

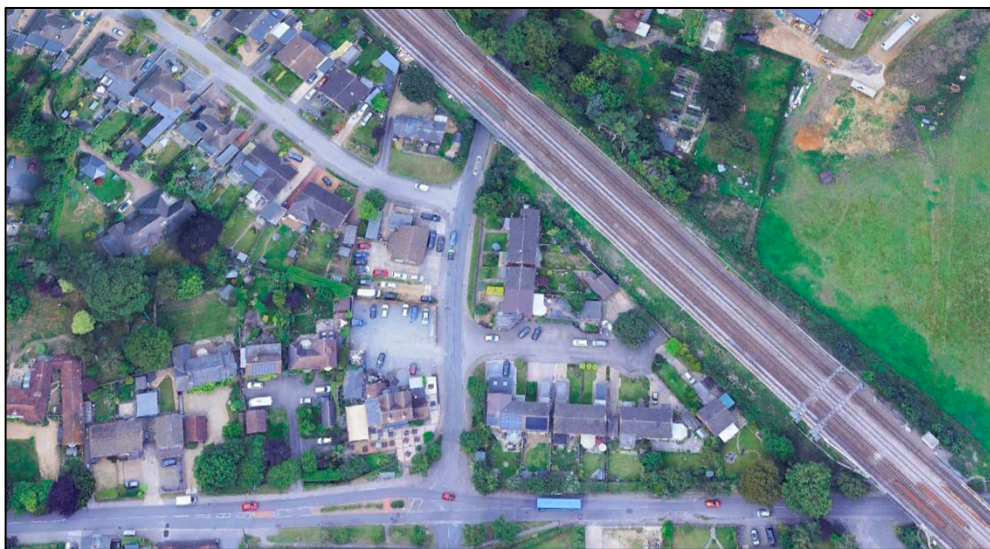


PLANNING STATEMENT

1-3 Priory Lane, Little Wymondley, SG4 7HE

Job Ref: 24/087

Date: December 2025



Prepared by Tom Donovan BA (Hons), MA, MRTPI on behalf of

PETER GEORGE TOWN PLANNING



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Table of Contents

<i>Section 1: Introduction & Background</i>	4
<i>Section 2: Analysis of the Site and Surroundings</i>	6
<i>Section 3: The Development Proposal</i>	9
<i>Section 4: Relevant Planning Policy</i>	11
<i>Section 5: Planning Analysis</i>	14
<i>Section 6: Summary & Conclusions</i>	25



Section 1: Introduction & Background

Introduction

- 1.1 Peter George Town Planning has been instructed by 356 Architects to provide this planning statement to accompany an application for full planning permission at 1-3 Priory Lane, Little Wymondley, SG4 7HE for the erection of three dwellings.
- 1.2 The purpose of this statement is to set out the proposals, provide an analysis against relevant national and local planning policy and ultimately make the case as to why planning permission should be granted.

Planning History

Ref.	Address	Proposal	Decision
21/02383/FP	1 Priory Lane, Little Wymondley	Erection of one detached 4-bed dwelling	Granted 30/01/2023
17/02105/1	1B Priory Lane, Little Wymondley	Extension of existing A1 use to include the fitting of in-car equipment within rear yard	Withdrawn
12/00650/1	2 Priory Lane, Little Wymondley	Change of use of land behind site address for storage of cars for retail sale	Withdrawn
12/00015/1	3 Priory Lane, Little Wymondley	Change of use of land behind site address for storage of cars for retail sale	Withdrawn



04/01586/1	Bridge Garage, 1 Priory Lane, Little Wymondley	Replacement detached double garage	Granted 17/11/2004
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Section 2: Analysis of the Site and Surroundings

The Application Site & Immediate Context

- 2.1 The application site is located to the west side of Priory Lane at the junction with Priory View. It is currently occupied by a single storey building half of which is in use as a funeral director, the other half for car sales.



Figure 1 - Google Earth Snapshot

- 2.2 The site lies within the built envelope of Little Wymondley which is a large village situated between south-east Hitchin and north-west Stevenage. Little Wymondley is identified by the Council in their Local Plan as being one of five larger villages within which approximately 13% of new housing is to be delivered.



- 2.3 The site lies a short distance to the south-west of the railway bridge across Priory Lane which essentially demarcates the settlement edge. The grade II* listed Wymondley Hall is located to the north-east side of the bridge to the east of Priory Lane. The grade II listed Plume of Feathers PH is situated to the south of the site at the junction of Priory Lane and Stevenage Road.
- 2.4 The site is not located within nor is it adjacent to a conservation area. The existing building on site is not on the statutory list, nor does it appear to or is understood to have any local historic significance.
- 2.5 Immediately to the south, to the north side of the pub car park, is a detached dwelling built in accordance with planning permission ref. 21/02383/FP. This is a two-storey, four-bedroom dwelling of a traditional form, design and materiality.
- 2.6 The site has a large hardstanding to the front, side and rear of the existing building. The site is served by dropped kerbs to the front and side enabling independent access and parking for the two commercial units contained within the existing building.



- 2.7 The site lies at the edge of Flood Zone 2 as per the Environment Agency mapping. Parts of the site appear to be at some risk of surface water flooding.



Section 3: The Development Proposal

3.1 The proposed development can be described as follows:

“Erection of a pair of semi-detached dwellings and a detached dwelling following the demolition of the existing commercial buildings and cessation of the commercial use of the site.”

Design and Layout

3.2 The proposed dwellings would be positioned on the site fronting Priory Lane. They would be on the same alignment as the recently constructed dwelling to the south and arranged as a single dwelling and a semi-detached pair.

3.3 The proposed dwellings would be two-storey in height with a further bedroom accommodated within proposed flat roof dormer windows set to the rear. Each property would have four bedrooms. The proposed dwellings would have a similar materiality and detailing to the existing dwelling to the south.



- 3.4 Each of the proposed dwellings would have private gardens immediately to the rear and, in the case of Plot 3, garden to the side and front. Each plot would have parking for two cars, a secure cycle storage, and a space for the storage of bins.



Section 4: Relevant Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

4.1 The Government policies on different aspects of planning are set out in the **National Planning Policy Framework 2024** (the Framework).

4.2 The relevant sections of the Framework are as follows:

- Section 2: Achieving sustainable development
- Section 5: Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
- Section 8: Promoting healthy and safe communities
- Section 9: Promoting sustainable development
- Section 11: Making effective use of land
- Section 12: Achieving well-designed places
- Section 14: Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- Section 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Development Plan

4.3 Section 38(6) of the Planning Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that:

“If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination under the Planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations dictate otherwise.”



- 4.4 The development plan context for the planning application is provided by:
- **North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 (adopted November 2022)**

- 4.5 The following policies are considered relevant to the consideration of this application:

Strategic Policies

- Policy SP1: Sustainable Development in North Hertfordshire
- Policy SP2: Settlement Hierarchy and Spatial Distribution
- Policy SP6: Sustainable Transport
- Policy SP8: Housing
- Policy SP9: Design and Sustainability
- Policy SP11: Natural Resources and Sustainability
- Policy SP12: Green Infrastructure, Landscape and Biodiversity

Development Management Policies

- Policy T1: Assessment of Transport Matters
- Policy T2: Parking
- Policy D1: Sustainable Design
- Policy D3: Protecting Living Conditions
- Policy D4: Air Quality
- Policy NE1: Strategic Green Infrastructure
- Policy NE4: Biodiversity and Geological Sites
- Policy NE7: Reducing Flood Risk
- Policy NE8: Sustainable Drainage Systems
- Policy NE9: Water Quality and Environment
- Policy NE11: Contaminated Land



Supplementary Planning Documents

- Vehicle Parking at New Development SPD (September 2011)



Section 5: Planning Analysis

Principle

- 5.1 Local Plan (LP) Policy SP1 sets out the guiding principles for planning in North Hertfordshire over the period of the Plan. The supporting text to the Policy sets out that planning permission will be granted where proposals meet these strategic aims.
- 5.2 LP Policy SP2 sets out that provision is made for at least 13,000 new homes over the period of the Plan (between 2011-2031). It notes that approximately 13% of new housing, along with supporting infrastructure and facilities, will be delivered within the adjusted settlement boundaries of five of the larger villages. This includes Little Wymondley.
- 5.3 The site is located within the north-eastern part of the village lying wholly within the defined settlement boundary. Accordingly, in accordance with LP Policy SP2, the proposed development of the site for residential would be acceptable in principle.



Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area

- 5.4 In design terms, Section 12 of the Framework deals with the design of development ultimately seeking to ensure that new development is visually appropriate and accords with its surroundings. LP Policies SP9 and D1 are largely consistent with the aims of the Framework aiming to ensure that the design of new development would be of a high standard and sited appropriately.
- 5.5 The proposed dwellings have been designed to align with and closely reflect the design and scale of the recently constructed detached dwelling immediately to the south. As a result, the proposed dwellings would be in keeping with the prevailing pattern, character and nature of development along this part of Priory Lane.
- 5.6 The site is largely laid to hardstanding with hard surfacing largely surrounding the existing building, including to the rear. Moreover, much of the site has been used for many years for car sales meaning that the entire area to the front and side of the existing building has historically been dominated by cars.



- 5.7 These proposals would resolve this by introducing a more sympathetic form of development to the site, introducing landscaping and private gardens, and permanently ceasing the commercial use of the site.
- 5.8 In all, it is considered that the proposed development would be acceptable in design terms and would thus be compliant with Section 12 of the Framework and LP Policies SP9 and D1.

Quality of the Proposed Accommodation

- 5.9 The proposed dwellings would have a generous internal area (GIA), with all rooms spacious in nature and suitable natural light and ventilation to all habitable spaces. The proposed dwellings would have a GIA of 115m² and would thus meet compliance with the NDSS for 4b, 6p three-storey dwellings.
- 5.10 All three of the proposed dwellings would have private gardens commensurate with their size, and similar to that approved in relation to the recently approved and constructed dwelling to the south.



Effect on the Living Conditions of Neighbouring Properties

- 5.11 The site is situated to the west side of Priory Lane at the junction with Priory View. Other than the public house situated to the south of the site at the junction of Priory Lane and Stevenage Road, the surrounding context is largely provided by residential properties.
- 5.12 Properties to the west (rear) of the site include the semi-detached pair 30-32. In recommending approval for the existing dwelling recently approved to the south of the site, the planning officer considered that the proposed dwelling is unlikely to be harmful to the living conditions of no.32 given the 10m distance between the rear wall of the dwelling and the flank boundary with this property.
- 5.13 The proposed dwellings would be set a similar distance from the flank boundary with no.32 and would be similar in terms of their overall design and scale. Moreover, the ground level at nos.32/30 is quite significantly higher than the ground level of the site. This further reduces any potential impact by way of the physicality of the proposed.
- 5.14 Accordingly, it is not considered that the proposed dwellings would be positioned in such close proximity to or have such scale that they would be



materially harmful to the living conditions of no.32 or any of the other properties to the west.

- 5.15 An existing dwelling has been recently constructed to the south of the site. However, the proposed dwellings would not be harmful to the living conditions of this property owing to their proposed siting, design and scale.
- 5.16 Other existing residential properties to the north of the junction of Priory Lane and Priory View, and to the east side of Priory Lane would not be impacted by the proposals.

Highways Implications

- 5.17 Each of the proposed dwellings would have parking directly from the public highway. This would be a similar arrangement to that approved in relation to the dwelling to the south, and would largely reflect the existing situation on site, albeit it would see a significant reduction in the number of cars on and around the site due to the cessation of the use of the site for car sales.
- 5.18 Two parking spaces would be provided per dwelling in compliance with the Council's parking standards SPD. A cycle store is proposed to be provided with each dwelling.



Other Matters

Flood Risk

- 5.19 The vast majority of the site appears to fall within Flood Zone 1, with the frontage falling within Flood Zone 2 and a small section to the east within Flood Zone 3. The eastern part of the site is identified as being at some risk of surface water flooding. Accordingly, the application is accompanied by a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment which provides a detailed analysis of the site from a flood risk perspective and ultimately justifies the approach.

Sequential Test

- 5.20 Paragraph 173 of the Framework sets out that a sequential risk-based approach should be taken to individual applications in areas known to be at risk of flooding. Paragraph 174 of the Framework sets out that the aim of the sequential test is to steer new development to areas with the lowest risk of flooding from any source.
- 5.21 Regarding the scope of the sequential test, the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) states that: *“For individual planning applications subject to the sequential test, the area to which the test needs to be applied will be governed by local circumstances relating to the catchment area for the type of development proposed and the needs it is proposing to address. The*



catchment area should always be appropriate to the nature and scale of the proposal and the settlement it is proposed for. For some developments this may be clear, for example, the catchment area for a school. For a non-major housing development, it would not usually be appropriate for the area of search to extend beyond the specific area of a town or city in which the proposal is located, or beyond an individual village and its immediate neighbouring settlements.”

- 5.22 The PPG further states that: *“Sites should be considered ‘reasonably available’ for the purposes of the sequential test if their location is suitable for the type of development proposed, they are able to meet the same development needs and they have a reasonable prospect of being developed at the same time as the proposal.”*

And that: “In considering whether alternative lower-risk sites (which could, where relevant, be a series of two or more smaller sites) would be capable of accommodating the proposed development, such alternative sites do not need to be owned by the applicant to be considered ‘reasonably available’.”

- 5.23 As per the PPG, it is considered that the area of the search need not extend beyond the extent of the village of Little Wymondley. However, in this case,



we have considered the availability of sites within the parish of Wymondley rather than limiting the search to the extent of Little Wymondley as it is defined in the NHLP.

- 5.24 In terms of nearby allocated sites, it is noted that allocated site WY1 is located to the south/south-west of Little Wymondley and is expected to deliver up to 300 homes. However, whilst an application for outline planning permission has been made, the application is currently under consideration and there is no certainty that it would be approved. Moreover, even if approved in the near future, the development is a long way from delivery given that a reserved matters application would need to be approved together with a number of planning conditions.
- 5.25 Accordingly, allocated site WY1 is not considered to be reasonably available in the context of the sequential test.
- 5.26 In order to establish whether there are any other reasonably available sites in the search area, a search of various online estate and land agents has been carried out. This has shown that there is not currently any land for sale that would be suitable for accommodating the development.



5.27 Accordingly, it is not considered that there are no other suitable sites within the search area. Accordingly, in accordance with the conclusions reached in the Flood Risk Assessment, it is considered that the proposed development passes the sequential test. It is now necessary to consider the exception test.

Exception Test

5.28 Paragraphs 177-179 of the Framework states that:

“177. Having applied the sequential test, if it is not possible for development to be located in areas with a lower risk of flooding (taking into account wider sustainable development objectives), the exception test may have to be applied. The need for the exception test will depend on the potential vulnerability of the site and of the development proposed, in line with the Flood Risk Vulnerability Classification set out in Annex 3.

178. The application of the exception test should be informed by a strategic or site-specific flood risk assessment, depending on whether it is being applied during plan production or at the application stage. To pass the exception test it should be demonstrated that:

a) the development would provide wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh the flood risk; and



b) the development will be safe for its lifetime taking account of the vulnerability of its users, without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and, where possible, will reduce flood risk overall.

179. Both elements of the exception test should be satisfied for development to be allocated or permitted.”

- 5.29 As discussed in the site-specific FRA submitted with the application, it is considered that the proposed development would pass the exception test on the basis that it would reduce flood risk to the wider community through the provision of flood management infrastructure, sustainable drainage systems and the incorporation of green infrastructure.
- 5.30 The proposed development would moreover involve the delivery of additional market housing in a sustainable location which would help to meet the established shortfall. This would provide additional benefits to the community above and beyond those associated with the flood risk.

Summary



- 5.31 The site-specific FRA concludes that the proposed development would be acceptable from a flood risk perspective whilst it has been demonstrated the proposed development would pass the sequential and exception tests.

Contaminated Land

- 5.32 The site may contain contamination due to its former land use. We are happy to accept a condition requiring a Phase I Preliminary Risk Assessment (and any further related work) to be undertaken and submitted pre-commencement.

Protected Species and BNG

- 5.33 A Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) has been carried out. This confirms that the proposed development would not have any impact upon UK or European protected species. The PRA sets out proposed ecological enhancements.
- 5.34 In terms of mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain, information submitted with the application confirms that the proposed development would achieve a post-development net gain of 14.23%.



Section 6: Summary & Conclusions

- 6.1 This statement supports an application for planning permission for the erection of three dwellings as part of proposals to redevelop the site.
- 6.2 The Council are currently unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of land for housing and as such, paragraph 11d of the Framework is engaged and planning permission should be granted unless the benefits of granting planning permission are significantly and demonstrably outweighed by the negatives.
- 6.3 With that said, for the reasons discussed above, it is considered that the proposed development would be acceptable in principle and would moreover involve the provision of new housing in a sustainable location.
- 6.4 Other matters material to the consideration of this application have been considered and discussed in the foregoing and it is considered that the proposals would be fully compliant with relevant national and local planning policy.



6.5 In light of the above, it is respectfully requested that planning permission be granted for the proposed development.

