

North Hertfordshire Council

Tree Officer comments

File Ref: 26/02077/OP
Date: 16/09/2026
Planning Officer: Saffron Loasby
Address: Site Of Former Oakfields Farm, Stevenage Road, Hitchin,
Hertfordshire, SG4 7JX
Subject: Outline Application : Erection of a single dwelling and
associated works, with all matters reserved except access.

1.0 Policy position: NPPF / Local Plan / Supplementary Planning Document

- 1.1 Paragraph 136 of the Achieving well-designed places chapter in the current Framework, addresses the integration of trees within new development. Draft NPPF Policy N3 (December 2025) proposes that trees in new development is included within the natural environment section to ensure consistency and alignment with wider environmental objectives.
- 1.2 North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 Chapter 11 deals with the natural environment.

Policy NE2: Landscape Planning permission will be granted for development proposals that: a) Respect the sensitivities of the relevant landscape character area and have regard to the guidelines identified for built development and landscape management; b) Do not cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area or the landscape character area in which the site is located, taking account of any suitable mitigation measures necessary to achieve this; c) Are designed and located to ensure the health and future retention of important landscape features; and d) Have considered the long-term management and maintenance of any existing and proposed landscaping

2.0 Observations

Trees

- 2.1 No tree survey data has been provided in support of the application, but a tree protection plan is included, which appears to adequately provide for the protection of T2 Oak located within the neighbouring property. No excavations appear to be required within the RPA of T2, so no specialist foundation design is anticipated to be necessary. Some consideration maybe

required with regards any landscaping within the RPA, depending on final intentions.

- 2.2 T3 and T4 2x cherries have already been removed from the site with T5 and T6 2x Plums are also to be removed. All four trees are categorised as C1 in accordance with BS5837:2012 meaning they are regarded as unremarkable trees of very limited merit or impaired condition. They do not appear to be large in size or rare in species and so they should not be a significant constraint on the site's potential.
- 2.3 The development intrudes into the RPA of T7 Willow located in a neighbouring garden and although categorised also as C1 grade, it is not down for removal and is to be retained as it is assumed to be within different ownership. Therefore, some care and consideration should be given to ensure construction works are not detrimental to the retention of this tree.

3.0 Conclusion

- 3.1 There are no arboricultural objections to the development, however if consent is to be granted, further details should be provided of tree protective measures to be implemented, including protective fencing and ground protection specifications. Details should also be provided of any landscaping and construction methodology where it occurs within the RPA of retained trees. These details and the Tree Protection Plan should be made available to all personnel on site working in close proximity to retained trees in the form of an Arboricultural Method Statement and should be secured by condition.

4.0 Recommendation

- 4.1 To ensure retained trees are afforded adequate protection during the construction and demolition of the proposed development I recommend the submission to the council of an Arboricultural Method Statement to complement the Tree Protection Plan in accordance with British Standard 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations for approval should be secured by condition.

Reason: To prevent damage to or destruction of trees to be retained on the site in the interests of 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.

Francis Mabbett
Tree and Landscape Officer