

Planning Statement

Planning Application

Erection of two dwellings

Land adjacent 21 Danesbury Park Road, Pottersheath,
Welwyn, AL6 9SH

DLA Ref: 25/392

January 2026

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1.0 Background

1.1.1 This report relates to a planning application for the erection of two dwellings at land adjacent 21 Danesbury Park Road, Pottersheath, Welwyn.

1.2.0 Scope

1.2.1 This document comprises an overarching Planning Report. Sections 2 to 4 consider the physical, economic, social and historical context of the site, identifying the relevant local, regional and national planning policy framework; and Section 5 sets out the details of the proposal. All these sections inform the evaluation of the proposal in Section 6 against the identified planning policy framework. The overall conclusions are set out in Section 7 and which are summarised below at paragraph 1.3.0.

1.3.0 Summary

1.3.1 The application site can be considered as grey belt land, such that a small scale residential development would not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The proposal would preserve the setting of the nearby listed building and the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Good living conditions would be provided for future occupiers and the residential amenity of neighbouring dwellings would be preserved. There are no highways or environmental reasons to restrict development.

2.0 SITE & CONTEXT ANALYSIS

2.1.0 Location

- 2.1.1 The site is located on the northern side of Danesbury Park Road, at its junction with Danesbury Lane. It is within a residential area known as Pottersheath, to the north-west of the settlement of Oaklands and to the north-east of Welwyn.

2.2.0 Application Site

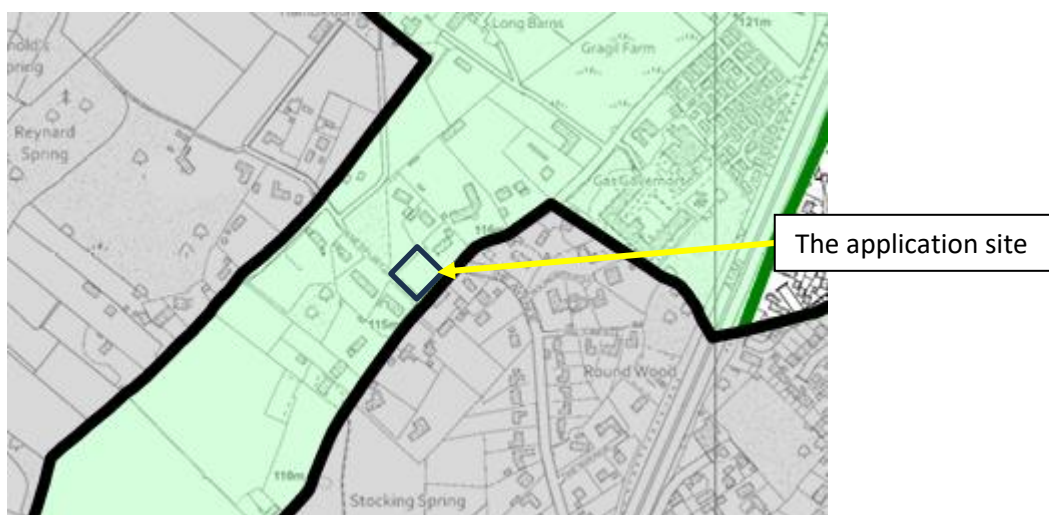
- 2.2.1 The site comprises an undeveloped, square parcel of land of some 0.16ha. The site is enclosed by hedges and timber fencing.

2.3.0 Context

- 2.3.1 To the north-east the site is bounded by No 21 Danesbury Park Road. This is a recently constructed two-storey dwelling of a contemporary appearance. To the south-east, on the opposite side of Danesbury Park Road is The Old House, No 12. This is a Grade II listed building, with parts of the property dating back to the 16th century. To the south-west the site is bounded by Danesbury Lane and on the opposite side of this is Heathfield, a two-storey detached dwelling. To the north-west are the entrances to 2a and 2b Danesbury Lane.

2.4.0 Proposals Map Notation

- 2.4.1 The Policies Map for the North Herts Local Plan 2011-2031 shows the site to be within the Green Belt and with no other designation.



Policies Map extract

2.5.0 Local Services

- 2.5.1 A parade of shops on the Great North Road (Mardley Hill), Oaklands is located some 1.4km from the application site via The Avenue. This includes a convenience store and a post office. The village centre of Welwyn, some 2.2km from the site, provides a wider range of local shops and services. There are schools both in Oaklands and Welwyn, the nearest being Oaklands

School at a distance of some 1.2km. Meadow View nursery and pre-school is within 900m at the end of the Avenue.

2.6.0 Accessibility

2.6.1 The nearest bus stops are within 900m of the site on Great North Road. These provide regular services to a number of destinations, including Stevenage, Knebworth, Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield. All of these settlements have railway stations.

3.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

3.1.0 Application Site

3.1.1 There is no relevant history for the application site.

3.2.0 Other Relevant Sites

3.2.1 **23/02102/FP** This application for a site at Heath Farm, Pottersheath Road, Pottersheath is considered relevant. A proposal for a 4-bedroom dwelling was approved in April 2024. The Officer's Report stated that the site was within a sustainable location. The proximity of Heath Farm to the application site is shown below.



4.0 POLICY CONTEXT

4.1.0 National Policy / Guidance

4.1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024, sets out the Government's planning policies for England. The following sections are considered directly relevant:

- Section 2: Achieving Sustainable Development
- Section 5: Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
- Section 8: Promoting healthy and safe communities
- Section 9: Promoting sustainable transport
- Section 11: Making effective use of land
- Section 12: Achieving well designed places
- Section 15: Conserving & enhancing the natural environment
- Section 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

4.1.2 Account is also taken of the National Design Guide - Planning practice guidance for beautiful, enduring and successful places, which aims to illustrate how well-designed places that are beautiful, healthy, greener, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice.

4.2.0 Development Plan

4.2.1 This comprises the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031. The following policies are considered relevant.

Policy No.	Title
SP1	Sustainable development in North Hertfordshire
SP2	Settlement Hierarchy and Spatial Distribution
SP5	Countryside and Green Belt
SP6	Sustainable transport
SP8	Housing
SP9	Design and sustainability
SP13	Historic environment
D1	Sustainable design
D3	Protecting living conditions
HE1	Designated heritage assets
NE2	Landscape
NE4	Biodiversity and geological sites
T1	Assessment of transport matters
T2	Parking

5.0 DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

5.1.0 Use

5.1.1 The proposal is for a Class C3 residential use comprising two, four-bedroom dwellings.

5.2.0 Layout

5.2.1 The dwellings would broadly align with the footprint of No 21 Danesbury Park Road. They would front towards the shared access drive with Nos 2a and 2b Danesbury Lane, set back from this by some 12m. Parking and turning areas would be to the front of the properties. The dwellings would have 12m rear garden depths with an additional landscaped area of approximately 5m width adjacent to Danesbury Park Road. A further landscape strip of some 4m width would separate the dwellings from Danesbury Lane. A detached dwelling would be located to the front of the properties.



Proposed Layout © BL Architecture and Design Ltd

5.3.0 Appearance & Scale

5.3.1 The dwellings would have a 1.5 storey appearance and a maximum ridge height of 7.8m. They would have a pitched, gable ended roof and, protruding front and rear projections and small dormer windows to the rear. Traditional materials would be used, including brick and roof tiles.



Proposed front elevation © BL Architecture and Design Ltd

5.4.0 **Landscaping**

5.4.1 As noted, the proposal includes two landscaping strips to the side and rear of the properties. The application is accompanied by a Landscape Plan and Landscape Statement. These show that a range of new tree, hedge, shrub and flower planting will be provided.

5.5.0 **Access**

5.5.1 The proposed access will be from Danesbury Lane via an existing shared drive. Visibility splays and a swept path analysis are provided in the accompanying Transport Technical Note.

5.5.2 Each of the properties would have a detached garage with additional parking spaces available in the driveway to the front of the dwellings.

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

Based on the analysis set out in Sections 2 to 5, I consider that the application proposal raises the following issues, which I will consider in turn below:

1. Principle
2. Heritage
3. Character and Appearance
4. Residential Amenity
5. Highway Safety & Access
6. Environment

6.1.0 Issue No 1: Principle

6.1.1.0 Policy Context

6.1.1.1 Local Plan Policy GBR1 advises that proposals for Green Belt sites will be determined in accordance with the provisions of the NPPF. Paragraph 154 of the NPPF advises that development in the Green Belt is inappropriate save for a number of exceptions. Paragraph 155 advises that the development of new homes on grey belt land may be regarded as not inappropriate.

6.1.2.0 Assessment

6.1.2.1 The December 2024 revision the NPPF introduced the concept of grey belt, which is defined in the glossary as:

“For the purposes of plan-making and decision-making, ‘grey belt’ is defined as land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) in paragraph 143. ‘Grey belt’ excludes land where the application of the policies relating to the areas or assets in footnote 7 (other than Green Belt) would provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development.”

6.1.2.2 Paragraph 155 of the new NPPF states that:

“The development of homes, commercial and other development in the Green Belt should also not be regarded as inappropriate where:

- a. The development would utilise grey belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan;*
- b. There is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed;*
- c. The development would be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to paragraphs 110 and 115 of this Framework; and*
- d. Where applicable the development proposed meets the ‘Golden Rules’ requirements set out in paragraphs 156-157 below.”*

6.1.2.3 The “Golden Rules” are then defined by paragraph 156 as follows:

“Where major development involving the provision of housing is proposed on land released from the Green Belt through plan preparation or review, or on sites in the Green Belt subject to a planning application, the following contributions (‘Golden Rules’) should be made:

- a. affordable housing which reflects either: (i) development plan policies produced in accordance with paragraphs 67-68 of this Framework; or (ii) until such policies are in place, the policy set out in paragraph 157 below;*

b. necessary improvements to local or national infrastructure; and
c. the provision of new, or improvements to existing, green spaces that are accessible to the public. New residents should be able to access good quality green spaces within a short walk of their home, whether through onsite provision or through access to offsite spaces."

- 6.1.2.4 The upshot of this new policy approach by the Government is that if a site is shown to be grey belt and, where applicable, the golden rules are met then development should not be considered inappropriate and very special circumstances are not required to be demonstrated.
- 6.1.2.5 The first step is to consider whether the application site could be considered grey belt. The site is not previously developed so it is a question of whether the site strongly contributes to Green Belt purposes a), b) and d).
- 6.1.2.6 **To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas:** The village of Pottersheath could not be considered a large built up area. Furthermore, the site is within a part of the village where there are only a few houses.
- 6.1.2.7 **To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another:** Development on the site would not result in towns, or any other forms of settlements being located closer together.
- 6.1.2.8 **To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns:** Pottersheath is not a historic town. Nonetheless, a small development in this location would not harm the character of the settlement.
- 6.1.2.9 On the basis that there is nothing approaching the "strong contribution" to Green Belt purposes referred to in the glossary and that none of the footnote 7 aspects apply, as such, the site is clearly grey belt.
- 6.1.2.10 The next question is whether the four requirements of paragraph 155 are satisfied and these are addressed below:
- 6.1.2.11 **The development would utilise grey belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across area of the plan:** As set out above, the site can be considered grey belt land. It would adjoin existing residential land and the small nature of the site means that its development could not "fundamentally" undermine the purposes of the remaining Green Belt. The development could not be considered as sprawl and, in any case, the latest Government guidance has confirmed that "urban sprawl" does not apply to villages.

6.1.2.12 **There is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed:** The Council acknowledges that it cannot demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply. The agenda for a December 2025 Planning Control Committee meeting reported a supply of between 2.6 and 3.3 years.

6.1.2.13 **The development would be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to paragraphs 110-115 of the Framework:** Paragraph 110 states that significant new development should be focused on locations which are or can be made more sustainable. It clarifies this further by advising:

“However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision making.”

6.1.2.14 The accessibility of the site is set out in more detail in the accompanying Transport Technical Note. A shopping parade in Oaklands is located some 1.2km from the site and Welwyn village centre is approximately 2.2km. Both can be accessed on foot via pavements and lightly trafficked shared surfaces. They can also be reached by bicycle within 4 minutes. Welwyn has a reasonable range of shops and services, commensurate to its Local Plan status as a large village.

6.1.2.15 In terms of public transport, the site is approximately 900m from bus stops on Great North Road. These provide 4 regular services per hour in each direction, including to Stevenage, St Albans and Welwyn Garden City.

6.1.2.16 Therefore, in the context of NPPF paragraphs 110-115, the site is considered to provide a sustainable location for a small residential development. This view is supported by the Council’s own recent decision making. For a site at Heath Farm, Pottersheath Road (23/01202/FP) the officer report recognised there were few services immediately around the site but nonetheless reasoned:

“Given the proximity of the site to Welwyn Garden City, I consider that it would be suitably sustainable given the availability of public transport links within the area among other leisure, retail and employment opportunities. Therefore, I consider that the site is in a sustainable location.”

6.1.2.17 Heath Farm is to the north-east of Danesbury Park Road. It is further from Welwyn, further from Welwyn Garden City and further from the nearest public transport link. It therefore must follow that the application site is also within a sustainable location.

6.1.2.18 Where applicable, the development proposed meets the ‘Golden Rules’ requirements set in paragraphs 156-157: Paragraph 156 of the NPPF sets out the ‘Golden Rules’ apply only to major development. The proposal would be for 2 houses on a site of less than 0.5 hectares. The Golden Rules therefore do not apply.

6.1.3.0 Conclusion

To conclude this issue, the application site is considered to represent grey belt, the provisions of paragraph 155 are satisfied and the three “Golden Rules” do not apply. The proposed development is therefore not inappropriate development in Green Belt terms and should be considered acceptable in principle.

6.2.0 Issue No 2: Heritage

6.2.1.0 Policy Context

- 6.2.1.1 In determining the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset - to include Conservation Areas - NPPF paragraph 212 states as follows:

“When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.”

- 6.2.1.2 Paragraph 207 provides guidance on the scale of assessment required to support any applications affecting heritage assets including reference to the significance of heritage assets. It states that.

“In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.”

- 6.2.1.3 Local Plan Policy HE1 states that applications relating to designated heritage assets or their settings shall be accompanied by a heritage assessment /justification. Proposals affecting the setting of a heritage asset will be approved where they preserve the asset’s significance.

6.2.2.0 Assessment

- 6.2.2.1 The Old House, No 12 Danesbury Park Road, is located to the south-east of the site. The building is Grade II listed. The list entry describes the house as having a C16 / C17 timber frame and C19 plaster front. The building possesses significant architectural significance and makes a very positive contribution to the character of the area.

- 6.2.2.2 Despite the proximity, the application site has little impact on the setting of the listed building due to the intervening conifer hedge. The hedge is substantial in size and dominates views from Danesbury Park Road. The proposed dwellings would not be seen in any views of The Old House and so would not alter its existing setting. Notwithstanding this, The Old House is already part of an established residential area and is close to several other properties. The dwellings would be set back from Danesbury Park Road, separated by gardens and a 4.5m+ landscaping strip. They would have a maximum ridge height of 7.8m and so would not be excessive in scale.



View of Old House from the junction of Danesbury Lane and Danesbury Park Road © Google Maps

6.2.3.0 Conclusion

- 6.2.3.1 To conclude this issue, by reason of their size, siting and the intervening boundary treatment, the proposed dwellings would preserve the setting and significance of the nearby listed building in accordance with Local Plan Policy HE1 and the provisions of the NPPF.

6.3.0 **Issue No 3: Character and Appearance**

6.3.1.0 **Policy Context**

6.3.1.1 Paragraph 135 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions ensure that developments - amongst other things – should: add to the long-term quality of the area; be visually attractive; and be sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting.

6.3.1.2 With regard to the North Hertfordshire Local Plan, Policy D1 (Sustainable Design) states that planning permission will be granted for development proposals that respond positively to the sites local context. Policy SP9 (Design and Sustainability) states that new development will be supported where it is well designed and located.

6.3.2.0 **Assessment**

6.3.2.1 The surrounding area is characterised by detached dwellings. There is considerable variety in terms of size, design, appearance and plot areas. Planning permission was recently granted at the neighbouring 21 Danesbury Park Road for a replacement dwelling with a contemporary design. Other dwellings in the area are typically more traditional in appearance.

6.3.2.2 The proposed dwellings would sit comfortably within this setting. At under 8m in height they would not be overly conspicuous within the streetscene. They would be set back from Danesbury Park Road by at least 16m and would be screened by the large conifer hedge. A gap of 5m would be retained to Danesbury Lane with the new dwellings, again, partly screened by a conifer hedge. The dwellings would incorporate a good quality design, utilising traditional features and materials. Their setting would be enhanced by a comprehensive landscaping scheme that includes both private gardens and managed landscape strips. The building/landscape ratio would ensure a spacious form of development that is in keeping with its surroundings.

6.3.4.0 **Conclusion**

6.3.4.1 To conclude this issue, the proposal has been carefully designed to deliver a high quality development that responds positively to the context of the site. The dwellings would be of an appropriate size, siting and appearance and their setting would be enhanced by a comprehensive landscaping scheme. The proposal would therefore comply with Local Plan Policies D1 and SP9 and the provisions of the NPPF.

6.4.0 **Issue No 4: Residential Amenity**

6.4.1.0 **Policy Context**

- 6.4.1.1 Paragraph 135 of the NPPF states that development should ensure a high standard of amenity for existing and future users. Local Plan Policy D3 similarly seeks to ensure that proposals do not cause unacceptable harm to living conditions.

6.4.2.0 **Assessment**

- 6.4.2.1 The siting of the proposed dwellings would ensure that they would not have a detrimental impact on any neighbouring occupiers. They would be positioned slightly forward of No 21 Danesbury Park Lane but would be comfortably outside of a 45 degree line from any windows and so would not result in a loss of light or overbearing impact. The dwellings would have a rear-to-front relationship with No 12 Danesbury Park Road. They would be separated by over 25m and with a tall coniferous hedge in between. This would ensure there would be no issue in respect of loss of privacy. Finally, the dwellings would have a side-to-front relationship with No 1 Danesbury Lane. At a distance of some 25m, there could be no issue of overbearing impact.

- 6.4.2.2 Future occupiers of the dwellings would be afforded excellent living conditions. The internal floor areas would comfortably exceed the minimum space standards and all habitable rooms would receive good levels of natural light. The dwellings would have large external amenity areas.

6.4.3.0 **Conclusion**

- 6.4.3.1 To conclude this issue, the size and siting of the dwellings would not give rise to any issues in respect of privacy, loss of light or overbearing impact. Future occupiers would be afforded excellent living conditions. The proposal would therefore accord with Local Plan Policy D3 and the provisions of the NPPF.

6.5.0 **Issue No 5: Highway Safety & Access**

6.5.1.0 **Policy Context**

6.5.1.1 NPPF paragraph 115 states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe. Local Plan Policy T1 similarly seeks to ensure highway safety and to protect the road network. Policy T2 requires a parking provision that is in accordance with Appendix 4 of the Plan. This requires 2 spaces per dwelling and up to 0.75 visitor spaces. One secure cycle space is required per dwelling but only where there is no garage provision.

6.5.2.0 **Assessment**

6.5.2.1 The application is accompanied by a Transport Technical Note. This identifies that the local walking environment around the site is good and the future occupiers would have reasonable access to local shops, services and public transport links. The proposal would ensure a safe access with larger vehicles, such as fire appliances, able to manoeuvre within the site. Appropriate visibility splays would also be provided. Trip generation would be low such that traffic associated with the development would likely be imperceptible on the local highway network. The Note concludes that there are no highways or transportation reasons to refuse the development.

6.5.2.2 Each of the properties could comfortably accommodate 3 car parking spaces by way of the detached garages and driveway. The garages would also provide secure cycle storage.

6.5.3.0 **Conclusion**

6.5.3.1 To conclude this issue, the proposal would have an acceptable impact on the local highway network. The scheme would include sufficient manoeuvring space for larger vehicles, appropriate visibility splays and the required level of off-street car parking. The proposal would therefore comply with Local Plan Policies T1 and T2 and the provisions of the NPPF.

6.6.0 Issue No 6: Environmental

6.6.1 Ecology

The application is accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Assessment. The Assessment recommends additional surveys for Great Crested Newts and Reptiles. A nesting bird survey will be required if development is carried out between March and August. The Newt and Reptile surveys cannot be carried before March and so it is requested that these are made subject to a condition. The Assessment concludes that, subject to these surveys, the proposal would not have significant or adverse impacts on protected species or their habitats.

6.6.2 The application includes a Biodiversity Net Gain Metric and Report. The proposal includes landscape strips which would be separate from the private garden to maximise their ecological potential. Despite, the Metric still indicates that the proposal would not deliver a 10% net gain, such that off-site credits will be required.

6.6.3 Landscaping

There are conifer hedges to the boundaries of the site. These would be retained as part of the proposal and would be separated from the dwellings by the landscaping strips. The remainder of the site is mainly scrub with some small self-seeded trees. The proposal includes a comprehensive scheme with significant new tree, hedge, shrub and flower planting. These would predominantly be native species, with many chosen for their ecological value.

6.6.4 Flooding

The Government's 1 in 1000 flood risk maps show that the site is not at risk for either river or surface water flooding. The inclusion of significant landscape areas would ensure that the proposal does not increase the risk of flooding off-site.



1 in 1000 map for surface water flooding

6.6.5 Conclusion

To conclude this issue, there are no environmental reasons that would prevent the development of the site.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

7.1.0 Background

7.1.1 This report relates to a planning application for the erection of two dwellings at land adjacent 21 Danesbury Park Road, Pottersheath, Welwyn. The proposal is promoted in the following circumstances:

- The application site is considered to represent grey belt, the provisions of paragraph 155 are satisfied and the three “Golden Rules” do not apply. The proposed development is therefore not inappropriate development in Green Belt terms and should be considered acceptable in principle.
- By reason of their size, siting and the intervening boundary treatment, the proposed dwellings would preserve the setting and significance of the nearby listed building in accordance with Local Plan Policy HE1 and the provisions of the NPPF.
- The proposal has been carefully designed to deliver a high quality development that responds positively to the context of the site. The dwellings would be of an appropriate size, siting and appearance and their setting would be enhanced by a comprehensive landscaping scheme. The proposal would therefore comply with Local Plan Policies D1 and SP9 and the provisions of the NPPF.
- The size and siting of the dwellings would not give rise to any issues in respect of privacy, loss of light or overbearing impact. Future occupiers would be afforded excellent living conditions. The proposal would therefore accord with Local Plan Policy D3 and the provisions of the NPPF.
- The proposal would have an acceptable impact on the local highway network. The scheme would include sufficient manoeuvring space for larger vehicles, appropriate visibility splays and the required level of off-street car parking. The proposal would therefore comply with Local Plan Policies T1 and T2 and the provisions of the NPPF.
- There are no environmental reasons that would prevent the redevelopment of the site.

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