

22 July 2025

Application Reference 25/01094/FP

Land rear of 34 Arlesey Road, Ickleford



Response to neighbour and Parish Council Comments

1. This brief note provides the Applicants comments upon / response to the representations which have been submitted by neighbouring residents and the Parish Council.

Neighbours

2. As a number of residents have raised similar matters we comment upon these by subject matter rather than to each separate representation.

Matters of Principle

Contrary to Local Plan - Site Notice

3. Some residents have raised concerns that the principle of development at the site may be contrary to the Local Plan. It is understood that this arises from the erection of an incorrect site notice on 22 May 2025. The notice was corrected and re-erected on 17 June, removing any reference to the proposal running contrary to the development plan.

Traffic, Access & Parking, Refuse

Access through Duncots Close is Inappropriate / Unsafe

4. Access via Duncots Close was envisaged as part of the local plan allocation process, hence the name given to the site in the Local Plan 'Land at Duncots Close'.
5. The access proposals have been designed and prepared by professional Highway Engineers Stomor and assessed by Hertfordshire Highways who raise no objection subject to conditions.

Insufficient Parking

6. The layout provides parking as required by and in accordance with the Council's parking standards. Hertfordshire Highways confirm that the proposal is acceptable in this regard.
7. However should officers wish to see additional on plot parking this can be readily provided by the Applicant

Tracking & Turning for Larger Vehicles

8. Residents question the layout in terms of access for larger vehicles and for the turning of refuse lorries. Tracking drawings are included in the application package. These have been assessed by Hertfordshire Highways who are satisfied that these meet appropriate standards.

Refuse Storage

9. Concern has been raised that there are proposals being advanced to add a further bin to the range of refuse / recycling services offered and the plans do not show this additional bin provision.

10. As may be appreciated the proposed provision is correct at the time of drafting and at the present time. It is expected that any consent granted would be conditioned requiring final details of refuse storage provision and the requirements in place at that time will be addressed. If an additional bin is to be required the houses are clearly of a nature where there is sufficient garden or garage space to accommodate this.

Neighbour Amenity / Loss of Privacy

Overlooking / Loss of Privacy

11. Concerns are raised that Plots 1 and 3 would overlook towards No.2 Duncots and that 1, 2, 8 and 9 will overlook generally towards and over the Duncots Close housing. Residents of Ivy Cottage also raise concerns regarding a loss of view.
12. The applicant does appreciate that neighbouring residents may prefer no change to the current situation at the site, however the site is allocated for residential development and so inevitably there will be some outlook towards Duncots Close.
13. As the Council is aware the separation distances which are provided are above those generally deemed acceptable in new residential developments and windows within upper floors are positioned to prevent any material loss of privacy. This issue was reviewed at the pre-application stage with officers (Planning and Design) confirming the acceptability of these relationships.

Archaeology & Heritage

Archaeology

14. Residents have noted the importance of ensuring that appropriate archaeological investigation is undertaken at the site.
15. As the Council is aware an archaeological desk based assessment was provided with the application. This has been assessed and agreed by Hertfordshire Archaeology who recommend a pre-development condition requiring on site investigatory trial trenching works.
16. A written scheme of investigation for the trenching work has now been agreed with Hertfordshire Archaeology and will be progressed in due course.
17. In summary the Applicant has gone beyond the minimum requirements deemed necessary at this stage.

Heritage

18. Some concerns have been raised regarding the impact of the development on heritage assets. As the Council will recall these points were scoped at the pre-application stage in terms of the views from the church and nearest listed buildings. Officers confirmed:

“The site allocation provides criteria seeking to retain views from the Grade I Listed Church in Ickleford, not permitting development within the north-eastern corner of the site. I consider that the position of dwellings suitably meets this criterion.

Separation to nearby Listed Buildings and to the Conservation Area is considered to be sufficient to mitigate prospective harm to these assets.”

19. The relationships and separation distances deemed acceptable have been retained as part of this formal submission.

Flood Risk & Drainage

Flooding & Surface Water

20. Concerns are raised regarding the potential for flooding at the site.
21. The application is accompanied by a comprehensive Flood Risk and Drainage assessment. This provides for an appropriate sustainable drainage connection to the adjacent water cause. The report demonstrates that this will ensure that the site itself and neighbouring properties will not be adversely impacted.
22. The report is being assessed by the LLFA and if any comments arise from the assessment these will be addressed.

Foul Drainage

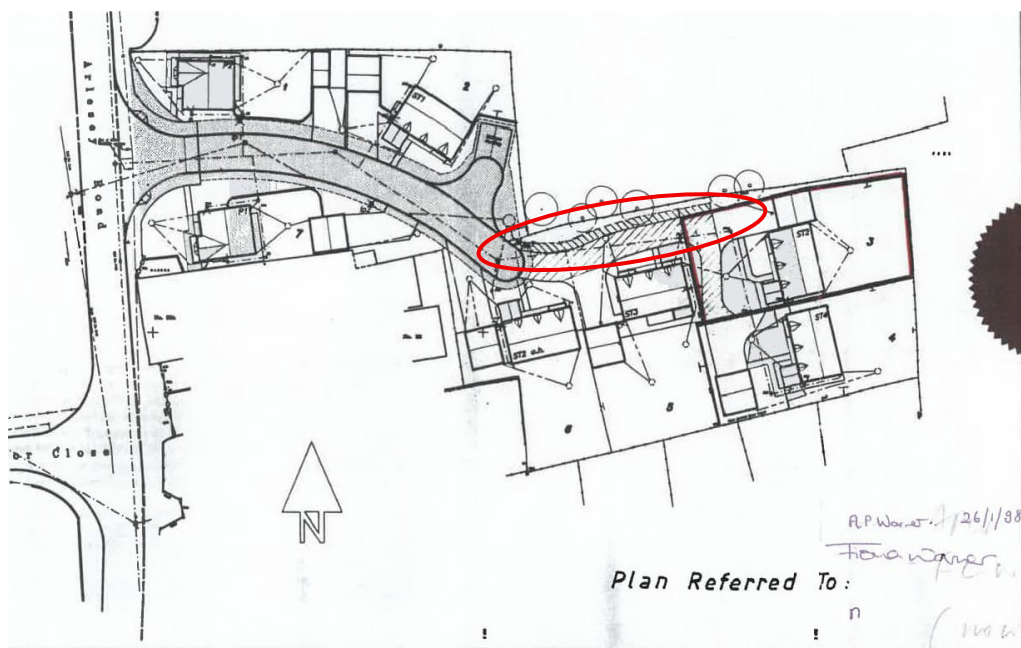
23. The submitted Flood Risk and Drainage report includes details of the existing foul water infrastructure within the vicinity of the site and within Duncots Close.
24. It would be normal practice for a detailed foul water drainage scheme demonstrating appropriate connections to be secured by condition rather than provided at application stage. The site is allocated in the Local Plan confirming that there are no overriding capacity or other foul drainage constraints preventing the development of the land.

Ecology

25. Concerns are raised regarding the impact of the works on site ecology.
26. As may be appreciated, given the greenfield nature of the site and its relatively modest scale it is impossible to bring forward a development in accordance with the envisaged allocation for residential development without reducing the 'green' space within the site.
27. It is generally recognised therefore through the BNG process that sites of this nature are likely to require the purchase of offsite biodiversity credits to address current policy requirements to deliver a 10% net gain. The concerns raised by the Council's ecologist regarding the accuracy of the BNG calculations submitted is being reviewed and a separate updated response will be provided to ensure that the 10% gain is delivered where possible on site and the shortfall addressed as is normal practice off site.
28. Linked to ecological concerns and as the Council is aware a poplar tree located outside the sites eastern boundary was removed by the landowner approximately 12 months ago. The tree was not 'protected' and its removal did not require the permission of the Council or any other body. As the Council is aware from pre-application discussions and a site visit the tree had suffered significant storm damage resulting in a number of larger limbs and branches falling into the application site. Its removal addressed what was a significant health and safety concern, particularly given the potential for large branches to have fallen onto the Duncots Field public footpath to the east of the site.
29. Notwithstanding that this tree lay outside of the site the applicant has developed a comprehensive landscaping scheme for the site which includes extensive new tree planting.

Service Strip – adjacent to Plots 8 and 9

30. A concern has been raised that the southern site boundary at the rear of proposed plots 8 and 9 includes a service strip where access is required to maintain underground utilities.
31. The applicant has provided the extract below taken from the land registry title information and it is understood that the concerns may relate to the hatched area highlighted red below.



32. Whilst the legal rights to access below ground services are not a matter directly relevant to the merits of a planning application, in an effort to assist the Applicant has reviewed this and does not consider the strip is impacted by the proposed development i.e. it lies outside of the gardens of Plots 8 and 9.
33. Even if that were not the case, if legal rights exist these would remain as they do today and access would be maintained through the application site as required.

The Parish Council

34. The Parish Council comments as set out in its letter of 10 July include many of the points referenced by residents and so are not repeated here.
35. Aspects not specifically dealt with above are:
- That the site lies within the Green Belt
 - There is no need for the development
 - The proposal fails to deliver affordable housing

Green Belt

36. As the Council is aware, upon adoption of the local plan the site was removed from the Green Belt. It is no longer Green Belt land but rather an allocated development site within the defined settlement boundary of Ickleford.

No need for the development – Ickleford Needs have been met

37. As the Council is aware development which is allocated in the local plan is focussed on the more sustainable towns and villages. It is not the case that every town or village is given a housing allocation to exactly meet the housing needs solely arising from the settlement in question. The site is allocated as part of a collection of sites across many settlements which seek to meet the overall district wide needs in a sustainable manner.

No Affordable Housing

38. When allocating the site for development in the Local Plan the Council was of course aware that the site is not of a sufficient scale to trigger an affordable housing requirement. Council Policy HS2 seeks affordable housing on sites large enough to provide 11 or more new homes.

Conclusions

39. We do appreciate the matters raised by neighbours and the PC and hope that the responses that have been provided are helpful in addressing those points.
40. The proposals have been carefully considered and will deliver a high quality development as envisaged when the site was allocated for this purpose.