to contain the more built-up and higher density parts of the village, with some less dense areas outside it.

- 6.4 In this respect, the site for the proposed dwellings is considered to be part of Ickleford. This is in regard to both visual and geographical terms. Therefore, the site for the proposed dwellings is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt, as it would constitute limited infilling in a village. As such, the development meets the exception for development within the Green Belt.



- 6.5 The overarching policy Framework of the NPPF states a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The three objectives of sustainable development, as prescribed by the NPPF, being economic, social and environmental, are considered to be fully met by the development.
- 6.6 There would be social benefits to the village by increasing the family housing stock of the village by this small development for two dwellings. The new occupiers would be part of an existing community, with easy access to nearby community needs and services of Ickleford and nearby Hitchin. The economic benefits would include the construction industry work, the council tax receipts for the Local Authority, together with supporting the vitality of local businesses in this part of Hertfordshire. There would be no environmental harm with the development being infilling within this village location. The three objectives of sustainable development are therefore met by the proposal.

7. Living conditions for occupiers

- 7.1 In regard to this key issue, the proposal would provide a high standard of residential amenity and living conditions for its occupiers. The dwellings would exceed the minimum internal space standards as prescribed by the DCLG Technical housing standards - nationally described space standard. For these 4 bedroom, up to 6 person units, 106 square metres (sqm) are required and 117.6 sqm are provided. This is shown in the full table from the Technical housing standards below.



Table 1 - Minimum gross internal floor areas and storage (m ²)					
Number of bedrooms(b)	Number of bed spaces (persons)	1 storey dwellings	2 storey dwellings	3 storey dwellings	Built-in storage
1b	1p	39 (37) *			1.0
	2p	50	58		1.5
2b	3p	61	70		2.0
	4p	70	79		
3b	4p	74	84	90	2.5
	5p	86	93	99	
	6p	95	102	108	
4b	5p	90	97	103	3.0
	6p	99	106	112	
	7p	108	115	121	
	8p	117	124	130	
5b	6p	103	110	116	3.5
	7p	112	119	125	
	8p	121	128	134	
6b	7p	116	123	129	4.0
	8p	125	132	138	

Figure 15 – Minimum floorspaces of the National described space standard

- 7.2 All bedrooms exceed the minimum width and floor area. The open plan kitchen / diner, with separate lounge, would provide light and modern day living spaces. Integrated storage areas are included, with sufficient circulation space provided throughout. A high standard of natural light and outlook would be provided to all habitable rooms of the dwellings.
- 7.3 In regard to amenity space, 98 sqm would be provided to the Plot 1 dwelling and 97 sqm to the Plot 2 dwelling. This would provide each set of occupiers with high quality and private amenity space. Moreover, the rear elevations and rear gardens are south facing, benefiting from passive solar gain accordingly.
- 7.4 Overall, the layout and amenity for occupiers would be of a high standard and in accordance with Local Plan Policy D1, Policy SD3 of the Ickleford Neighbourhood Plan and, with Section 12 of the NPPF.

8. Impact upon neighbouring living conditions

- 8.1 With regard to any impact of the development upon the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers, there would be no adverse impact. The dwellings



would be a good separation distance from the two neighbouring properties, of No.2 and No. 3. An ample sized rear and side garden area would be retained for No. 2. The dwellings would be comfortably inset from the flank boundaries, to have no dominating impact upon either neighbouring property.

- 8.2 The only flank windows proposed at first floor are landing windows and these would be obscure glazed and non-opening below 1.7 metres from internal floor level. Likewise for the ground floor windows, which would serve the cloakroom WCs. The fencing and hedgerow boundary treatment would also be present. The privacy of both neighbouring properties would therefore be fully retained.
- 8.3 Overall, the new dwellings would have no impact of any loss of light, loss of privacy or any overbearing impact. The development would have no harm upon occupier living conditions of any neighbouring properties. The proposal complies with Policy D3 of the Local Plan, Policy SD3 of the Ickleford Neighbourhood Plan and, with Section 12 of the NPPF.

9. Design and appearance

- 9.1 In regard to the specific design, Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states:

“Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:

- will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;*
- are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping”.*



- 9.2 The proposal is considered to meet the above three requirements of this national policy, through its high-quality design and high quality materials. The overall proportions are in keeping with the adjacent dwellings in the road. Matching eaves and ridge heights to the existing dwellings are proposed. In addition, the building line is respected with the dwellings being in line with the front elevations of Nos. 1 and 2, along with Nos. 3 and 4.
- 9.3 The development would indeed function well in providing family sized dwellings for the District, with its high-quality design adding to the overall quality of the area, for the lifetime of the development. The scheme is considered to be visually attractive as a result of the good architecture.
- 9.4 As such, it is considered that the proposal would cause no harm upon the character and appearance of the area. Overall, the design, form and appearance are in accordance with the provisions of Section 12 of the NPPF, Policies SP9 and D1 of the Local Plan and, with Policy SD3 of the Ickleford Neighbourhood Plan.

10. Heritage assets

- 10.1 In regard to any impact upon heritage assets, both designated and undesignated, the proposal would not affect any such assets. The site is not within or adjacent to the Ickleford Conservation Area and so the setting of such is not affected. The existing adjacent dwellings are not listed and the site is not proximate to any listed buildings.
- 10.2 The site is not within an area of archaeological significance. Overall, it is considered the scheme has no harmful impact upon any designated or undesignated heritage assets. Consequently, the scheme does not conflict with Policy HE1 of the Local Plan, or Section 16 of the NPPF.



11. Access, parking and cycle provision

- 11.1 In terms of access, two new crossovers are proposed to Snailswell Lane, to serve the two new dwellings. These would be single width, providing tandem parking spaces to the sides of each dwelling.
- 11.2 Visibility splays in both directions from both new crossovers, meet the required highway regulations. Vehicle visibility is shown to at least 43 metres in both directions, as required along this 30mph highway. The front verge is Highway Authority land and so would remain free of obstruction for these visibility splays to always be maintained. The ample visibility distances are shown in the following photographs.



Figure 16 – View of visibility looking left upon exit





Figure 17 – View of visibility looking right upon exit

- 11.3 In regard to parking provision, the Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for Parking at New Development, requires that residential schemes provide vehicle parking on the basis of a minimum standard of 1 space per dwelling for one bedroom dwellings and 2 spaces for two bedrooms or more. The scheme provides 3 parking spaces to each dwelling, which exceeds the standards for these four bedroom dwellings. An electric charging point for each dwelling would be installed to each flank elevation. A cycle store for four cycles each is provided to the rear garden areas of both dwellings.
- 11.4 In summary, access, vehicle parking and cycle provision are therefore considered to be acceptable for the proposal, causing no harm to the safe and free flow of the local highway network.

12. Landscaping and ecology

- 12.1 In regard to landscaping, the new plots would feature shrub planting to the frontage, with lawn and shrubs to the rear gardens, beyond the first sections of patio. With parking set to the sides of the dwellings, means the frontages



are able to accommodate soft landscaping and retain the central section of the current mature hedgerow. The retained and new landscape planting will maintain and provide habitat and biodiversity of the site. Furthermore, Swift bird bricks will be installed to the flank elevations of both dwellings. The scheme accords with Local Plan Policy SP12, NE2 and NE4, Policy E4 of the Ickleford Neighbourhood Plan and, with Section 15 of the NPPF in this regard.

13. Waste and recycling

- 13.1 Occupiers would store household waste and recycling bins to the rear gardens and present them to the front gardens on collection days. The storage and collection of waste and recycling is therefore considered to be acceptable for the proposed development.

14. Land contamination

- 14.1 In regard to any potential for land contamination, there are no known former uses of the land to have led to any ground pollutants, as the site has always been residential garden land of No. 2. Therefore, no ground investigations are considered to be required, as the land would remain as residential garden for the new dwellings.

15. Sustainability and Energy Statement

- 15.1 In regard to the Sustainability SPD, the development of the two dwellings will be constructed from cavity wall brickwork construction, which has a proven longevity and low maintenance compared to some modern materials. The brick and block construction will give the dwellings a high thermal mass, which is able to moderate excesses in temperature and store energy received from solar gain. Timber to be used in the construction will be from sustainable and renewable sources.



- 15.2 In addition to this, the dwellings will have a fabric first approach with the building envelope and insulation levels designed with a very good thermal performance, which will exceed the requirements for minimum U values set out in the current Building Regulations.
- 15.3 Heat source will include an air source heat pump and solar PV panels are to be considered to the south facing rear roofslopes, in order to offset electricity power demand from the national grid. Low flow water fixtures, showerheads and dual flush toilets will be installed. This will significantly reduce water consumption to less than 100 litres per person per day.
- 15.4 Furthermore, electric vehicle charging points will be installed on the flank walls of each dwelling. The development would be a highly sustainable construction, minimising its energy consumption. The scheme is in accordance with Local Plan Policies SP9 and D1, the Sustainability SPD and Policy SD4 of the Ickleford Neighbourhood Plan.

16. Flood risk

- 16.1 In regard to any flood risk, the application site is deemed at very low risk of flooding from rivers and seas, by the Environment Agency. The site is in Flood Zone 1 (FZ1) which is the zone of lowest flood risk.
- 16.2 The site does show as higher risk for surface water. In order to safeguard against this risk, finished floor levels for the new dwellings will be set appropriately above surrounding ground level and above the 1 in 1000-year surface water level, to ensure suitable resistance to potential surface water exceedance.
- 16.3 The development has been designed to ensure safe and efficient surface water management. The private driveways are proposed of permeable block paving construction, to reduce peak runoff and enhance infiltration. Aco drains will be to the front of the required tarmac sections of the two



crossovers over the public highway section. This will prevent any surface water discharging onto the public highway, from the small areas of impermeable surfacing. This area of hardsurface is unavoidable due to Highway Authority requirements.

- 16.4 Finished ground levels around the overall building will be designed with outward falls to prevent surface water from flowing towards door thresholds. It is reasonable to conclude that the site is not at risk of flooding and that the proposed development would not result in an increase in flooding.
- 16.5 The following image shows the flood risk for the site, from the Environment Agency web site for surface water flood risk.

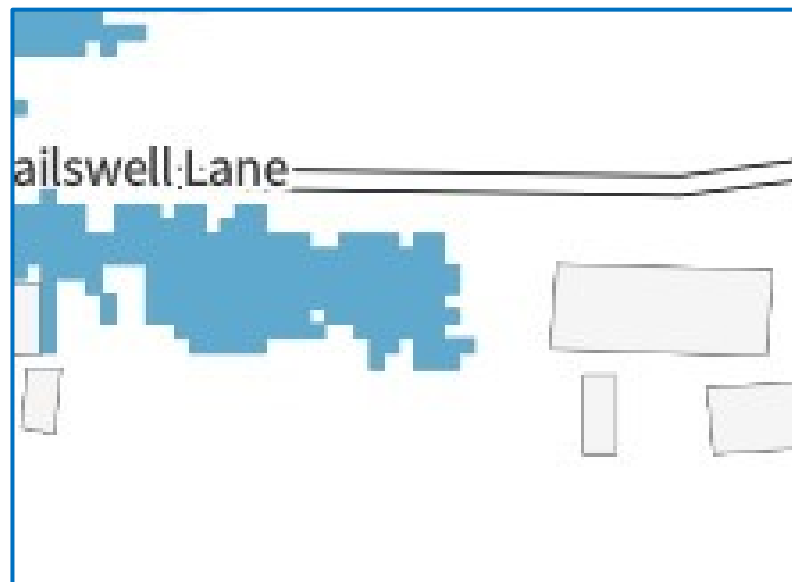


Figure 18 – Environment Agency mapping for surface water flood risk

17. Affordable housing and planning obligations

- 17.1 The scheme is for two additional dwellings. No affordable housing or planning obligations are required with this level of scheme. The Community Infrastructure Levy is not yet adopted by the Council.



18. Summary

- 18.1 In summary of the proposal, the site for the proposed two dwellings is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt, as it would constitute limited infilling in a village. As such, the development meets the exception for development within the Green Belt, in accordance with local and national planning policy.
- 18.2 The proposal for two residential dwellings on the site, meets the three objectives of sustainable development, being environmental, social and economic, as prescribed by the NPPF.
- 18.3 The proposal comprises a pair of well-designed dwellings, which are sensitive to the surrounding built form in their siting, size and design. The proposals would have no harm upon nearby occupier living conditions. The site provides on-site parking adequate for the dwelling size, with visitor provision accommodated on each plot.
- 18.4 Living conditions for proposed occupiers would be of a high standard, both for internal floorspace, outlook and privacy, together with high quality external amenity spaces. The storage of refuse and recycling is also provided and can be adequately collected from the kerbside of Snailswell Lane.
- 18.5 The development would complement the overall character of the area, through the high-quality overall design and materials. The proposal is therefore compliant with the Local Plan, the Ickleford Neighbourhood Plan and, with the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 18.6 The benefits of the scheme are the provision of two dwellings towards the Council's supply of housing land, together with the social and economic benefits of housing in a sustainable location, supporting local businesses and services. The planning balance is considered to be that there are no adverse



impacts of the development, which in no way 'significantly and demonstrably' outweigh the benefits of the development. With this being the case the development is acceptable for the grant of planning permission accordingly.

