

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...Alex Howard.....

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
25/02473/FP	Erection of one self-build dwelling including landscaping. Conversion of existing cow shed into carport/storage space. Retention of existing vehicular access off A600 (as amended by plans received 21st and 27th November 2025)	Land Off Bedford Road Ickleford Hertfordshire SG5 3RS

Submitted Plan Nos

A270-0100 Rev C A270-1000 Rev C A270-0102 Rev C A270-0101 Rev C S31-24232-S3-R03 A270-1100 A270-1101 A270-1102 A270-2100 A270-2101 A270-2102 A270-2103 A270-2104 A270-3100 A270-0103

2.0 **Planning History**

2.1 None relevant to this application.

3.0 **Representations**

3.1 **Site Notice and Neighbour Consultation** – None received.

3.2 **Ickleford Parish Council** – *“No objection to this planning application. However, the Council would request that any approval be subject to appropriate conditions relating to:*

- *Safe access and visibility onto the A600;*
- *Suitable landscaping and boundary treatments to maintain the rural character of the site; and*
- *Consideration of any ecological or drainage impacts arising from the development”.*

3.3 **Hertfordshire Highways** – Following the submission of further information as requested, no objections raised subject to conditions relating to access work/drainage plans and the provision of appropriate visibility splays.

3.4 **Environmental Health** – No objections to the proposal on noise or air quality grounds and subject to a provisional contamination condition.

3.5 **Hertfordshire Ecology** – No objection subject to informatives relating to bats and nesting birds.

3.6 **Urban Design** – *“Comments are given with the acknowledgement of the cooperation of the applicant and their chosen design team to work proactively with the LPA by way of numerous pre-application submissions and meetings to reach a proposal that is coherent with planning policy, is strong in terms of design and architectural interest and can be justified under Paragraph 84 (NPPF) as an isolated dwelling in the countryside”.*

3.7 **Sustainability Officer** – None received.

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

4.1.1 The site is a field located on the east side of Bedford Road, Ickleford. The site is immediately adjacent to the highway and is narrow and triangular in shape, benefiting from a flat gradient and mature landscaping on all boundaries with the highway and surrounding fields. The site benefits from an existing access onto Bedford Road which

utilises a field gate. There are existing agricultural buildings on the site, in the form of a cowshed.

- 4.1.2 The site is outside of the defined settlement boundary for Ickleford and is therefore designated as within the Green Belt.

4.2 **Proposal**

- 4.2.1 Planning permission is sought for the erection of one self-build dwelling including landscaping. Conversion of existing cow shed into carport/storage space. Retention of existing vehicular access off A600 (as amended by plans received 21st November 2025)

4.3 **Key Issues**

- 4.3.1 The key considerations are the principle of development, paragraph 84/design, impact on the character of the area, impact on the amenities of neighbours/future occupiers, highways, access and parking, landscaping, ecology/BNG, contaminated land, sustainability.

Principle of Development

- 4.3.2 The site is within the Green Belt. Therefore, the provisions of Policy SP5 of the Local Plan and Section 13 of the NPPF are relevant. Paragraph 153 of the NPPF states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in 'very special circumstances'. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. Paragraph 154 of the NPPF set out those instances where there are exceptions to inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Paragraph 142 of the NPPF sets out that *"The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence"*.

Paragraph 143 of the NPPF sets out the five purposes of the Green Belt:

*"a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land"*.

- 4.3.3 The proposal, which is for the erection of a self-build dwelling with landscaping, conversion of an existing cowshed and retention of existing access, would not comply with any of the exceptions to inappropriate development in the Green Belt as set out under Paragraph 154 of the NPPF. The site is not considered to constitute Grey Belt land given its isolated location, contrary to Paragraph 155 of the NPPF.

- 4.3.4 Moreover, in terms of the openness of the Green Belt, which is supported in case law to have a spatial and visual dimension, the proposal for a single dwelling on this site would result in a loss of openness, both spatial and visual, due to the erection of built form on what is currently an open field. However, it is noted that existing mature landscaping which is proposed to be retained and enhanced would screen the development from view from Bedford Road, which would limit harm to visual openness. The site is adjacent to a main road and opposite a field which is allocated for residential development in the Local Plan, which weigh against the themes and key aims of the Green Belt generally. Furthermore, in relation to the five purposes of the Green Belt, it is considered that the proposal would conflict with purpose c), seeing as the site is currently part of the countryside on the east side of Bedford Road and the siting of a dwelling on it has the potential to encroach on that visual character.
- 4.3.5 As such, reviewing the proposal against the relevant parts of the NPPF, it is considered that there is harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, harm to the spatial and visual openness of the Green Belt, and conflict with purpose c) of the Green Belt. Cumulatively, this amounts to substantial harm to the Green Belt in line with Paragraph 153 of the NPPF, given the scale and nature of the development.

Paragraph 84/Design

- 4.3.6 The proposal, which has been the product of four pre-application submissions by the applicant, is submitted on the basis that the development constitutes a Paragraph 84 house. The proposal is for a contemporary dwelling with unique form, massing and external appearance, taking its design cues from the rural vernacular and local geology. The dwelling is proposed to be finished in high quality materials, including gault clay, chalk, flint, red brick, timber, Arlesey whites, and corrugated metal with solar panels. The scheme also seeks to convert an existing cowshed into a carport/storage building.

Paragraph 84 of the NPPF sets out that:

“Planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless one or more of the following circumstances apply:

e) the design is of exceptional quality, in that it:

- is truly outstanding, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; and

- would significantly enhance its immediate setting and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area”.

- 4.3.7 The first stage is to consider whether this site can be considered to be ‘isolated’. This matter has been the subject of pre-application submissions, where the agents submitted a document assessing this matter alone. The site is outside of the defined settlement boundary of Ickleford, which is one of the larger villages in North Herts. As such, under Policy SP2, the proposal would not comply with the policy provisions which seeks to deliver housing within the settlement boundaries of our larger villages. The agents

provided a map which shows the site relative to the Ickleford settlement boundary, and it is approx. 800m from the centre of this village in the Green Belt.

- 4.3.8 The isolation supporting document goes into some detail as to the meaning of an isolated home. The topic of isolation was considered under *Braintree District Council v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (2017)* and it is stated that this decision has been particularly important and the Braintree case is now synonymous with discussions around isolation in relation to Paragraph 84. The Court of Appeal in the Braintree case concluded that in determining whether a particular proposal is for “isolated homes in the countryside”, the decision maker must consider whether the development would be physically isolated, in the sense of being separate or remote from a settlement. What is a “settlement” and whether the development would be “isolated” from a settlement are both matters of planning judgement for the decision maker to decide on a case-by-case basis. It is important to emphasise, as the Court of Appeal did in *Bramshill v SSHCLG*, that the question is one of physical separation from a settlement rather than another or other dwellings.
- 4.3.9 The isolation supporting document made several observations in respect of the sites proximity to Ickleford as the crow flies and by road, its rural character which is very different to the main village, and that dwellings closer to the site are also outside the settlement boundary, due to their separation from the village by open fields/woodland and the fact they are more dispersed without a formal core. It goes on to consider the character and visual impact of the site within its context, acknowledging that it is enclosed by mature landscaping on all sides and is largely hidden from Bedford Road, which speaks to its separate visual character from the village of Ickleford.
- 4.3.10 The agents, Studio Bark, have dealt with several Paragraph 84 proposals and as such, have an evidence base which can reasonably cover this isolation issue. They have provided four appeal decisions from other Local Authorities in Exeter, Stratford-upon-Avon, Tunbridge Wells and Cornwall. In all cases, the Inspectors considered that the sites were isolated, and, in some case, the sites were within close proximity to more dwellings and built form generally than the application site. This view was further supported by a diagram of the site in context, compared to the four other planning applications which were considered by the respective Councils to be isolated. Considering the matters above against those comparative diagrams, it is considered that there is little material difference between the application site and the other examples in terms of their physical separation. In some case, the site would appear more separated from nearby buildings than these other example applications and further away from the closest settlements.
- 4.3.11 Overall, mindful of the Court of Appeal decision which states that whether a site is physically isolated from a settlement is a matter of planning judgement and is taken on a case-by-case basis, it is considered that the application site is physically and visually separated from the nearest settlement. Therefore, the site can be considered isolated for the purposes of paragraph 84 of the NPPF.

4.3.12 The next stage in this instance is to consider whether the proposal would have a design that is of exceptional quality, in that it:

- is truly outstanding, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; and
- would significantly enhance its immediate setting and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.

4.3.13 As stated, this application has been prepared following four pre-application submissions with Officers and the Urban Design Team, where the design evolution of this proposal has changed significantly since the earliest submissions. The final pre-application submission before the submission of this application confirmed that the proposals meet the high bar of exceptional design, which has been the result of iterative processes and collaborative working with the Council. There is a clear narrative thread that informs the design which is site specific and results in a contextually sensitive proposal, such that the high quality design helps to raise the standard of design in the North Herts area as well as more generally in rural areas.

4.3.14 The Council's Urban Design Officer has provided formal comments on this application, with the primary conclusions as follows:

"Paragraph 84 of the National Planning Policy Framework provides guidance on the development of isolated homes in the countryside under specific circumstances:

This application is considered to fully satisfy the requirements of subsection e)i and e)ii for the following reasons:

The proposed architecture can be regarded as outstanding, reflecting the highest standards of contemporary design in the UK. It demonstrates a level of quality that would raise architectural and design standards both locally and nationally within the rural vernacular.

The building's immediate setting will be enhanced through the applicant's careful approach to ecology and context-led design decisions. The landscape strategy reinforces this by introducing diverse and robust planting, strengthening the site's character. The proposal is sensitive to its surroundings, employing an architectural language that responds to local context. The form and massing have been developed through a clear and well-documented design narrative, resulting in a scheme that is both distinctive and appropriate for this site.

Urban Design Summary:

This proposal exemplifies the value of investing in high-quality design. Proactive commitment to design excellence benefits everyone, the resident, the wider community, and the local authority, by creating places that are sustainable, distinctive, and enduring.

The level of design rigour demonstrated here, through a clear narrative, robust policy justification, and thoughtful material and landscape choices, should be

the standard we expect across all applications. North Hertfordshire deserves developments that not only meet policy requirements but actively contribute to the identity and quality of our built environment. This scheme shows that good design is not an optional extra; it is fundamental to delivering places of lasting value”.

- 4.3.15 As such, in light of the formal comments from the Urban Design Officer, it is considered that the proposal is truly outstanding, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; and would significantly enhance its immediate setting and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area. Given the extensive work that has taken place to design the proposal, it is considered that conditions covering these elements are not reasonable and justifiable. The proposal would therefore comply with Paragraph 84 of the NPPF.
- 4.3.16 The submitted DAS also includes a number of case studies from other Local Authorities, whether through delegated powers or at appeal, where the exceptional design of a scheme against paragraph 84, along with other sustainability and/or ecological benefits, collectively amounted to very special circumstances of sufficient weight to clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and any other harm. This is noted and is a matter that will be addressed at the end of the report.

Impact on the Character of the Area

- 4.3.17 Policy D1 of the Local Plan states that planning permission will be granted provided the development responds positively to the site's local context in addition to other criteria. Policy SP9 of the Local Plan further considers that new development will be supported where it is well designed and located and responds positively to its local context. These considerations are echoed in Section 12 of the NPPF.
- 4.3.18 As outlined above in this report, the proposed dwelling is considered to be truly outstanding and reflects the highest standards in architecture and will significantly enhance its immediate setting and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area. The dwelling is to be sited in the northern portion of the site, and the site benefits from substantial landscape screening on its boundaries with Bedford Road and the wider fields to the north and east, which is proposed to be retained and enhanced where appropriate in line with the landscaping strategy. It is considered that the proposed dwelling and converted cowshed will be largely screened from view by the existing/enhanced landscaping and even from those viewpoints where the built form will be visible, owing to its exceptional design quality, the development will not result in any harm to the rural character of the area. This is considered to respond well to the sites local context, in accordance with Policies D1 and SP9 of the Local Plan and Section 12 of the NPPF

Impact on the Amenities of Neighbours/Future Occupiers

- 4.3.19 Policy D3 of the Local Plan states that planning permission will be granted for development proposals which do not cause unacceptable harm to living conditions.
- 4.3.20 The site is isolated and is not within close proximity to any neighbouring properties and is well enclosed in any case. Therefore, the proposal will not cause any overdominance, loss of daylight/sunlight or loss of privacy to any neighbours, such that it would not result

in any harm to the amenities and reasonable living conditions of neighbouring properties, in line with Policy D3 of the Local Plan.

- 4.3.21 In terms of future occupiers, the proposed dwelling would exceed the national space standards for a dwelling of this size, would provide exceptional private amenity space for occupiers, and the dwelling has been comprehensively designed to ensure that all habitable rooms benefit from suitable natural light, in line with Policy D3 of the Local Plan.

Highways, Access and Parking

- 4.3.22 Policy T1 of the Local Plan states that Planning permission will be granted provided that development would not lead to highway safety problems or cause unacceptable impacts upon the highway network. Policy T2 of the Local Plan and the Council's Vehicle Parking at New Development SPD sets out that parking provision must have regard for the standards set out in said documents.
- 4.3.23 The proposal seeks to utilise the existing access to this field of Bedford Road, which benefits from an existing dropped kerb and crossover. The Highway Authority have considered this proposal and provided formal comments, stating that they are satisfied that the existing VXO provides an adequate and suitable means of access to serve the proposed single dwelling. The comment notes that the submitted site plan is lacking certain details and as a result; to secure these essential elements, Condition 1 is recommended to ensure the access gate is set back a minimum of 5.0 metres from the back of the highway boundary and that the initial section of the access is constructed in a bound surface to prevent the deposition of muds on the public highway. The Highway Authority have also recommended that the approved plan showing visibility splays are provided prior to occupation, which is deemed reasonable. Overall, the proposal is considered acceptable on highway safety grounds.
- 4.3.24 The proposal seeks to convert the existing cowshed into a carport/storage area, with a sizable area of hardstanding in front for parking. The space is sufficient to accommodate several cars, in line with Policy T2 of the Local Plan.

Landscaping

- 4.3.25 The application is supported by a comprehensive landscape strategy. The majority of the surrounding landscape is dominated by arable farmland and large urban settlements, with Ickleford and Hitchin to the south and Letchworth to the east in the local landscape. However, within this is a vein of green corridor that runs along the River Oughton/Purwell, cutting in between Ickleford and Hitchin, and running north following the meandering nature of the river. The landscape within this catchment has such a significant difference from that surrounding it, that it has its own landscape character categorisation, with it being a part of the River Oughton and Purwell Valleys area. The site sits just one field away from this catchment and so has the opportunity to connect to this landscape character through encouraging ecological enhancements on site.
- 4.3.26 The landscape strategy has been developed in collaboration with the project ecologist consultant to ensure a locally relevant and significant enhancement of the sites habitats is achieved. The general approach has been two pronged, the first, to assess and understand what is on the site in its current form in order to understand how best to

enhance it. The second is to study the landscape setting to identify key habitats locally and how best to enhance the connectivity generally within the wider landscape. The main strategy includes the following:

1. gap up and improve the diversity of the existing hedgerows using a mix of locally relevant and climate resilient species,
2. significantly improve the meadow diversity by utilising local nature reserves and commons as a locally relevant seed bank,
3. introduce a new scrub habitat to enhance the connectivity of the site with adjacent habitat corridors,
4. the creation of a water attenuation pond to manage and improve water quality from the proposed dwelling and associated hard standing areas,
5. creation of an ecological pond with aquatic planting margin to create a new habitat type in site which compliments nearby waterway and significantly enhances the biodiversity opportunity,
6. the introduction on a swale with wet meadow marginal planting to connect the ponds and create a new habitat type, improving the site biodiversity potential.
7. additional tree planting to hedgerows and within the meadow setting for additional arboreal habitats and to maintain the local landscape character,
8. creation of a new orchard using locally relevant heritage species

- 4.3.27 The landscape strategy is considered robust and acceptable, and results in a significant benefit alongside the ecological measures proposed. A condition will be enforced to ensure the development is carried out in accordance with the details and meets the requirements of Policy NE1 of the Local Plan.

Ecology/Biodiversity Net Gain

- 4.3.28 This application has been submitted with an Ecological Impact Assessment September 2025, which has appraised the site and made recommendations for biodiversity enhancements. The Hertfordshire LEADS Department have been consulted on this application and have no objections on ecological grounds, subject to informatives relating to bats and nesting birds. Moreover, given that this proposal is seeking to deliver considerable ecological enhancements as part of the package of benefits associated with this proposal (page 37 of the Sustainability Statement), it is considered that a condition which requires that the ecological enhancements as defined in the September 2025 Ecological Impact Assessment are implemented on site and evidence of this submitted to the Local Planning Authority, is reasonable and in line with Policy NE4 of the Local Plan.
- 4.3.29 This is a form of development which is exempt from BNG Legislation, defined under article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 due to it being a self-build scheme.

Contaminated Land

- 4.3.30 Following correspondence with the Council's EHO, a protective condition relating to contaminated land will be enforced on this decision in case any contamination is found during the construction phase, which is considered reasonable.

Waste and Recycling

- 4.3.31 It is proposed to store bins in the storage/plant room of the carport, and place these out to the kerbside for collection. This is considered acceptable and appears to take place already for the other residential properties on Bedford Road.

Sustainability

- 4.3.32 The overarching purpose of the planning system is to contribute to achieving sustainable development, as stated in Section 2 of the NPPF. This is considered against the three objectives of sustainable development, the economic, social, and environmental objectives.
- 4.3.33 In terms of the economic objective, the proposed development would deliver modest benefits through the creation of employment during the construction phase and the use of nearby services in Ickleford, as well as those further afield in Hitchin and Letchworth and neighbouring villages. These benefits would be moderate in the context of the single dwelling being proposed.
- 4.3.34 In terms of the social objective, the proposed development would deliver 1 dwelling towards the Councils housing supply, which is moderate in this context.
- 4.3.35 In terms of the environmental objective, the application is supported by an Energy and Sustainability Strategy, which sets out the approach to sustainable building methods and whole life carbon efficiency which is engrained into this proposal. The proposals meet six of the council's sustainability gold standards as set out in the Sustainability SPD, with the remaining three standards not applicable. The project will be whole life net zero carbon, exceeding industry standard targets to become carbon positive after 54 years, as opposed to 60 years, which is inherently sustainable and a benefit. Moreover, there is an emphasis on the use of natural, sustainable materials to ensure that the design has low embodied carbon, with locally sourced materials used as much as possible to reduce carbon impact. These measures, alongside the ecological proposals, are considered to be over and above what is reasonable expected for a scheme of this size, which would attribute very substantial weight in favour of this development.

Other Matters

- 4.3.36 It is considered reasonable to remove Permitted Development Rights through Classes A, B, C, D and E, given the size of the site which is in the Green Belt and the scale of the new dwelling.

4.4 Conclusion

- 4.4.1 The proposal is, through extensive collaboration with Officers, considered to be truly outstanding, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; and would significantly enhance its immediate setting and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area, such that it would constitute a Paragraph 84 dwelling. The proposal would also deliver significant ecological benefits across the site and BNG, when in fact this proposal is technically exempt, and would deliver substantial sustainability benefits through the net zero carbon features and the measures that meet the gold standards of our Sustainability SPD.

4.4.2 Officers acknowledge that the proposal would result in harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, harm to the spatial and visual openness of the Green Belt, and conflict with purpose c) of the Green Belt. Cumulatively, this amounts to substantial harm to the Green Belt in line with Paragraph 153 of the NPPF.

4.4.3 However, in the round, it is considered that the design of the dwelling is truly outstanding and innovative and that it will significantly enhance its immediate setting, such that the proposal meets paragraph 84 of the NPPF for isolated homes in the countryside. This, together with the significant enhancement of local biodiversity on site with local species planting and the creation of new habitats, the significant environmental credentials and net zero design, combine to provide 'very special circumstances' that outweigh the harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm, which justifies the granting of planning permission in this case.

4.5 **Alternative Options**

4.5.1 N/A

4.6 **Pre-Commencement Conditions**

4.6.1 The applicant is in agreement to the proposed pre-commencement conditions.

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. Prior to the commencement of development, detailed plans shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, in consultation with the Highway Authority, showing:

1. The resurfacing of the existing footway(s) across the site access frontage.

2. The resurfacing of the first 10 metres of the site access road, measured from the highway boundary; and
3. The access gate set back a minimum of 5 metres from the back edge of the highway boundary.

The approved works shall be carried out and completed prior to first occupation of the development hereby permitted. In addition, arrangements shall be made to intercept and dispose of surface water within the site so that no runoff discharges onto the public highway.

Reason: To ensure residents and visitors of the development have the realistic option of travelling by local bus routes, and not a reliance on the private motorcar, in accordance with paragraphs 114 - 116 of the NPPF (December 2023).

4. Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted a visibility splay shall be provided in full accordance with the details indicated on the approved plan (Ref- A270-0101, Rev-C). The splay shall always thereafter be maintained free from any obstruction between 600mm and 2m above the level of the adjacent highway carriageway.

Reason: To ensure construction of a satisfactory development and in the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policy 5 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018) and Roads in Hertfordshire, Section 4, 2.3

5. The scheme of landscape and ecological enhancements as set out on page 37 of the Sustainability and Energy Statement shall be carried out on site in accordance with the details set out in the statement, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Following the substantial completion of the landscape and ecological enhancements on site, a document including details and evidence showing these measures in place and detailing how they are proposed to be maintained shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, in consultation with the Councils Senior Ecologist.

Reason: To secure the biodiversity and landscape benefits on site, in line with Policy NE4 of the Local Plan.

6. The approved details of landscaping set out under plan ref: S31-24232-S3-R03 Landscape Strategy, shall be carried out before the end of the first planting season following either the first occupation of any of the buildings or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner; and any trees or plants which, within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development, die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased, shall be replaced during the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority agrees in writing to vary or dispense with this requirement.

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.

7. In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development, it shall be reported in writing immediately to the Local Planning Authority. An investigation and risk assessment shall then be undertaken by a competent person, in accordance with BS10175:2011. A written report of the findings should be forwarded for approval to the Local Planning Authority. Following completion of remedial measures, a verification report shall be prepared that demonstrates the effectiveness of the remediation carried out. No part of the development should be occupied until all remedial and validation works are approved in writing.

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

8. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 as amended no development as set out in Classes A, B, C, D and E of Part 1 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.

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 early engagement with the applicant at the pre-application stage 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:

1. AN) Obstruction of highway: It is an offence under section 137 of the Highways Act 1980 for any person, without lawful authority or excuse, in any way to wilfully obstruct the free passage along a highway or public right of way. If this development is likely to result in the public highway or public right of way network becoming routinely blocked (fully or partly) the applicant must contact the Highway Authority to obtain their permission and requirements before construction works commence.

Further information is available via the County Council website at:

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/business-licences/business-licences.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

AN) Extent of Highway: Information on obtaining the extent of public highway around the site can be obtained from the HCC website:

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/changes-to-your-road/extent-of-highways.aspx

AN) Debris and deposits on the highway: It is an offence under section 148 of the Highways Act 1980 to deposit compost, dung or other material for dressing land, or any rubbish on a made up carriageway, or any or other debris on a highway to the interruption of any highway user. Section 149 of the same Act gives the Highway Authority powers to remove such material at the expense of the party responsible. Therefore, best practical means shall be taken at all times to ensure that all vehicles leaving the site during construction of the development and use thereafter are in a condition such as not to emit dust or deposit mud, slurry or other debris on the highway. Further information is available by telephoning 0300 1234047.

AN) Gravel / shingle driveways: Where loose gravel or shingle is used, a suitable measure to prevent material spilling onto the road/footpath/verge must be installed. It is an offence under section 148 of the Highways Act 1980 to deposit debris onto the public highway, and section 149 of the same Act gives the Highway Authority powers to remove such material at the expense of the party responsible.

Further information is available by telephoning 0300 1234047.

AN) Avoidance of surface water discharge onto the highway: The applicant is advised that the Highway Authority has powers under section 163 of the Highways Act 1980, to take appropriate steps where deemed necessary (serving notice to the occupier of premises adjoining a highway) to prevent water from the roof or other part of the premises falling upon persons using the highway, or to prevent so far as is reasonably practicable, surface water from the premises flowing on to, or over the footway of the highway.

AN) New or amended vehicle crossover access (section 184): Where works are required within the public highway to facilitate a new or amended vehicular access, the Highway Authority require the construction of such works to be undertaken to their satisfaction and specification, and by a contractor who is authorised to work in the public highway. If any of the works associated with the construction of the access affects or requires the removal and/or the relocation of any equipment, apparatus or structures (e.g. street name plates, bus stop signs or shelters, statutory authority equipment etc.) the applicant

will be required to bear the cost of such removal or alteration.

Before works commence the applicant will need to apply to the Highway Authority to obtain their permission, requirements and for the work to be carried out on the applicant's behalf. Further information is available via the County Council website at: <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/changes-to-your-road/dropped-kerbs/dropped-kerbs.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

AN) Construction Management Plan (CMP): The purpose of the CMP is to help developers minimise construction impacts and relates to all construction activity both on and off site that impacts on the wider environment. It is intended to be a live document whereby different stages will be completed and submitted for application as the development progresses. A completed and signed CMP must address the way in which any impacts associated with the proposed works, and any cumulative impacts of other nearby construction sites will be mitigated and managed. The level of detail required in a CMP will depend on the scale and nature of development.

The CMP would need to include elements of the Construction Logistics and Community Safety (CLOCS) standards as set out in our Construction Management template, a copy of which is available on the County Council's website at:

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/development-management/highways-development-management.aspx>

2. Bats: As the conversion of the cow shed onsite to a carport would cause disturbance to any bats roosting in this structure, a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) was undertaken. The methodology appears to follow the relevant guidelines and the assessment found that the building had negligible bat roosting potential.

A Ground Level Tree Assessment was also carried out in which potential bat roosting features were identified on two trees on-site (categorised as PRF-1); However, as these trees will be retained, no further surveys are required. Considering the records of bat species in the area including of rarer species such as Barbastelles, I would support the recommendation made in the report that should any potential impact on the trees onsite as a result of the proposed works arise, they will need to be re-assessed for suitability.

Nesting Birds: An unidentified nest was found in the southern wall of the cattle shed. The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 makes it an offense to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird, or to take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built. As such, I would support the recommendation outlined in the report that any vegetation removal or demolition of the existing building required should take place outside of the bird breeding season of March to August. I would also suggest that a nesting bird check be carried out prior to the demolition of this building, and if any nesting birds are found then all works within 5m of the nest or that may cause disturbance or damage to the nest should cease.

Signed  Anne McDonald	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Determining Officer Date: 9 January 2026	