

Thomas Howe
North Hertfordshire District Council
Planning Control & Conservation
Council Offices Gernon Road
Letchworth Garden City
Hertfordshire
SG6 3JF

Our ref: NE/2026/139072/01
Your ref: 25/01094/FP
Date: 12 February 2026

Dear Thomas,

Land to the Rear 34 Arlesey Road, Ickleford, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG5 3UU.

Erection of nine dwellings including access, parking and landscaping.

Thank you for consulting us on this application on 6 February 2026.

Environment Agency position:

We have **no objection** to the proposed development.

Most of the site lies within Flood Zone 1; however, the red line boundary does include some areas of Flood Zones 2 and 3.

Our detailed modelling, which factors in the presence of flood defences, shows that all built development is located outside the 1 in 1000-year (0.1% AEP) flood event and all events of greater frequency. However, the proposed swale is partly located within the modelled 1 in 100-year (1% AEP) flood extent, but as this should have no impact on fluvial floodwater flows or flood storage, we have no concerns with this proposal.

Advice to LPA:

Sequential Test

What is the sequential test and does it apply to this application?

In accordance with the NPPF (paragraphs 175-177 (inc. footnote 62)), development in flood risk areas should not be permitted if there are reasonably available alternative sites, appropriate for the proposed development, in areas with a lower risk of flooding. The sequential test establishes if this is the case.

Development is in a flood risk area if it is in Flood Zone 2 or 3, or it is within Flood Zone 1 and your strategic flood risk assessment shows it to be at future flood risk or at risk from other sources of flooding such as surface water or groundwater.

The only developments exempt from the sequential test in flood risk areas are:

- Householder developments such as residential extensions, conservatories or loft conversions
- Small non-residential extensions with a footprint of less than 250sqm
- Changes of use (except changes of use to a caravan, camping or chalet site, or to a mobile home or park home site)
- Applications for development on sites allocated in the development plan through the sequential test and:
 - the proposed development is consistent with the use for which the site was allocated; and
 - there have been no significant changes to the known level of flood risk to the site, now or in the future, which would have affected the outcome of the test
- Developments where no built development within the site boundary, including access or escape routes, land raising or other potentially vulnerable elements, would be located on an area that would be at risk of flooding from any source, now and in the future

Avoiding flood risk through the sequential test is the most effective way of addressing flood risk because it places the least reliance on measures such as flood defences, flood warnings and property level resilience.

Who undertakes the sequential test?

It is for you, as the LPA, to determine an appropriate area of search and to decide whether the sequential test has been passed, with reference to the information you hold on land availability. You may also ask the applicant to identify any other 'reasonably available' sites which are on the open market and to check on the current status of identified sites to determine if they can be considered 'reasonably available'. Further guidance on the area of search can be found in paragraphs 027-030 of the planning practice guidance [here](#).

What is our role in the sequential test?

We can advise on the relative flood risk between the proposed site and any alternative sites identified - although your strategic flood risk assessment should allow you to do this yourself in most cases. We won't advise on whether alternative sites are reasonably available or whether they would be suitable for the proposed development. We also won't advise on whether there are sustainable development objectives that mean steering the development to any alternative sites would be inappropriate. Further guidance on how to apply the sequential test to site specific applications can be found in the planning practice guidance [here](#).

Exception test

In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraphs 178 and 179), the proposed development is appropriate provided that the site meets the requirements of the exception test. Our comments on the proposals relate to the part of the exception test that demonstrates the development is safe. The local planning authority must decide whether or not the proposal provides wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh flood risk.

Connection to mains foul drainage (no foul drainage assessment submitted)

The Building Regulations 2010 and Government Guidance contained within the [PPG for Water Supply, Wastewater and Water Quality](#) (paragraph 020 ID: 34-020-20140306) sets out a hierarchy of drainage options that must be considered and discounted in the following order:

1. Connection to the public sewer
2. Connection to a private sewer that drains to a public sewer
3. Package sewage treatment plant or septic tank
4. Cesspool

Foul drainage should be connected to the main sewer whenever it is feasible to do so. Where this is not possible, under the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016 any discharge of sewage or trade effluent made to either surface water or groundwater will need to either comply with [General Binding Rules for Small Sewage Discharges](#) or comply with a permit issued by the Environment Agency, additional to any planning permission that may be required. This applies to any discharge to ground, inland freshwaters, coastal waters or relevant territorial waters. Further information about the permitting process can be found at [Septic tanks and sewage treatment plants: what you need to do](#).

Further advice is available at: [Septic tanks and treatment plants: permits and general binding rules](#)

Advice to applicant

Water Efficiency Advice

Increased water efficiency for all new developments potentially enables more growth with the same water resources. Developers can highlight positive corporate social responsibility messages and the use of technology to help sell their homes. For the homeowner lower water usage also reduces water and energy bills.

We endorse the use of water efficiency measures especially in new developments. Use of technology that ensures efficient use of natural resources could support the environmental benefits of future proposals and could help attract investment to the area. Therefore, water efficient technology, fixtures and fittings should be considered as part of new developments.

Residential developments

All new residential developments are required to achieve a water consumption limit of a maximum of 125 litres per person per day as set out within the Building Regulations 2010. We recommend that wherever possible and in areas of serious water stress (as identified in our report Water stressed areas - final classification) a higher standard of a maximum of 110 litres per person per day is applied. This standard may already be a requirement of the LPA. A higher standard may be required in future by some LPAs and these should be complied with where applicable.

We recommend you contact your LPA for more information.

Signing up for flood warnings

The applicant/occupants should phone Floodline on 0345 988 1188 to register for a flood warning or visit [Sign up for flood warnings - GOV.UK](#). It's a free service that provides warnings of flooding from rivers, the sea and groundwater, direct by telephone, email, or text message. Anyone can sign up.

Flood warnings can give people valuable time to prepare for flooding – time that allows them to move themselves, their families, and precious items to safety. Flood warnings can also save lives and enable the emergency services to prepare and help communities.

For practical advice on preparing for a flood, visit [Prepare for flooding: Protect yourself from future flooding - GOV.UK](#)

To get help during a flood, visit [What to do before or during a flood - GOV.UK](#)

For advice on what do after a flood, visit [What to do after a flood - GOV.UK](#)

Final comments

Thank you for contacting us regarding the above application. Our comments are based on our available records and the information submitted to us. Please quote our reference number in any future correspondence. Please provide us with a copy of the decision notice for our records. This would be greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Demitry Lyons
Sustainable Places Planning Advisor

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