

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...Tom Rea.....

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
25/01973/FP	Conversion of four stables to a one bed dwelling including alterations to fenestration and insertion of two rear rooflights; formation of enclosed amenity space, and provision of one car parking space, cycle store, and bin storage area (development has commenced)	Welwyn Equestrian Centre Pottersheath Road Pottersheath Hitchin Hertfordshire AL6 9SZ

Submitted Plan Nos

25-01A 25-02A 25-03A 25-04 25-05 25-026

1.0 Policies

1.0 **Relevant Planning Policy**

1.1 **National Planning Policy Framework (2024)**

Section 2: Achieving sustainable development
Section 5: Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
Section 9: Promoting sustainable transport
Section 11: Making effective use of land
Section 12: Achieving well-designed places
Section 13: Protecting Green Belt land

1.2 **North Herts Local Plan (2011 – 2031)**

Policy SP5: Countryside and Green Belt
Policy D1: Sustainable Design
Policy D3: Protecting Living conditions
Policy T1: Transport
Policy T2: Parking

1.3 **Codicote Neighbourhood Plan (May 2025)**

Policies:

COD 1: Designing with Design Codes COD 2: Designing for Net Zero COD 3: Designing for Flood Resilience COD 4: Planning for Biodiversity COD 12: Traffic Congestion and Road Safety COD 13: Public Transport COD 14: Safe and Accessible Active Travel Routes COD 15: Sustainable Water Supply COD 16: Landscape Character and Important Views COD 17: Biodiversity and Ecological Connectivity COD 19: Climate Change Resilience

2.0 **Site History**

2.1 24/01321/PNG : Conversion of 4 stables to two one-bed flats. Withdrawn

24/02636/FP: Conversion of 4 stables to two one-bed flats. (Development already carried out). Refused permission 5/6/25 for the following reasons:

'By reason of the limited floorspace for each dwelling (below the nationally described space standard), poor levels of natural lighting, lack of facilities for waste storage and collection, lack of amenity space, allocated car parking area and / or cycle storage and general location within a working equestrian yard, the development gives rise to poor living conditions for the occupants of the dwellings contrary to the provisions of Policies D1 and D3 of the North Herts Local Plan 2011 – 2031'

3.0 **Representations**

3.1 Codicote Parish Council: Advise no objection (received 9th December 2025)

3.2 Site Notice / Adjoining occupiers: No responses received.

3.3 NHDC Environmental Health: 'No objections'

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

The application site comprises a single storey former stable block located within a working stable yard / equestrian centre. The Equestrian centre site is accessed from a track that leads to Pottersheath Road.

The site and the surrounding land is located within the Green Belt and is outside of any settlement boundary.

Immediately to the north west of the site is a recently completed residential development following the redevelopment of redundant agricultural buildings.

4.2 **Proposal**

4.2.1 Conversion of 4 stables to a one bed dwelling, formation of amenity space, and provision of car parking, cycle storage, and bin storage (development partially carried out).

4.3 **Key Issues**

4.3.1 Principle of the use

4.3.2 Paragraph 154 of the NPPF states that development in the Green Belt is inappropriate with some exceptions including at sub-paragraph h) :

iv. the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction;

In this case the buildings that were subject of the conversion are former stables of timber frame construction with a brick plinth section at the ends and with a slate roof. It is considered that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction and therefore the development would not be considered inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

In terms of openness the converted buildings have been on site for some time and no extensions are proposed therefore there would be no harm to openness arising from the residential use.

This issues regarding design and layout and living conditions as commented on in more detail below.

4.3.3 Design and appearance

4.3.4 The only external alterations appear to be the provision of two rooflights on the north roof elevation and a single window on the south west elevation. The remaining openings are to be retained including a single entrance door and windows to the dwelling in lieu of the original stable doors. The yard in front of the cottages comprises a concrete hardstanding.

4.3.5 The details of the external alterations are acceptable in this location.

4.3.6 Living conditions of the occupiers

4.3.7 Although previously occupied as two dwellings the proposal is now to occupy the former stable as one 1 x bedroom dwelling with a floorspace of 64 sq metres. This exceeds the minimum requirement of 37 sq metres required for a 1 bedroom, one person dwelling by the Department for Communities and Local Government publication 'Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard' (March 2015).

4.3.8 Additional natural light is provided by two rooflights and a side window. Good levels of natural light are now provided for the occupiers.

4.3.9 There is now an allocated amenity space for the occupiers of the dwellings in addition to a drying area (see plan 25-02 A). In addition a secure cycle store and bin store is provided.

4.3.10 The applicants have provided a noise impact assessment. The assessment has indicated that internal noise levels within the proposed development are predicted to meet the guideline noise criteria contained in BS 8233:2014 provided the identified appropriate minimum specified glazing, ventilation and façade materials are installed to a good manner of workmanship. A condition is recommended to ensure that the development is completed in accordance with the recommendations set out in the submitted noise assessment.

4.3.11 It is considered that the living conditions of the occupiers of the dwellings are acceptable and would comply with Policy D3 of the Local Plan

4.3.12 The Council's Environmental Health officer advises that the application is supported by a noise assessment which concludes that internal and external noise levels are predicted to be satisfactory based on some specified standard glazing and ventilation options. The EHO advises that he is satisfied with this conclusion and raises no objections to the proposals.

4.3.13 Parking / access / refuse

- 4.3.14 The submitted planning statement advises that there is now a proposed parking space within the courtyard (see plan 25-02A) on private land and there will be a secure cycle store within the outbuilding opposite the dwelling. Provision has been made for waste storage and collection. There will be no impact on the local highway network.
- 4.3.15 The application site is remote from any local services – the nearest local centre being at Oaklands almost 1 mile away. There is no bus service along Pottersheath Road which is narrow with no footpaths and for the most part unlit. However, the Framework states at paragraph 110 that:

‘However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.’

Paragraph 84 of the Framework also addresses the issue of isolated homes in the countryside which should be avoided unless certain criteria apply including at c) ‘it would involve the re-use of a redundant or disused building’

Given this advice in the Framework and in view of the limited scale of the development there are no sustainability grounds on which to refuse permission in my view.

4.3.16 Climate change and BNG

- 4.3.17 A sustainability and energy statement has been submitted. The development will be all electric but there are few other carbon reducing measures however the development is unlikely to have any significant impact on local climate change.
- 4.3.18 As there is no habitat area affected the development is exempt from the need to demonstrate a biodiversity net gain.

4.4 **Conclusion**

- 4.4.1 The development is now considered to be acceptable in planning terms.

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 development hereby permitted shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the recommendations set out in the submitted noise assessment.

Reason: To ensure satisfactory living conditions for the occupants and to comply with Policy D3 of the North Herts Local Plan.

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  Anne McDonald	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Determining Officer Date: 11 December 2025	