

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...Thomas Howe.....

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
26/01989/FP	Erection of toilet block building with integrated site office, following demolition of existing toilet block buildings.	Graveley Fruit Farm Jacks Hill Graveley Hertfordshire

Submitted Plan Nos

Location Plan PL01 PL02 PL03

1.0 Policies

D1 Sustainable design

D3	Protecting living conditions
NE4	Biodiversity and geological sites
NE8	Sustainable drainage systems
SECN13	Protecting Green Belt Land
SECN14	Achieving well-designed places
SP2	Settlement Hierarchy and Spatial Distrib
SP5	Countryside and Green Belt

2.0 **Site History**

- 2.1 25/02289/FP - Siting of one mobile home for agricultural workers accommodation. – Conditional Permission
- 2.2 24/01037/FP - Use of existing hard standing storage yard for the storage of empty skips and empty roll-on roll-off bins (Continued change of use of land). - Refused

3.0 **Representations**

3.1 **Neighbour Consultation:** None received.

3.2 **Environmental Health:** No Objections.

3.3 **Affinity Water:** No Comment.

3.4 **Anglian Water:**

- No concerns raised with regards encroachment of Anglian Water assets or soul sewer network.

- Thames Water should be consulted regarding wastewater treatment capacity and any network constraints to understand capacity.
- Surface water drainage comments cannot be provided unless they would output into a watercourse
- A surface water strategy would need to be listed within the decision notice with any approved plans if permission is granted.
- Should the strategy for surface water management include interaction with AW assets a consultation would be necessary.

3.5 **Herts Fire and Rescue:** No Comment.

3.5 **National Gas:**

2nd September 2026 – Works must not proceed without adequate asset protection as the development would be within the high risk zone of national gas transmission apparatus.

17th September 2026 – No Objection. Provides general information with regards mitigating impacts from the development to gas transmission assets.

3.6 **Graveley Parish Council:** Unable to comment as it cannot convene a quorate meeting.

3.7 **Highways:** Does not wish to restrict grant of permission. Recommends informatives. No changes to access or parking are required with ample parking provided.

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

4.1.1 The application site comprises Graveley Fruit Farm. The location of the development is set centrally within the wider site. It is within the Green Belt.

4.2 **Proposal**

4.2.1 Planning Permission is sought for:

Erection of toilet block building with integrated site office, following demolition of existing toilet block buildings.

4.3 **Key Issues**

4.3.1 The key issues for consideration are as follows:

- The principle of the development.
- The acceptability of the design of the proposed development and its resultant impact on the character and appearance of the area.
- The standard of amenity afforded to future occupiers.
- The impact that the proposed development would have on the living conditions of neighbouring properties.
- The impact that the proposed development would have on car parking provision in the area.
- The impact that the proposed development would have on the environment.

Principle of Development:

- 4.3.2 The site is brushed over by the Green Belt. The Planning Statement considers that the proposal falls within the scope of exception f. iv. of Policy GB7 of the NPPF, set out below:

“The following categories of development are not inappropriate in the Green Belt, and therefore should not be regarded as harmful to the Green Belt or be required to demonstrate very special circumstances:

f. Certain other forms of development, provided the impact on the openness of the Green Belt is minimised, and there would not be a significant conflict with the Green Belt purposes. These are:

iv. The provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use), including buildings, for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments.”

- 4.3.3 The proposed toilet block/office would replace existing facilities, providing an upgrade and enlargement to the facilities. It can therefore be demonstrated that the block would comprise an appropriate facility in connection with the existing use of the land and would in some part contribute towards the existing outdoor recreation uses associated with fruit picking and other uses within the site. The proposed building would be single storey in height, and would be located centrally within the site, adjacent to hedging, another building and in the same location of the existing temporary facilities. Information submitted satisfies that the development is required to accompany the use. The developments impact upon the openness of the Green Belt would be minimised and would not significantly conflict with the purposes of the Green Belt. The principle of development is therefore supported by this exception, complying with Policy SP5 of the Local Plan and Policy GB7 of the NPPF.

Design and Appearance:

- 4.3.4 Policy D1 of the Local Plan states that development will be granted provided the design of the development appropriately and positively responds to the site's local context together with other criteria to encourage a positive and sustainable form of development. This policy is broadly consistent with Chapter 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 4.3.5 The proposed building would be single storey in height with a dual pitched gabled roof. It would be constructed from timber weather boarding to external elevations, with metal profile roof sheeting to its roof. It would be located behind the existing café building and on the footprint of the existing buildings. The built form, scale and siting of the building is not considered to appear incongruous within its setting and would not be harmful to local character. The building is not visible from public vantage points, with visibility from locations within the farm site. Its design is therefore acceptable.
- 4.3.6 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in compliance with Policies D1 and D2 of the Local Plan and the core principles set out within Chapter 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Impact on Neighbouring Properties:

- 4.3.7 Policy D3 of the Local Plan permits development that does not result in unacceptable harm to the amenity of neighbouring occupiers and where necessary encourages the

use of mitigation measures to reduce these impacts. This is generally reflected by the provisions within the National Planning Policy Framework.

4.3.8 The building is set centrally within the site and would not be in proximity to residential uses. It would allow for some degree of intensification of the use of the site, but this is not considered to amount to material harm from vehicle movements or noise generation when in use.

4.3.9 Given the above, it is considered that the proposed development would result in no unacceptable detrimental impact upon neighbouring occupiers and is therefore compliant with Policy D3 of the local plan and the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Environmental Implications:

4.3.10 The proposed development, by virtue of its limited scale in general terms together with the sustainable location would have no significant implications for the local environment in terms of carbon emissions and therefore would be generally in compliance with Chapter 18 of the NPPF. The development would be exempt from delivering biodiversity net gain.

4.3.11 Matters of drainage are raised by Anglian Water, however, the applicant advises that matters of foul water drainage will be agreed with the relevant bodies outside of the planning process. The development would therefore seek a connection into the sewer system. Surface water drainage would output into a soakaway into the ground and would not lead into a watercourse. This would therefore be acceptable.

Impact on Highway Network and Parking Levels:

4.3.12 Highways have not objected. The development would not reduce parking levels, and no conditions are recommended by Highways.

4.3.13 I do not consider that the development is likely to result in harm to local parking levels and would be unlikely to impact upon the safe operation of the highway locally. The development would therefore comply with Policies T1 and T2 of the Local Plan 2011-2031.

4.4 Conclusion

4.4.1 The proposed development is considered acceptable and is considered to comply with the necessary provisions of the Local Plan policies and the National Planning Policy Framework. Grant conditional permission.

4.5 Alternative Options

4.5.1 None applicable.

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. Notwithstanding the lack of detail on the plans, the development should be constructed in accordance with the materials described in the emails received 1 and 2 October 2026 unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These are:

Walls - Timber weatherboarding stained in dark brown/black

Windows and doors - Black or brown UPVC wood effect frames to match walls

Roof - Dark grey or black metal sheeting

Front Canopy supports - Oak timber

Reason: In the interest of design and amenity, to comply with Policy D1 of the Local Plan 2011-2031.

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  Sam Dicocco Determining Officer	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Date: 7 October 2026	