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DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

in Support of a new Permanent agricultural self-build dwelling

Land at Park Farm, Park Farm Lane, Nuthampstead, Hertfordshire



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Prepared on behalf of Mr Barker by
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1. INTRODUCTION

This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for the erection of a permanent agricultural self-build worker's dwelling at Land at Park Farm, Park Farm Lane, Nuthampstead.

The application seeks planning permission for the construction of a detached dwelling to provide permanent on-site accommodation for an established agricultural enterprise operating from Tower Yard Farm.

The holding specialises in the breeding and management of pedigree Charolais cattle and requires a continuous on-site presence to ensure the effective operation of the business, maintain high standards of livestock welfare and enable an immediate response to operational requirements.

Pre-application advice was sought from North Hertfordshire Council prior to the submission of this application. The Council confirmed that, whilst the site lies within the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt where new residential development would ordinarily be resisted, Policy CGB3 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan provides an exception for permanent rural workers' dwellings where the relevant policy requirements can be demonstrated.

This statement considers the proposal against the relevant national and local planning policies and explains why planning permission should be granted.

2. SITE AND PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Site Description

The application site forms part of the established agricultural holding known as Tower Yard Farm, located off Park Farm Lane, Nuthampstead.

The holding lies within the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt and comprises a range of agricultural buildings together with associated hardstanding, internal access roads and surrounding grazing land.

Existing buildings provide livestock housing, calving accommodation, machinery storage, feed storage and straw storage, all of which remain in active agricultural use.

Access to the holding is obtained from Park Farm Lane via an existing private farm drive which currently serves the operational requirements of the business. The proposed development will utilise this established access and existing internal circulation routes without alteration.

The proposed dwelling is positioned immediately adjacent to the existing group of agricultural buildings, allowing it to function as part of the established farmstead whilst maintaining direct visual oversight of the principal operational areas of the holding. Existing areas of hardstanding will be retained and reused for vehicle parking and maneuvering, reducing the extent of new development within the site.

The nearest unrelated residential property lies approximately 250 metres from the proposed dwelling. Owing to this separation distance and the established agricultural context of the site, the proposal is not considered to adversely affect neighbouring residential amenity.



Proposed Development

Planning permission is sought for the construction of a permanent agricultural worker's dwelling required to serve the operational needs of the existing agricultural enterprise.

The dwelling has been designed as a simple two-storey building that reflects the agricultural character of the surrounding farmstead. The building adopts a straightforward rectangular footprint with a shallow pitched roof, creating a restrained form that sits comfortably alongside the existing agricultural buildings whilst reducing its visual prominence within the surrounding landscape.

External materials comprise a natural slate roof together with dark vertical cladding and white render, providing a robust and durable finish appropriate to a working agricultural environment. The architectural approach is intentionally simple, drawing upon the proportions and character of traditional farm buildings rather than conventional suburban housing.

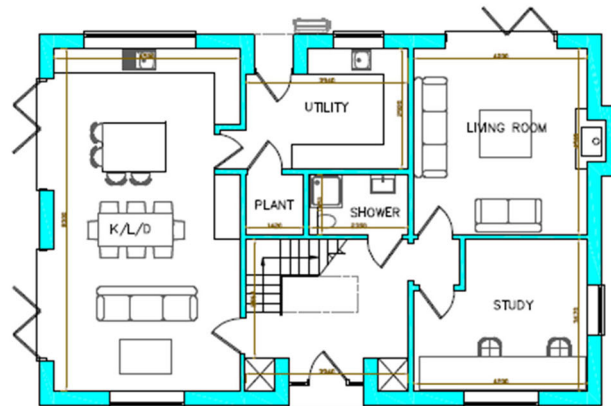
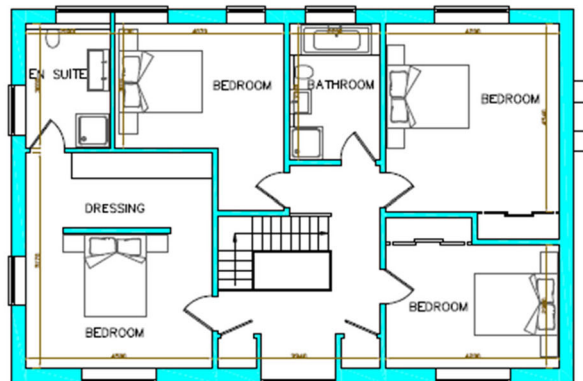
The internal layout has been arranged to provide practical family accommodation appropriate to the operational needs of the holding and has been designed to comply with the requirements of Approved Document M4(2), providing accessible and adaptable accommodation capable of meeting the changing needs of its occupants over time.

The principal living spaces are orientated towards the farmyard and surrounding agricultural land, allowing passive supervision of the livestock buildings whilst benefiting from views across the wider holding. This arrangement improves the day-to-day management of the enterprise and strengthens the relationship between the dwelling and the operational farm.

The dwelling incorporates a range of sustainable design measures including roof-mounted photovoltaic panels, an air source heat pump, electric vehicle charging provision and a highly insulated building envelope to minimise operational energy demand. Landscape proposals

accompanying the application provide additional tree and hedge planting together with biodiversity enhancements that integrate the development into its rural setting.

Overall, the proposal represents a modest and well-considered addition to the existing farmstead that has been specifically designed to support the continued operation of the agricultural enterprise.



210 GIA

3. PLANNING POLICY

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The statutory Development Plan comprises the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011–2031. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is also a material consideration in the determination of this application.

The NPPF supports sustainable development and recognises the importance of maintaining a prosperous rural economy by supporting sustainable agricultural businesses. It promotes well-designed development that responds positively to local character, protects and enhances the natural environment and contributes towards addressing climate change.

The application site lies within the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt where new residential development is generally restricted. However, the Local Plan recognises that there are circumstances where a rural location is essential to support agricultural and other rural enterprises.

The proposal is therefore assessed principally against **Policy CGB3 – Rural Workers' Dwellings**, which permits permanent rural workers' dwellings where:

- a clearly established functional need exists;
- the agricultural enterprise is established, financially sound and capable of supporting the proposed dwelling;
- the identified need cannot reasonably be met through existing accommodation; and
- the dwelling responds appropriately to the operational requirements of the business and its rural context.

The proposal has also been considered against the following relevant policies of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan:

- SP1 – Sustainable Development
- SP5 – Countryside and Green Belt
- SP9 – Design and Sustainability
- D1 – Sustainable Design
- T1 – Assessment of Transport Matters
- T2 – Parking
- NE4 – Biodiversity and Geological Sites

The Council's pre-application response confirmed that the principle of a permanent agricultural worker's dwelling may be acceptable under Policy CGB3, subject to demonstrating compliance with the relevant policy requirements. The following assessment addresses those matters.

4. ASSESSMENT AGAINST POLICY CGB3

Principle of Development

The principle of residential development in the countryside is normally restricted by the adopted Local Plan. However, Policy CGB3 recognises that agriculture is a land-based industry which, in

certain circumstances, requires workers to live at or very close to their place of employment. The policy therefore provides a specific exception where a permanent dwelling is demonstrated to be essential to the operation of an established agricultural enterprise.

The Council's pre-application advice acknowledged that this policy is applicable to the current proposal and concluded that the principle of a permanent agricultural worker's dwelling could be supported, subject to satisfactory evidence being provided in relation to the functional need, the viability of the enterprise, the availability of alternative accommodation and the design of the dwelling.

This application has been prepared to address each of these matters. Supporting information demonstrates that the agricultural enterprise is established, that the operational demands of managing a pedigree cattle breeding business create an essential need for a permanent on-site presence, and that no suitable alternative accommodation exists to meet those requirements.

The proposal is therefore considered against the specific provisions of Policy CGB3 rather than the general restraint on new housing within the countryside.

Functional Need

Tower Yard Farm is an established agricultural business specialising in the breeding and management of pedigree Charolais cattle. The enterprise currently manages approximately 120 head of livestock, comprising high-value breeding animals developed through years of careful genetic selection.

The success of the business depends upon maintaining exceptionally high standards of livestock welfare, breeding performance and management. Unlike commercial beef enterprises, pedigree breeding operations require continual monitoring of individual animals, as the loss of breeding stock represents not only a significant financial cost but also the loss of valuable bloodlines that have been developed over the years.

A permanent on-site presence is essential to ensure that livestock can be monitored throughout the day and night, enabling immediate intervention where welfare issues arise. This requirement becomes particularly important during the calving season when inspections are routinely undertaken overnight. Difficult births, malpresentations, retained calves and other complications frequently require immediate assistance, and delays in responding can have serious consequences for both the cow and calf.

Beyond calving, continual supervision is required to monitor animal health, identify illness or injury, manage breeding activities, respond to equipment failures, check water supplies and deal with escaped livestock or other unforeseen incidents. The ability to respond within minutes, rather than travelling from off-site accommodation, forms an essential part of the day-to-day operation of the enterprise and directly supports the welfare of the herd.

The proposed dwelling also provides important operational benefits in terms of farm security. The holding contains valuable pedigree livestock together with agricultural machinery, fuel, feed and equipment, all of which remain vulnerable outside normal working hours in the absence of a permanent residential presence. Occupation of the dwelling by an agricultural worker will provide continual passive surveillance of the farmstead and enable a rapid response to incidents should they arise.

The proposal is therefore an operational requirement arising directly from the management of an established agricultural business.

Alternative Accommodation

Policy CGB3 requires consideration of whether the identified functional need could reasonably be met through existing accommodation.

There is no dwelling within Tower Yard Farm capable of providing the level of on-site supervision required for the operation of the agricultural enterprise. Whilst residential properties are available within the wider area, none would enable the immediate response necessary to manage livestock welfare, particularly during calving periods or other time-critical situations. Even relatively short travel times would introduce delays that are incompatible with the operational requirements of the business.

Consideration has also been given to the potential conversion of existing agricultural buildings. However, the buildings within the holding are fully utilised for livestock housing, calving facilities, machinery storage, feed storage and straw storage. Their loss or partial conversion would compromise the efficient operation of the farm and reduce its operational capacity.

The identified need cannot therefore be met through existing accommodation either on or of the holding, and the proposed dwelling represents the only practical means of providing the permanent on-site presence required by the agricultural enterprise.

5. TRANSPORT AND ACCESS

The proposed dwelling will be served by the existing access from Park Farm Lane, which currently accommodates all traffic associated with the agricultural enterprise. No alterations to the access arrangements or the public highway are required.

Vehicle parking and turning will be provided within the existing farmyard using established areas of hardstanding. The development therefore makes efficient use of existing infrastructure and avoids the need for significant engineering works or additional areas of hard surfacing.

Given that the proposal comprises a single dwelling associated with an existing agricultural business, it is not expected to generate any material increase in traffic on the local highway network. The level of vehicle movements associated with the dwelling will be modest and will be accommodated safely using the existing access arrangements.

The proposal also offers wider transport benefits. The agricultural enterprise currently requires regular journeys between the applicant's existing residence and the holding, including early morning, late evening and overnight visits to monitor livestock and respond to emergencies. Providing permanent on-site accommodation will remove the majority of these journeys, reducing vehicle movements, fuel consumption and associated carbon emissions whilst improving the efficiency of the farming operation.

The proposal therefore complies with Policies T1 and T2 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan by providing safe and suitable access, appropriate parking provision and a development that will not have an unacceptable impact on the local highway network.

6. BIODIVERSITY AND LANDSCAPING

The application is supported by an Ecological Appraisal, which considers the ecological value of the site and identify appropriate enhancement measures.

The application is exempt of Biodiversity Net Gain calculations, as it is for a self-build dwelling, and the application has been submitted prior to the 6th of August 2026.

The proposed dwelling has been located adjacent to the existing farmstead and largely within previously developed areas associated with the existing holding. This approach minimises disturbance to the surrounding agricultural landscape and limits the loss of undeveloped land.

The landscape strategy has been developed to integrate the dwelling into its rural setting through the introduction of native trees, hedgerow planting and species-rich landscaping. These measures will soften the appearance of the development, reinforce the established field boundaries and strengthen the transition between the farmstead and the surrounding countryside.

In addition to landscape enhancements, the proposal incorporates measures to improve biodiversity, including habitat creation and the installation of integrated bird and bat boxes.

The proposal therefore not only safeguards existing ecological interests but also delivers measurable enhancements that contribute positively to the biodiversity of the site.

7. ENERGY AND SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT

The proposed dwelling has been designed to minimise environmental impact and support the transition towards low-carbon development.

A fabric-first approach has been adopted, incorporating high levels of insulation and high-performance glazing to reduce energy demand and improve thermal efficiency. Renewable energy technologies, including roof-mounted photovoltaic panels and an air source heat pump, will further reduce operational carbon emissions, while electric vehicle charging infrastructure has been incorporated to encourage the use of low-emission vehicles.

The dwelling has also been designed to meet the requirements of Approved Document M4(2), providing accessible and adaptable accommodation capable of meeting the changing needs of its occupants throughout its lifetime. This contributes to the long-term sustainability of the development by reducing the need for future alterations and supporting inclusive design.

The reuse of the existing access, internal roads and areas of hardstanding minimises the need for additional construction works and reduces unnecessary land take.

Importantly, the provision of permanent on-site accommodation will significantly reduce the repeated vehicle journeys currently undertaken between the applicant's existing residence and the farm. The ability to live adjacent to the livestock enterprise will reduce fuel consumption and associated carbon emissions while improving the day-to-day efficiency of the agricultural business.

Taken together, these measures demonstrate that the proposal responds positively to the Council's Climate Change Strategy and the sustainability objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework and the North Hertfordshire Local Plan.

8. CONCLUSION

This application seeks planning permission for a permanent agricultural worker's dwelling to serve the established agricultural enterprise at Tower Yard Farm.

The proposal has been prepared following pre-application discussions with North Hertfordshire Council and responds directly to the matters identified through that process. The supporting information demonstrates that the enterprise is established and financially sound, that there is a clear and ongoing functional need for a permanent on-site worker, and that this need cannot reasonably be met through existing accommodation.

The proposed dwelling is modest in scale, appropriately located within the existing farmstead and designed to support the operational requirements of the business without giving rise to unacceptable impacts on the character of the countryside, neighbouring amenity, highway safety or ecology. The proposal also incorporates measures to improve biodiversity, reduce carbon emissions and support sustainable rural development.

When considered as a whole, the application satisfies the requirements of Policy CGB3 together with the relevant policies of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework. The proposal represents an appropriate and justified form of development that will support the long-term viability of an established agricultural enterprise whilst delivering environmental and sustainability benefits.

It is therefore respectfully requested that planning permission be granted.