



## PLANNING, DESIGN AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

**Site:** The Mill House  
Purwell Lane  
Hitchin  
SG4 0NF

**For:** Ms B Lavin

**Project Ref:** 26066

**Date:** August 2026

**Prepared by:**

Kenya Sharland MPlan (Hons) MRTPI  
Associate

Barker Parry Town Planning Ltd  
33 Bancroft, Hitchin, Herts SG5 1LA  
T: 01462 420224 / E: office@barkerparry.co.uk



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1.0 **Introduction and Background**

1.1 This Planning, Design and Heritage Statement has been prepared on behalf of our client, Ms B Lavin, in respect of a householder application at The Mill House, Purwell Lane, Hitchin, SG4 0NF.

1.2 The proposal seeks householder planning permission for the siting of a freestanding, above ground swimming pool structure ('SwimCross Pool') within the residential curtilage of the property. The proposal would ordinarily be permitted development, however, the Mill House is Grade II listed and therefore does not benefit from Class E permitted development allowances.

1.3 The Applicant originally installed the structure in June 2026 and was subsequently contacted by NHC's Enforcement Team by email on 9 July 2026 where concerns were raised relating to, *"works occurring on the land, namely the construction of a raised platform and installation of a pool, for no planning permission and/or listed building consent appears to have been granted"*. Barker Parry subsequently wrote to the Enforcement Team on 14 July 2026 to advise the following:

*"I do consider that a householder planning application is required in order to site the pool structure within the garden due to being with the curtilage of the listed building and therefore not benefitting from Class E permitted development rights. I am instructed to prepare such an application.*

*The hard standing which has been installed on which the pool would sit would, however, not meet the definition of a 'raised platform' as outlined in your email which is defined by the technical guidance as 'any platform with a height greater than 0.3 metres'. The hardstanding is level with the ground as far as practicable and would benefit from permitted development rights under Schedule 2, Part 1, Class F of the GPDO and therefore does not require*

*planning permission. Additionally, as the hardstanding is not attached to the listed building in any way, it would not, in my view, require listed building consent."*

- 1.4 It was also advised at this time that the pool was now being kept off-site in storage, so there was no ongoing breach and the applicant simply needed to seek the requisite consent before the pool is returned to site.
- 1.5 This application seeks the requisite householder planning permission to site the pool structure within the rear garden of Mill House.
- 1.6 This Statement seeks to demonstrate that the proposed installation complies with relevant local and national planning policy and that planning permission should be granted for this incidental structure for the enjoyment of occupiers of The Mill House.

## 2.0 **Site Context**

2.1 The application site comprises a domestic dwellinghouse known as The Mill House, Purwell Lane, Hitchin, SG4 0NF (see Figure 1 below). The dwelling is Grade II listed and was first listed in June 1974. It was used for mill purposes in the 18th century and was converted into a residential dwelling around the time of its listing. Its' official list entry description reads as:

1. 5255 PURWELL Mill House TL 22 NW 11/280 II GV
  2. 2. C18 altered C19. Chequered red and grey brick, Welsh slated roof with C19 bargeboards. 2 storeys end attics, floor bands. 2 flush sash windows with glazing bars under outer flat arches.
- All listed buildings in Purwell form a group.*
- Listing NGR: TL2040529430"*

2.2 It is located amongst a cluster of historic buildings including two other listed buildings; 'Mill Cottage' to the south and 'Sluice' to the north. The site is within the Green Belt in a gap between two sections of Hitchin. It is not subject to any other planning designations.



Figure 1 – Application property indicated by yellow star.

### Planning History

- 2.3 On 22 May 2023, planning permission and listed building consent were granted for a single storey side extension following demolition of existing WC (LPA Refs. 22/03067/FPH / 22/03068/LBC).

3.0 **Relevant Planning Policy**

**The Development Plan**

3.1 The relevant development plan document (DPD) for the proposed scheme is the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031. Relevant policies from this DPD comprise:

Policy HE1: Designated heritage assets

3.2 States that planning applications relating to designated heritage assets or their setting shall be accompanied by a Heritage Statement that:

- i. Assesses the significance of heritage assets, including their setting;
- ii. Justifies and details the impacts of any proposal upon the significance of the designated heritage asset(s); and
- iii. Informs any necessary measures to minimise or mitigate against any identified harms.

3.3 Planning permission for development proposals affecting the same will be granted where they (as applicable):

- a) Enable the heritage asset to be used in a manner that secures its conservation and preserves its significance;
- b) Incorporate a palette of materials that make a positive contribution to local character or distinctiveness, where it is appropriate and justified; and
- c) Will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset, and this harm is outweighed by the public benefits of the development, including securing the asset's optimum viable use.

Policy D1: Sustainable design

- 3.4 Outlines that planning permission will be granted provided that development proposals respond positively to the site's local context and have regard to the Design SPD, and any other relevant guidance.

Policy D2: House extensions, replacement dwellings and outbuildings

- 3.5 Confirms that planning permission for outbuildings will be granted where the proposal does not harm the character and appearance of the site.

Policy D3: Protecting living conditions

- 3.6 Planning permission will be granted for development proposals which do not cause unacceptable harm to living conditions.

**National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2026**

- 3.7 Relevant Policies from the NPPF comprise:
- Policy S3: Presumption in favour of sustainable development
  - Policy GB6: Control of development in the Green Belt
  - Policy GB7: Development which is not inappropriate in the Green Belt
  - Policy DP3: Key principles for well-designed places
  - Policy HE4: Securing the conservation of heritage assets
  - Policy HE5: Assessing effects on heritage assets

## 4.0 **The Proposed Scheme**

4.1 Householder planning permission is sought to site an above ground pool structure within the rear garden of the application property. The pool is an exercise system known as a SwimCross Pool and is 4.5m long, 2.26m wide and 1.27m tall.

4.2 The SwimCross is a domestic pool which can be hot or cold with a temperature range of between 15c and 40c. It has both hydromassage jets and swim jets which allow it to be used for static swimming or as a hot tub.

4.3 The pool structure will sit on a concrete pad installed at the property. This pad is flush with ground level and benefits from permitted development rights under Schedule 2, Part 1, Class F of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) ('GPDO'). As a freestanding patch of hardstanding in the rear garden which does not affect fabric or significance of the heritage asset, listed building consent is also not required. Further as the pool structure is freestanding it also does not require listed building consent.



*Figure 2 – Product image of the pool structure (not taken at the application site).*

## 5.0 **Assessment**

### **Heritage and Design**

5.1 The Mill House is a Grade II listed dwellinghouse and has a large curtilage. Its main significance is considered to stem from its historical former mill use and the architectural form and detailing of the building itself.

5.2 The proposed installation is a modest pool/hot tub structure that is to be located on an existing (permitted development) concrete slab. The structure is moveable/removable, evidenced by the fact it was previously on-site but is presently being kept off-site in storage. The pool structure will have an incidental use providing outdoor recreation for the occupiers of the dwellinghouse.



*Figure 3 – Location of proposed pool structure siting, adjacent fence/hedge means it will not be visible from adjacent dwellings.*

5.3 It is of a design and appearance which reflects this incidental purpose. The structure, at only 1.27m in height, will not be readily visible from any wider viewpoints due to the enclosed nature of the rear garden. Whilst intended to be sited in the rear garden for a continuous period, the detached structure

will not be fixed to the ground and can be readily moved at short notice. It is sited close to but detached from the asset itself and would have a similar appearance to a small, domestic garden store. Further, it would not be out of character for the immediate context, the neighbouring properties have similar domestic installations such as hot tubs, outbuildings and garden structures.

5.4 Siting the pool structure in the proposed location will therefore not result in any harm to the historic fabric or to the significance of the listed building nor is it considered to result in harm to the setting of the group of listed buildings in this location, owing to its scale and visual containment.

5.5 As such, the value of the heritage asset to this and future generations is fully preserved with no effect on its significance, and the proposal does not conflict with national or local planning policy in respect of heritage and design.

### **Green Belt**

5.6 The application site is located within the Green Belt, but it should be taken into consideration that the proposed installation is an incidental pool structure that would typically benefit from permitted development rights and could be installed within most residential curtilages without the need for planning permission or any assessment of Green Belt impact. As such, its scale, form and function are all typical of very minor development which can take place within dwelling curtilages in the Green Belt. Within this context, the proposed development is not considered to be inappropriate development within the Green Belt when assessed under NPPF Policy GB7. This is because it would not be a disproportionate addition to the existing dwellinghouse and relates to the provision of facilities in connection with the existing land use for outdoor sport/recreation.

## 6.0 **Summary and Conclusions**

- 6.1 The proposed pool structure is to be sited in the rear garden of an established residential dwelling and would ordinarily be permitted development. However, as the dwelling is a designated heritage asset, householder planning permission is required for siting the pool/hot tub structure within the private garden area. This Statement has assessed the impact of the modest structure on the significance of the heritage asset and against all relevant policy. It is considered that the proposed incidental structure will not result in any harm, and planning permission should be granted for the siting of the pool structure at The Mill House, Purwell Lane, Hitchin.