

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...Melissa Tyler.....

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
25/02022/FP	Change of use of former agricultural building to special educational needs school (Use Class D1) Installation of access ramps and associated parking	East Hall School East Hall Farm St Pauls Walden Hitchin Hertfordshire SG4 8DL

Submitted Plan Nos

2025-389-01 2025-389-02 2025- 389-03 2025-389-04 2025-389-05 2025-389-06 2025- 389-07

1.0 Policies

CGB4	Exist buildings in the RA Beyond GB
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CGB1	Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt.
D1	Sustainable design
D3	Protecting living conditions
SECN11	Making effective use of land
SP9	Design and Sustainability
SPDVP	Vehicle Parking at New Development
T2	Parking

2.0 **Relevant site history**

2.1 **20/00724/FP** Change of use of former agricultural building to use as a school for children and young people with special educational needs (Use Class D1) **Conditional Permission**

3.0 **Representations**

3.1 **Parish Council** – No comments received (No objections raised to original application for School in 2020 application)

3.2 **Hertfordshire County Council highways** – Does not wish to restrict the grant of permission.

3.3 **Environmental Health (Noise)** – No objections.

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

4.1.1 The site is part of a former agricultural building, located next to the existing School that was granted in 2020. The site is part of a larger group of agricultural buildings forming Easthall

Farm. The character of the locality, with the majority of the farm buildings and a small number of dwellings to the south. A Grade II listed building is opposite the site. The site is within the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt.

4.2 **Proposal**

4.2.1 Change of use of former agricultural building to special educational needs school (Use Class D1) Installation of access ramps and associated parking. This proposal provided some additional classroom areas. It is proposed that an additional 6 students be invited to attend the special educational needs school. It is anticipated that, as a result of the additional pupil numbers and to maintain an acceptable teaching ratio, two additional members of staff will be required.

4.2.2 The internal dimensions of the empty unit are 8.9m x 7.5m.

4.3 **Key Issues**

4.3.1 The key material considerations are whether the development is acceptable in principle, character and appearance, impacts on neighbour amenity, and parking.

Principle

4.3.2 The site is within the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt and therefore special consideration is given to new development. The proposed change of use application operates within the general policy of restraint and is acceptable in the rural area.

4.3.3 The re-use of a small section of an existing building, with a building adjacent under the same use complies with Policy CGB4. The expansion of the school will re-use a building formerly in agriculture with no new built development or increase in footprint. I consider the principle of the proposed change of use acceptable. There would also be economic benefits from rural diversification, and community and health benefits in providing the type of education and help to children proposed.

Character and appearance

4.3.6 The proposal would not alter the external appearance of the building and would not contrast with its present more modern character which is not dissimilar to offices or meeting rooms. The use would be small in scale and its impacts in terms of noise etc. would not be considered out of character in this location given its location within a much larger farm complex. The proposal would not harm the setting of the listed building to the south and would not harm the character and appearance of the locality.

Neighbour amenity

4.3.7 The additional use would be small in size and scale, would have relatively limited operating hours, would not be considered to generate harmful amounts of noise and other disturbance, and is relatively far from dwellings south of East Hall Farmhouse. Impacts on residential amenity are therefore considered acceptable, and it is not considered necessary to restrict the operation of the use by condition. D1 uses encompass a variety of uses, therefore I consider it

necessary to restrict the D1 use to that specified to enable the LPA control over the use of the site.

Parking and highways

- 4.3.8 The applicant proposes to increase the existing school capacity from 16 to 22 pupils through the addition of 6 SEMH students. The school was previously granted planning permission (Ref: 20/00724/FP) for the change of use of a former agricultural building to a school for children and young people with special educational needs (Use Class D1). The planning statement confirms that no changes are proposed to the existing vehicular access from the public highway. It also notes that two additional staff members will be employed to support the increased student numbers. The Highway Authority considers the proposal to be small in scale and, taking all factors into account, does not anticipate any significant impact on the adjacent highway network. Therefore, no objection is raised.

Climate change mitigation

- 4.3.10 The proposed development is not considered of a scale whereby any practical climate change measures can be secured via the grant of planning permission.

4.4 **Conclusion**

- 4.4.1 In the absence of material planning reasons to the contrary it is my view that planning permission is **GRANTED**.

5.0 **Recommendation**

- 5.1 That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out wholly in accordance with the details specified in the application and supporting approved documents and plans listed above.

Reason: To ensure the development is carried out in accordance with details which form the basis of this grant of permission.

3. The use of the site shall be restricted to a D1 use as a school for children and young people with special educational needs as proposed.
Reason: To allow the Local Planning Authority to retain control over the use of the site.

Biodiversity Net Gain

1. This development is not subject to the statutory Biodiversity Gain Plan condition because it is considered exempt under the statutory exemptions (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain-exempt-developments>) or transitional arrangements in respect of the biodiversity gain condition.

Proactive Statement:

Planning permission has been granted for this proposal. Discussion with the applicant to seek an acceptable solution was not necessary in this instance. The Council has therefore acted proactively in line with the requirements of the Framework (paragraph 38) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

Signed  Shaun Greaves Determining Officer	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Date: 22 October 2025	