

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...Alex Howard.....

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
25/00696/FPH	Installation of gas tank and fence enclosure.	Standalone Farmhouse Wilbury Road Letchworth Garden City Hertfordshire SG6 4JN

Submitted Plan Nos

1092-04 1092-01 1092-02a 1092-03 1092-PL50 1092-PL51

1.0 Policies

SP5	Countryside and Green Belt
D1	Sustainable design
D3	Protecting living conditions
HE1	Designated heritage assets
SECN12	Achieving well-designed places
SECN16	Conserve + enhance historic environment

2.0 **Planning History**

- 2.1 **24/01673/FPH** - Alterations to existing windows, upgrade existing thermal efficiency, replace existing rooflights with conservation rooflights, infill existing rear porch to create weatherproof area, and installation of external drain. (revised plan received 22/11/2024).

Conditional Permission

- 2.2 **24/01674/LBC** - Alterations to existing windows, upgrade existing thermal efficiency, replace existing rooflights with conservation rooflights, infill existing rear porch to create weatherproof area, and installation of external drain. Internal alterations. (revised plans received 22/11/2024).

Conditional Permission

3.0 **Representations**

- 3.1 **Site Notice and Neighbour Consultation** – Comments received from 63 Highfield, 6 Croft Lane and 43 Wilbury Road, objecting to the proposal for the following reasons (summary):

- There is no confirmation on the LPG tanks capacity and this should be confirmed.

- There are no details of warning signage, colour of the tank/fencing colour, regulatory compliance/supplier standards, security review for the tank.
- There is no mention of the large Sycamore tree and its protection from the proposal.
- There is no existing LPG tank so why is this method being proposed over other methods?
- The proposal would be industrial in appearance and would have a harmful visual impact on the grade II listed building.
- Other less obtrusive methods would be better, such as all-electric or an air source heat pump.
- The proposal is contrary to the Heritage Foundation basic principles.

3.2 **Environmental Health** – No objections.

3.3 **Letchworth Heritage Foundation** – None received.

3.4 **Herts County Archaeology** – No comment.

3.5 **Conservation Officer** – No objection.

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

4.1.1 Standalone Farmhouse is a grade II listed building sited on Standalone Farm on the western edge of Letchworth. Standalone Farm is a working farm and visitor attraction open to the public and for school visits. The site is within the Green Belt and an Archaeological Area.

4.2 **Proposal**

4.2.1 Planning permission is sought for the installation of a gas tank and hit and miss fence enclosure. The tank and enclosure would be located in the private rear garden of the farmhouse.

4.3 **Key Issues**

4.3.1 The key considerations are the impact on the Green Belt, design, the impact on heritage assets, impact on archaeological matters, and the impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties.

Green Belt

4.3.2 The site is within the Green Belt. Paragraph 154 of the NPPF sets out the exceptions to inappropriate development in the Green Belt. It is considered that the proposal would not comply with any of the exceptions to inappropriate development in the Green Belt; however, given the scale, nature and location of the proposal which is a very modest form of development, screened by fencing and as a whole, will not be visible from anywhere except the rear garden of this property, it is considered that the proposal will not result in any material harm to the purposes and general aims of the Green Belt and

openness. An objection on such grounds is not considered reasonable or sustainable at appeal.

Design

- 4.3.3 Policy D1 of the Local Plan states that planning permission will be granted provided that development responds positively to the site's local context in addition to other criteria. These considerations are echoed in Section 12 of the NPPF.
- 4.3.4 The proposal is for a new gas tank in the rear garden of the host dwelling. The tank is to be screened by 2.0m tall close-boarded fencing. The proposal will be sited approx. 8.0m from the host dwelling and will be screened from the frontage by a mature hedgerow.
- 4.3.5 It is considered that the design of the proposal is acceptable in planning terms. Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposed hit and miss fencing isn't ideal from a visual perspective, its purpose is to screen the proposed gas tank which is far worse in terms of its external appearance. Moreover, given the location of the proposal behind the mature hedgerow, it will not be visible from anywhere except the rear garden of the dwelling. On balance, the design is considered acceptable
- 4.3.6 The proposal is therefore deemed acceptable in design terms and in accordance with Policy D1 of the Local Plan and Section 12 of the NPPF.

Impact on Heritage Assets/Archaeology

- 4.3.7 The host dwelling, Standalone Farmhouse, is a Grade II listed building. Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that where considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building, or its setting special regard shall be had to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural interest which it possesses. Policy HE1 of the Local covers the impact of development on designated heritage assets.
- 4.3.8 The applicant has submitted a Heritage Impact Statement and the Council's Conservation Officer has been consulted on it, stating as follows:

"Since the receipt of the heritage impact assessment which gives a much improved understanding of the impact on the setting of the listed building, and I would have no objections to the proposal based on the fact that it is well distanced from the listed building. The proposed close board fencing is sufficiently screened from view with hedging as to no cause harm to the setting.

The proposals would preserve the architectural and/or historic interest of the listed building and therefore complies with sections 16 (1) of the Act.

There is/are NO OBJECTION/S. The scheme will satisfy the provisions of Sections 16(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the aims of Section 16 of the NPPF and Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031".

- 4.3.9 As such, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable in heritage terms and will not harm the setting or significance of the host grade II listed building. This is in accordance with Policy HE1 of the Local Plan.
- 4.3.10 Given the nature of the development and following a response from the Herts County Council LEADS Department, there are no objections to the scheme on archaeological grounds.

Impact on Neighbours

- 4.3.11 Policy D3 of the Local Plan states that planning permission will be granted for development proposals which do not cause unacceptable harm to living conditions.
- 4.3.12 The property is isolated and does not benefit from any neighbours. Therefore, the proposal will not result in any harm to the reasonable living conditions of neighbouring dwellings.
- 4.3.13 Therefore, the proposal will not cause unacceptable harm to living conditions, in line with Policy D3 of the Local Plan.

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 4.3.14 The proposal is exempt from the mandatory 10% BNG.

Other Matters

- 4.3.15 A number of interested parties have queried the principle of the proposal, insofar as it relates to the installation of an LPG gas tank instead of other means of gas production which would be more green/sustainable. In response, upon querying this with the agent, it was stated that other means of heating the dwelling were considered, such as air source heat pumps, but this was discarded due to heat loss associated with the historic building. Given that this is a listed building, the level of insulation required to facilitate other means may well go above what would be acceptable in heritage terms. On balance, whilst the proposed tank is not the most sustainable form of gas supply, in this instance it is considered acceptable.

4.4 Conclusion

- 4.4.1 The proposal is considered acceptable in planning terms and in accordance with Policies D1, HE1 and D3 of the Local Plan, as well as Section 12 and 16 of the NPPF.

4.5 Alternative Options

- 4.5.1 N/A

4.6 Pre-Commencement Conditions

- 4.6.1 N/A

5.0 Recommendation

5.1 That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out wholly in accordance with the details specified in the application and supporting approved documents and plans listed above.

Reason: To ensure the development is carried out in accordance with details which form the basis of this grant of permission.

3. The fencing hereby permitted shall be built with vertical timber treated boards as detailed in the approved plans.

Reason: to ensure the development is sympathetic to local context, in line with Policy D1 of the Local Plan.

4. In the event that the gas tank comes to the end of its operational lifetime, the gas tank, fence enclosure and any other associated footings and development shall be removed from the site and disposed of in an environmentally responsible manner. The application site and associated land is to be made good again within one year of the removal of the development.

Reason: To protect the character and setting of the listed building, in line with Policy HE1 of the Local Plan.

Proactive Statement:

Planning permission has been granted for this proposal. The Council acted proactively through positive engagement with the applicant during the determination process which led to improvements to the scheme. The Council has therefore acted proactively in line with the requirements of the Framework (paragraph 38) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

Signed  Anne McDonald	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Determining Officer Date: 21 May 2025	