

BNG (EXEMPTION) STATEMENT AND GARDEN PLAN
Change of use for existing detached annexe to detached independent dwelling
house, Annexe at Mill Corner, 22 Charlton Road, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG5 2AE

As a change of use application on an existing development, it follows that there are no proposed changes that would have any influence on existing Biodiversity issues. It can also be confirmed that any changes of use resulting from a successful outcome to this application would not result in any change or disruption to the existing natural environment/garden. The change of use application therefore meets the 'de minimis' exemption criteria, i.e that it involves no built development or impact on significant habitats.

Specifically, it can be confirmed that the application will not:

- Impact any **on-site priority habitat**.
- Impacts less than **25 square metres** of non-priority on-site habitat with a biodiversity value greater than zero.
- Impacts less than **5 metres** in length of non-priority on-site linear habitats (like hedgerows or watercourses).

The original development in 2021-2022 was carried out with the utmost sensitivity to its natural environment. As part of the existing development, any below ground disruption was overseen by an independent archaeological surveyor (as required by planning conditions) any land movement was minimal and only necessary due to the topography in order to retain and protect adjacent structures. Where this was the case, timber and gabion wall retaining structures were utilised using natural materials wherever possible.

All pathways and parking surfaces were created using locally sourced stone chippings and natural stone edging. No trees were removed and the native hedge between the site and adjoining footpath was retained; any open patches have been infilled with similar native hedge varieties, i.e Beech and Hawthorn.

Additional planting that has occurred has been in relation to a small number of raised bedding areas where potentilla hedging, rambling rose, wildflower and cottage garden varieties have been used. The natural Chestnut Paling fencing has been retained on the remaining boundary area and a short section (20 linear meters) of estate fencing, similar to that used on entry to Charlton, was installed within the site along the edge of a terraced area where it was necessary to provide protection from falling.

The applicants have owned the site for over 11 years and were very familiar with its biodiversity prior to development of the annexe, which commenced in 2021. Prior to 2014 the plot retained remnants of the original 18th century dwelling and was overgrown with brambles and had been used as an agricultural storage area; arguably a challenging area for natural wildlife. Since the development a significant increase in the amount of bee, bird, fox and rabbit activity has been observed.

Photos of the existing site/garden/planting, front and rear:



Cont'd/.



