

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

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

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
25/01361/FP	Change of use and conversion of barn to provide one self-contained two-bed dwelling including single storey front and rear extensions, side porch extension and alterations to fenestration including parking and hardscaping.	White House Ashwell Road Newnham Baldock Hertfordshire SG7 5JU

Submitted Plan Nos

RWL 001 RWL 002 RWL 003 RWL 004 RWL 005

1.0 Policies

1.0 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024

1.1 The NPPF is a material consideration in the determining of planning applications and the relevant sections of the Framework are as follows:

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 14: Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

Section 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Section 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

1.2 North Herts Local Plan

Strategic Policies

Policy SP1: Sustainable Development in North Hertfordshire

Policy SP2: Settlement Hierarchy and Spatial Distribution

Policy SP5: Countryside and Green Belt

Policy SP6: Sustainable Transport

Policy SP9: Design & Sustainability

Policy SP12: Green Infrastructure, Landscape and Biodiversity

Policy SP13: Historic Environment

Development Management Policies

Policy T1: Assessment of Transport Matters

Policy T2: Parking

Policy CGB1: Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt

Policy D1: Sustainable Design

Policy D3: Protecting Living Conditions

Policy NE2: Landscape

Policy NE4: Biodiversity and Geological Sites

Policy NE7: Reducing Flood Risk

2.0 Site History

2.1 21/02062/FP: Change of use of existing agricultural building to a 2 bed domestic annex.

Refused on 27th October 2021 for the following reasons:

'The proposed conversion of an existing agricultural building into a residential annex could not be considered incidental to the main dwelling at the White House by reason of its size, distance from the main dwelling and the self-contained nature of the accommodation proposed including separate vehicular access. As such, the proposal would fail to meet criteria set out in Policy 33 (Relatives and Staff accommodation) of the Saved Local Plan . Furthermore, the scale and self-contained nature of the proposed conversion would be tantamount to the creation of a separate dwelling in the countryside contrary to the provisions of Policy 6 (Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt) of the Saved Local Plan, Policies SP5, CGB1 and CGB4 of the North Hertfordshire

Emerging Local Plan 2011 - 2031. The proposal would also fail to comply with the guidance set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) which seeks to control development in the open countryside and focus growth within designated settlements.

3.0 **Representations**

3.1 **Environment Agency:**

Comment on amended information submitted 27/1/2026

Advise that they withdraw their previous objection. Recommends advice to applicant.

3.2 **Bedford & River Ivel Drainage Board** (non-statutory consultee)

Comment on amended information submitted 27/01/2026

‘Objection due to additional built development in the floodplain. Request further information on floodplain impacts, byelaw compliance and drainage design’.

3.3 **Newnham Parish Council:**

Advise as follows:

*‘Caldecote and Newnham Parish Council have **no objections** to the application but would like to voice their concern over the access to the property which is on the Ashwell Road, the point at which the access joins the road is next to a small bridge with room for one car only. Whilst this causes a natural slowing down if two cars are approaching, when there is only one car crossing the bridge the speeds can be fast and in some cases cars accelerate to get over the bridge before another reaches it from the opposite direction. It will be necessary to ensure that the hedge/bush is cut back to ensure safety.’*

In addition there is a public footpath running through the property of which the applicant will be aware.

3.4 **NHDC Environmental Health:**

Advises no objections in respect of noise.

Recommends a contaminated land condition and EV charging point condition

3.5 **Site Notice / Adjoining occupiers:**

Letter received from Mrs Anne Conchie:

I write as the Ramblers Footpath Secretary for North Herts.

I am concerned that a RoW goes through this plot - Newnham and Caldecote FP 005. I did not see anything to show that this had been considered and that the necessary gates would remain.

3.6 NHDC Waste and recycling services manager

No response

3.7 Hertfordshire Rights of Way officer

Advises as follows:

'The Public Right of Way (Caldecote & Newnham Footpath 5) must remain open and unobstructed at all times during development. If there is any need, for safety reasons, to close the Right of Way, a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order must be applied for and granted before any works/closures can take place.

The surface of the Right of Way must not be left damaged, whether through vehicle use or spilled materials. If any damage is done to the surface of the Right of Way, then Hertfordshire County Council expects that it will be repaired to HCC standards.

More information about applying for a TTRO can be found on HCCs website, or by contacting row@hertfordshire.gov.uk'

3.8 Herts Highways:

Advises that they do not wish to restrict the grant of planning permission. **No objections** No conditions requested.

4.0 Planning Considerations

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

4.1 The building the subject of this application is a detached agricultural building granted permission under planning ref: 16/00696/1 located to the north east of the main dwelling known as White House. The site is surrounded by agricultural fields and the adjoining paddock between the building and White House is used for sheep grazing. A public footpath (Caldecote & Newnham 005) appears to cross the site in a south west to north east direction. The site is within the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt.

The site itself comprising the extended barn and curtilage amounts to 0.36 hectares. ,

The site is also designated as within Flood Zones 3a and 3b

4.2 **Proposal**

4.2.1 Change of use and conversion of barn to provide one self-contained two-bed dwelling including single storey front and rear extensions, side porch extension and alterations to fenestration including parking and hardscaping.

The external materials will largely match the existing barn.

4.3 **Key Issues**

4.3.1 **Principle of development**

4.3.2 The village of Newnham is located within the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt in the adopted Local Plan

4.3.3 As part of the Council's settlement strategy, Policy SP2 of the Local Plan identifies Newnham as a Category B village where infilling development which does not extend the built core of the village will be allowed. Furthermore, Policy CGB1 of the Local Plan also states that in the Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt planning permission will be granted subject to certain criteria including :

a) infilling development which does not extend the built core of a Category B village

4.3.4 The application site is in within the eastern end of the village and would be seen as part of the collection of buildings to The White House. The eastern boundary of the site is well defined by the Cat Ditch. It is considered that the development could be considered infilling development in that it would not extend the built up area or core of the village into the surrounding countryside.

4.3.5 Furthermore Policy CGB 4 of the Local Plan allows for the re-use, replacement or extension of buildings in the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt provided that :

b) Any existing building to be converted for re-use does not require major extension or reconstruction; c) The resultant building(s) do not have a materially greater impact on the openness, purposes or general policy aims of the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt than the original building(s); and d) Any outbuilding(s) are sited as close as possible to the main building(s) and visually subordinate to them.

In this case the building would be extended by approximately 57 sqm or a 49% increase in floor area. I do not consider this to be a major extension or reconstruction given that the footprint of the existing barn and its roof will be retained with no increase in ridge height. The development will be confined to the existing building and its immediate curtilage – there would be no spread of buildings into the wider site area and thus the openness, purposes and general policy aims of the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt will be preserved. Any outbuildings can be controlled through the withdrawal of permitted development rights.

4.3.6 Overall for planning policy purposes it is considered that the proposed development would comply with Policies SP9, CGB1 and CGB4 of the Local Plan and would therefore be acceptable in principle.

4.3.7 **Impact on the character and appearance of the area**

4.3.8 The pattern of development in Newnham is mainly linear with most development comprising two storey detached or semi-detached dwellings fronting or close to Ashwell Road and Caldecote Road although there is some in depth development extending the settlement behind the built frontage such as outbuildings, farm buildings and stables. There are however, like this proposal, examples of single storey buildings

and detached bungalows within the village such as barns and outbuildings especially around Hall Barns and Newnham Hall just to the south west of the site.

- 4.3.9 The location of the proposed dwelling set back from Ashwell Road means that it has limited impact on passing traffic. That said, public footpath 005 crosses the site towards Caldecote. Even so the building would retain its rural appearance.
- 4.3.10 The properties within the village vary in age from traditional thatched cottages to modern new housing. There is a variety of architectural styles (both contemporary and traditional) and a wide range of materials from flintwork, render and brick to thatched roofs, slate roofs and those with plain tiles. The extensive use of hedgerow through the village softens to some extent the built character and the verdant road frontage in this case will be maintained.
- 4.3.11 The proposed development would be consistent with the character of the village where there are many examples of the main or principle dwelling on a site with several outbuildings.
- 4.3.12 In terms of detailed design, the dwelling would be of a simple part hipped roof form with a slate tiled roof. The external cladding above a brick plinth would be in keeping with this rural location. The design features and materials are commonly found within the village.
- 4.3.13 The single storey scale of the dwelling would sit comfortably in this rural location alongside other single storey outbuildings and barn conversions nearby.
- 4.3.14 The proposed new dwelling would be set back from south eastern boundary of the site maintaining the existing trees and hedgerow with Ashwell Road and this, together with the single storey scale of the dwelling, will maintain the rural character of the village.
- 4.3.15 Considering the built form within the immediate locality and the range of architectural styles and external materials, it is considered that the proposals would not be in conflict with Local Plan Policies SP9, CGB1 and D1 which support development that is well designed and responds positively to its context.

4.3.16 Access and parking and general sustainability

- 4.3.17 The existing field gate access will be used to serve the dwelling. Visibility sight lines of 2.4m x 43 metres in both directions can be achieved from the access point without requiring any significant removal of boundary hedgerow. The Highway Authority do not object to the location of the access or the slight intensification of use commenting :

'Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority has considered that the proposal is of a small-scale development consequently the proposal would not significantly increase the traffic generation to the area and have an unreasonable impact on the safety and operation of the adjoining highway and has no objections on highway grounds to the application'.

More that sufficient space exists for vehicle parking to serve the development and vehicles and can enter and leave the site in forward gear. It is considered that there would be no unacceptable impact caused to highway safety The proposals would not conflict with Local Plan Policy T1 in this regard.

4.3.18 An EV charging point can be provided in accordance with Part S of the Building Regulations and there is room for secure cycle storage

4.3.19 The application site is within a rural area where the range of shops and other services is limited. That said, the application site is within a short drive or cycle distance of Ashwell a large village in the Local Plan with its larger range of facilities including shops, primary school, public houses, church, recreation ground and village hall. The NPPF recognises that transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas. On this basis, the development would be in a sustainable location having particular regard to paragraphs 110 and 115 of the NPPF.

5.21 Impact on neighbouring properties

5.22 There would be adequate separation distance between the new dwelling and The White House so as not to cause unacceptable loss of privacy or loss of outlook. Noise from this compatible residential use is unlikely to be an issue in terms of residential amenity of neighbours. It is accepted that there would be potential for noise and disturbance from construction works however this would be short term given the very small scale of the development. The proposals would be in accordance with Policy D3 of the Local Plan.

5.30 Landscaping, ecology and biodiversity

5.31 The application site has no special landscape designation. The area is considered to be of moderate to high landscape sensitivity and of moderate landscape value overall. The proposal will add some additional value to the local landscape with the proposed landscaping. All existing boundary trees and hedges will be retained.

5.3.2 The site has no special ecological designation. The existing barn is of recent construction and is unlikely to be a suitable habitat for local wildlife. The development is proposed as a self build scheme therefore it is exempt from the need to demonstrate a 10% net gain for biodiversity. That said, the site is large enough to deliver some measurable benefits for biodiversity gain and it is recommended that a condition is attached requiring the submission of an ecological enhancement scheme to satisfy the requirements of Policy NE4 of the Local Plan.

5.33 Other environmental matters

5.34 The site is located within Flood Risk Zones 3a and 3b according to the Environment Agency. The applicant has submitted a Flood Risk Assessment and several technical documents of flood modelling data following the request for further information.

The EA have now withdrawn their objection. As a precautionary measure it is considered essential that the development is conditioned so as to be carried out in accordance with the submitted Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) & Hydraulic Modelling Report by UK Flood Risk (dated 20 October 2025, ref. QFRA 2748, Version 1.0).

5.35 The Council's Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document adopted in 2024 seeks to ensure that new developments are future proofed against the challenge of climate change. The submitted Energy & Sustainability Statement proposes that the development incorporates a high level of thermal fabric performance and renewable heating & energy generation systems (air source heat pump and Mechanical Ventilation and Heat Recovery). The development is therefore considered to meet the

Council's aspirations in terms of mitigating the impact of new development on local climate change.

- 5.36 As the application site consists of grassland used as agricultural or paddock land it is unlikely to contain ground pollutants. Given the residential use proposed however precautionary contamination conditions are necessary.

6.0 **Conclusion**

- 6.1 The proposed development would be located in an area within the built core of the village and represent an infill plot. The site would not extend into the wider countryside. The development also relates to an existing rural building. The development would meet the locational criteria for new development as required by Policies SP9, CGB1 & CGB4 of the Local Plan.
- 6.2 The traditional style proposed, along with the acceptable siting within this rural environment ensures that it would be a development that is contextually appropriate and have an acceptable effect on the character and appearance of the area. The dwelling would not be harmful to adjacent neighbours amenity. The site provides adequate on-site parking and manoeuvring and there would be no harm to highway safety.
- 6.3 The proposal would provide a small family sized dwelling which given North Herts Council's current inability to demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites is of some social benefit. Further modest benefits to the local economy would stem from the final construction of the dwelling and from spending of future occupants of the dwelling within the local community. From an environmental perspective, the dwelling would be designed to incorporate renewable and low carbon technology to help meet the Government's policy to meet the challenge of climate change. New planting would provide a measurable net gain for biodiversity as required by local and national planning policy.
- 6.4 As outlined above, the development would meet the social, economic and environmental objectives necessary to achieve sustainable development in accordance with the NPPF. In the absence of any significant identified harms the benefits of the proposed development weigh substantially in favour of the proposal.

7.0 **Alternative Options**

- 7.1 None applicable

8.0 **Pre-Commencement Conditions**

- 8.1 I can confirm that the applicant is in agreement with the pre-commencement conditions that are proposed.

9.0 **Recommendation**

- 9.1 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. No development approved by this permission shall take place until the following has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority:
 - o A Phase 1 Desk Study report documenting the ground conditions of the site with regard to potential contamination;
 - o A Phase 2 Site Investigation (where shown as necessary the Phase 1 Desk Study);
 - o A Phase 3 Remediation Scheme (where shown as necessary by the Phase 2 Site Investigation)

All such work shall be undertaken in accordance with BS:10175:2011 or other appropriate guidance issued by the regulatory authorities. The work shall be sufficient to ensure that measures will be taken to mitigate any risks to human health and the wider environment.

Reason: To protect human health and to ensure that no future investigation is required under Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990

4. Prior to any permitted dwelling being occupied a validation report shall be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority to demonstrate the effectiveness of any agreed Remediation Strategy. Any such validation shall include responses to any unexpected contamination discovered during works.

Reason: To protect human health and to ensure that no future investigation is required under Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990

5. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the submitted Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) & Hydraulic Modelling Report by UK Flood Risk (dated 20 October 2025, ref. QFRA 2748, Version 1.0).

Reason: To ensure that the development is resilient to flood risk in accordance with

Policy NE7 of the North Herts Local Plan.

6. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 as amended no development as set out in Classes A, AA, B, C and E of Part 1 (and any further new class that may be introduced by way of an update) of Schedule 2 to the Order, (or any subsequent Statutory Instrument which revokes, amends and/or replaces those provisions) shall be carried out without first obtaining a specific planning permission from the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: Given the nature of this development, the Local Planning Authority considers that development which would normally be "permitted development" should be retained within planning control in the interests of the character and amenities of the area and to comply with Policy D1 and/or Policy D3 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 to 2031.

7. No development shall take place until an Ecological Enhancement Plan (EEP) for the creation of new wildlife features such as hibernacula, the inclusion of integrated bird/bat and bee boxes in buildings/structures, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure development is ecologically sensitive and secures biodiversity enhancements in accordance with the North Herts Local Plan policy NE4

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. The Council acted proactively through positive engagement with the applicant during the determination process which led to improvements to the scheme. 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.

Informative/s:

Hertfordshire County Council Rights of Way unit informative:

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More information about applying for a TTRO can be found on HCCs website, or by contacting row@hertfordshire.gov.uk'

Signed  Shaun Greaves Determining Officer	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Date: 25 February 2026	