

North Hertfordshire Council

Tree Officer comments

File Ref: 26/00760/FP
Date: 24/06/2026
Planning Officer: Melissa Tyler
Address: Land At Former Merchant Taylors School, Mill Street,
Ashwell, Hertfordshire,
Subject: Full Planning Permission : Erection of two detached residential dwellings including alterations to access, parking, detached garages, landscaping, amenity space and installation of Air Source Heat Pumps and refuse/cycle storage.

1.0 Policy position: NPPF / Local Plan / Supplementary Planning Document

- 1.1 Paragraph 136 of the Achieving well-designed places chapter in the current Framework, addresses the integration of trees within new development. Draft NPPF Policy N3 (December 2025) proposes that trees in new development is included within the natural environment section to ensure consistency and alignment with wider environmental objectives.
- 1.2 North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 Chapter 11 deals with the natural environment.

Policy NE2: Landscape Planning permission will be granted for development proposals that: a) Respect the sensitivities of the relevant landscape character area and have regard to the guidelines identified for built development and landscape management; b) Do not cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area or the landscape character area in which the site is located, taking account of any suitable mitigation measures necessary to achieve this; c) Are designed and located to ensure the health and future retention of important landscape features; and d) Have considered the long-term management and maintenance of any existing and proposed landscaping

2.0 Observations

Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs): None
Conservation Area: Ashwell Conservation Area

Trees

- 2.1 There appears to be no tree removal required to facilitate the development and impact to retained trees on site is low. The greatest impact to trees on site is from construction of the entrance drive although the intention is to leave the existing hard surfacing intact and extend it with the use of CellWeb TRP Cellular Confinement System or similar. However, other than the potential use of an air spade and arboricultural supervision no further details are provided on its construction. The entrance will be required at the very start of construction to provide access for all machinery and materials to the site, so should be adequate to support all required vehicles and machinery while minimising compaction of the roots.
- 2.2 The remaining trees are on the whole suitably distanced from the excavations to not be significantly impacted and the installation of proposed protective fencing should be adequate. The proposed ground protection for trees T018 and T019 appears to be fit for purpose.

Landscaping

- 2.3 A comprehensive landscaping plan has not been submitted with the application and should be secured by condition.

3.0 Conclusion

- 3.1 The protection of retained trees during the construction of the proposed development appears to have been considered adequately and there are no arboricultural objections to this development. To ensure all personnel on site have access to the correct methodology and processes to be used during the construction of the entrance driveway, further details of CellWeb installation should be provided within the Arboricultural Method Statement including details of materials to be used, how exposed roots may be dealt with and details of any driveway edging to be installed. These details can be secured by a suitably worded condition if necessary.

4.0 Recommendation

- 4.1 To ensure retained trees are afforded adequate protection during the construction I recommend before any work commences the submission of further details regarding methodology of entrance driveway construction. I also recommend the development is carried out in accordance with these approved plans.

Reason: To prevent damage to or destruction of trees to be retained on the site in the interests of the appearance of the completed development and the

visual amenity of the locality, and to comply with Policy NE2 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 to 2031.

- 4.2 I recommend the submission to the council, for approval, of a comprehensive hard and soft landscaping scheme and management plan, be secured by condition. This should include details of boundary treatments, hard surfacing, drainage, tree/plant species including quantities, densities, sizes, planting locations, timing, planting preparation, planting methodology and an aftercare maintenance plan to be implemented for a minimum of the first 5 years post planting, to ensure successful establishment, which should make provision for the replacement of any plants that succumb within this period.

Reason:

To safeguard and enhance the appearance of the completed development and the visual amenity of the locality, and to comply with Policy NE2 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 to 2031.

Francis Mabbett
Tree and Landscape Officer