

Tom Rea
North Hertfordshire District Council
Planning Policy & Projects
Council Offices Gernon Road
Letchworth Garden City
Hertfordshire
SG6 3JF

Our ref: NE/2025/137817/01
Your ref: 24/02814/FP

Date: 30 January 2025

Dear Tom,

Land at Mill Farm, Charlton, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG5 2AB

Conversion and extension of existing barns to create two dwelling following demolition of shed/outbuildings/silos. Alterations to existing vehicular access.

Thank you for consulting us on the above application on 15 January 2025.

Environment Agency Position

We have reviewed the application and have **no objection to the proposal**. The proposed development is located entirely within floodzone 1 and so will not increase flood risk to the future occupants or elsewhere. Due to the proximity to the River Hiz, we would like to **include the following condition**:

Condition

Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification, no structure shall be erected and no landscaping shall take place within the rear gardens of the proposed development located East of the River Hiz.

Reason

The rear gardens to the east of the main river may be partially located within the functional floodplain, (Flood Zone 3b). This condition is to ensure that there is no additional risk of flooding or alteration of the functional flood plain, which may reduce the functional flood plain and increase the risk of flooding both on and off site. The functional floodplain designation should be confirmed with your local authority.

Advice to Local Planning Authority

Biodiversity Net Gain

We are not a statutory consultee for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) however, we are providing advice on the watercourse metric for your consideration on those applications that met our internal risk bar and where we are able to add value. For this application, we have not reviewed the BNG information or any metric

calculations for watercourses as part of our response. Our position on this application does not mean that the BNG proposals are appropriate as submitted, however, we can offer the following advice:

The Watercourse Unit Module within the Statutory Biodiversity Metric is of key importance in determining whether BNG has been met for watercourses. The Watercourse Unit Module is applied to priority rivers; other rivers and streams; canals; ditches and culverted sections of these features.

Please be aware, this application is subject to statutory BNG and requires completion of the Watercourse Unit Module by a competent person because the watercourse bank top is within 10m of the redline boundary (ie the red line boundary intersects the riparian zone).

Guidance on undertaking metric calculations is available in [The Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide \(Feb 2024\)](#) and all information regarding BNG can be found via <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/understanding-biodiversity-net-gain> or in the [planning practice guidance](#).

Further information, data and advice on our rivers and catchments can be found using the [England | Catchment Data Explorer](#) and [River Basin Management Plans](#).

Advice to applicant

Any proposed flood resilient measures should follow current Government Guidance. For more information on flood resilient techniques, please see the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) guidance document "Improving the Flood Performance of New Buildings – Flood Resilient Construction", which can be downloaded from the following website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/flood-resilient-construction-of-new-buildings>

The Environment Agency operates a flood warning system for existing properties currently at risk of flooding to enable householders to protect life or take action to manage the effect of flooding on property. Flood Warnings Service (F.W.S.) is a national system run by the Environment Agency for broadcasting flood warnings. Receiving the flood warnings is free; you can choose to receive your flood warning as a telephone message, email, fax or text message. To register your contact details, please call Floodline on 0345 988 1188 or visit <https://www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings>

Registration to receive flood warnings is not sufficient on its own to act as an evacuation plan. We are unable to comment on evacuation and rescue for developments. Advice should be sought from the Emergency Services and the Local Planning Authority's Emergency Planners when producing a flood evacuation plan.

Water Resources

Increased water efficiency in new developments potentially enables more growth to be realised without an increased availability of water resources. Developers can highlight responsible water use as a positive corporate social responsibility message

that will boost the commercial appeal of the development. For the homeowner/tenant, lower water usage also reduces water and energy bills.

We endorse the use of water efficiency measures in all developments, particularly in those that are new. 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 all considered as an integral part of new developments and/or refurbishments. The technology used to achieve improved water efficiency (e.g. efficient fittings, greywater recycling, etc) is also an attractive feature for many prospective building owners and tenants.

The supply of water in the area is under serious water stress (as identified in our report: [Water stressed areas – 2021 classification](#)). All residential developments must therefore achieve the higher water consumption efficiency standard of 110 litres per person per day, as set out within [the Building Regulations &c. \(Amendment\) Regulations 2015](#). This standard **or higher** may already be a requirement of the local planning authority.

We also recommend you contact your Local Planning Authority for more information.

Pre-Application Advice

Regarding future applications, if you would like us to review a revised technical report prior to a formal submission, outside of a statutory consultation, and/or meet to discuss our position, this will be chargeable in line with our planning advice service. If you wish to request a document review or meeting, please contact our team email address at HNLsustainableplaces@environment-agency.gov.uk.

Further information on our charged planning advice service is available at; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-advice-environment-agency-standard-terms-and-conditions>.

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.

Should you have any queries regarding this response, please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Ms Frankie Mansi
Planning Advisor

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