



Planning, Design & Access Statement

Concrete Yard to front of Bury Lodge, Ickleford Bury, Old Hale Way, Ickleford, SG5 3UW

Permission in Principle Stage 1 Application: The redevelopment of a concrete yard area and double garage for a low level bungalow

Project No

458

Project Title

Ickleford

Date

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Reference

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Context

This Planning in Principle (PIP) Stage application seeks to redevelop an existing walled concrete yard area and double garage within a residential cluster of homes into a bespoke 2-bedroom home on previously developed land (PDL) within the Green Belt. The proposal is on the edge of the designated Ickleford village settlement boundary and opposite the Bowmans Mill site (also outside of the settlement boundary) which is set for redevelopment.

The PIP site relates strongly with the cluster of surrounding residential properties and the centre of Ickleford with its wide-ranging facilities and services.

The concrete yard is the left-over land following redevelopment to the south for the erection of Bury Lodge, first approved in 2018 and final amendments being approved in 2021. Following the building of Bury Lodge, the PIP site has been used for the storage of materials in connection with maintenance of Ickleford Bury. With this maintenance coming to an end, it is sought to make a meaningful use of the concrete yard by way of a low level Architect designed new home.

It is envisaged the new home will not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt (NPPF Paragraph 154g and would utilise Grey Belt Land (NPPF Paragraph 155) given its detachment from the wider Green Belt setting.

Access to the PIP site is from Old Hale Way and from the Ickleford Bury driveway.

The land itself is principally flat opening many design possibilities enabling a proposal of a new home in this unique location. Through integration, the home will be nestled within its village location and will be complemented by the well-established surrounding built forms.

Ickleford is classed as a village by the Council within the Local Plan. Policy S2 identifies in the plan period 235 new homes are planned on open green space and redevelopment of brownfield land within the plan period. The proposal being a windfall site, seeks to redevelop PDL – not green virgin open land.

The proposal seeks to make efficient use of PDL whilst having no adverse impacts upon the openness of the Green Belt, its neighbouring residential properties due to design (illustrative design plan submitted), closely relates to Ickleford Village and is within a sustainable location.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out infilling and redevelopment of PDL is an acceptable exception for development within the Green Belt providing it would not cause substantial harm to the openness. Being Green Belt in location, these tend to be outside of settlement boundaries.

PIP Stage 1 Requirements

The permission in principle consent route was introduced by the Government in 2017 as a way of obtaining planning permission for housing-led development which separates the consideration of matters of principle for proposed development from the technical details of the development. The permission in principle consent route has two stages:

The first stage (or 'permission in principle stage') establishes whether a site is suitable in principle and the second ('technical details consent') stage covers

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assessment of the detailed development elements of a proposal. Granting of Stage 2 technical details consent is akin to a full planning application, only the principle of planning permission being suitable on the site having been established at Stage 1.

For the purpose of PIP Stage 1, the LPA will make a decision on whether to grant PIP for a site in accordance with relevant policies contained within the Local Development Plan (LDP) unless there are material considerations, such as updated policy context within the NPPF and national guidance which indicate otherwise. The scope of matters which can be considered with Permission in Principle is limited to:

- location of the site
- the type of land use proposed
- the amount of development

Issues relevant to these 'in principle' matters should be considered at Stage 1. All other matters should be considered at Stage 2 (the technical details consent stage). Applications for technical details consent must be determined within three years of Stage 1 being granted.

At Stage 1, the LPA are not able to impose conditions or finalise S106 agreements to be attached to a grant of permission in principle. However, the LPA can inform Applicants about what they expect to see at the technical details consent stage. It is acknowledged, NHDC do assist future applications in this regard.

Is PIP Stage 1 Suitable for this Application?

5B of The Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) (Amendment) Order 2017 requires that:-

(1) A local planning authority may not grant permission in principle, on an application to the authority, in relation to development which is —

(a) major development;

PIP is sought for the construction of one dwelling on the plot. The development is not a major development and therefore meets this element.

(b) habitats development;

According to the Councils Policies Map, the site does not fall within any statutory protected habitats. The proposal meets this element.

(c) householder development; or

The application is not a householder planning application and therefore this element is met.

(d) Schedule 1 development.

The proposal is not a Schedule 1 development. This element is met.

The application is suitable for consideration under the prelude of PIP Stage 1.

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Site Description and Surroundings

Redline Site Size: Circa 0.04Ha

Ickleford Bury and Bury Lodge Site in control of Applicants: 0.55Ha

The PIP site is located within a cluster of homes just outside of the village settlement boundary. Despite being located on the other side of the settlement boundary, it is within very close proximity to the centre of Ickleford with its wide range of services and facilities.

The site is within walking distance of Ickleford and its local amenities including shop, schools, pubs, restaurants, and bus routes. It also has good sports facilities and social enterprises which can be accessed by walking or cycling. The proposed entrance from the PIP site onto Old Hale Way has a footpath with direct access into Ickleford. It is a 400 metre walk along the established footpath to Ickleford Stores. Such walk would take the average person 5 minutes or 1 minute cycle ride.

As such, the proposal can be considered to be in a sustainable location.

The Councils Local Plan identifies Ickleford as a village and notes "The village of Ickleford has a relatively good range of facilities, including a school, shops, public houses, village hall and church." It also acknowledges it is one of five villages where a greater amount of development has been allocated. This does not include the Bowmans Mill Site opposite which is yet to be developed.

The PIP site is a walled concrete yard with no soft landscaping and is principally flat. It is part of the wider Ickleford Bury site which does not contribute positively to the estates setting. The concrete yard has recently been used for the storage of building materials for the maintenance of Ickleford Bury. With these works coming to an end, the yard will become vacant.

The concrete yard meets the NPPF definition of PDL and can be considered Grey Belt Land in that it does not contribute to the openness of the wider Green Belt setting.

The concrete yard is quadrilateral in shape with brick boundary walls on the south, west and east of the site up to 2.1 metres in height. These boundary walls provide containment of the site and privacy to and from neighbours, in particular Riverside Lodge. Of note, the bungalow of Riverside Lodge to the east has a ground level of approximately 1 metre below the application site. As such any future low-level bungalow is unlikely to be seen from the Riverside Lodge front garden.

Riverside Lodge has recently finished extensive extension works to the property. To the north of the site is Bury Lodge. Bury Lodge is in the process of building a new boundary to provide separation from the concrete yard area. The distance from the front of Bury Lodge to the boundary of the PIP site is 6.2 metres.

To the west is Ickleford Bury a flatted development. Also on the west is the vehicle access into the site and Bury Lodge.

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Site Photographs



The walled concrete yard, double garage and existing vehicle access



View from vehicle access into the walled concrete yard

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Driveway entrance from Old Hale Way



Footpath from the PIP site into Ickleford Village

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Design Proposal

Our proposal consists of the redevelopment of PDL. The existing double garage will be demolished, and the concrete yard is proposed to be transformed into a new low level bungalow.

At this stage, we envisage the bungalow to feature a green roof and comprise of two bedrooms. This modest bungalow will almost entirely be unseen from any neighbouring vantage points due to the existing height of the boundary walls and topography of neighbouring properties such as Riverside Lodge.

Space configuration has been considered to maintain vehicle access to the parking area of Bury Lodge as well as a new parking location for the proposed new home. The proposed parking allocation is set at 2 car parking spaces.

To compliment a high level of design internally, the bungalow will be of modern architecture to differentiate against the older building of Ickleford Bury. Likewise, the proposal will have a courtyard garden for future occupiers to use as private amenity space whilst still having full access to the wider grounds of Ickleford Bury to enjoy as and when wanted. The courtyard garden provides private space set within the existing walls for future occupiers to sit, have a BBQ and hang washing. All unseen from any vantage point.

The Stage 2 proposal will focus on turning the concrete yard into a green oasis. New landscaped sections to integrate the new home, as well as the landscaped courtyard and green roof will visually enhance this plot making efficient use of land within a sustainable location.

Access to the site is via Old Hale Way from the existing driveway leading directly to the proposed car parking as shown on the indicative block plan.

With its location in very close proximity to Ickleford Village, the proposal can benefit from the existing amenities and be a new home to enjoy.

Planning Policy Framework

Planning Documents

- North Hertfordshire Local Plan Adopted November 2022
- Ickleford Neighbourhood plan 2024
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024

Local Plan Planning Policies

- Policy SP1 – Sustainable Development
- Policy SP2 – Settlement Hierarchy and Spatial Distribution – Villages removed from Green Belt Policies to enable greater degrees of development. Directs new housing to existing settlements due to being in sustainable locations.
- Policy SP5 – Countryside and Green Belt – Links to SP2 in that villages have been removed from the boundaries of the Green Belt. The Policy enables development in the Green Belt which would not result in inappropriate development by definition and in sustainable locations. Section 4.61 directs that the Council will permit development within the

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- Green Belt which is not inappropriate in accordance with the NPPF and detailed policies of the Local Plan
- Policy SP6 – Sustainable Transport – encourages development in sustainable locations with key facilities such as shops, pubs, schools...
 - Policy SP8 – Housing Provision/Numbers – seeks to maintain a 5YHLS, but is currently at 3.4 – 3.7 years. It seeks to achieve 20% of new homes on PDL. The PIP site is PDL. Section 4.95 identifies, to achieve the required housing numbers the settlement boundaries of villages, these need to be expended. Section 4.96 identifies the importance of windfall sites in PDL such as the PIP Site. Section 4.104 identifies, housing completions need to accelerate well above those achieved historically to support the Governments “significant boost” of housing supply. Section 4.117 identifies the importance of small windfall sites for self-build and small developments. It highlights that small windfall sites have made a valuable contribution to housing land supply. Such sites are supported by the Council in accessible locations (Section 4.118).
 - Policy SP9 – Design and Sustainability – Expects new homes to be in sustainable locations and aesthetically to achieve a high level of design and sustainability for all proposals. The proposal will be of high-quality architectural design with embedded sustainability measures which will be showcased in Stage 2.
 - Policy SP11 – Natural Resources and Sustainability – Detail to be provided at Stage 2
 - Policy SP12 – Green Infrastructure, Landscape and Biodiversity – Supports greening of sites. An indicative plan is provided at Stage 1 which demonstrates some greening improvements which are envisaged to be achieved. Full details will be provided at Stage 2.
 - Policy T2 – Parking provision in accordance with Appendix 4 of the Local Plan.
 - Policy D1 – Sustainable Design incl SuDs – To be provided at Stage 2.
 - Policy D3 – Protecting Living Conditions – To maintain neighbour amenity. An indicative plan is shown at Stage 1, with full details following at Stage 2.
 - Policy NE4 – Biodiversity – envisaged to be exempt from BNG due to site characteristics but ecological enhancement will be proposed within Stage 2.
 - Policy NE7 – Reducing Flood Risk - Site is within Flood Zone 1
 - Policy NE8 – Sustainable Drainage Systems – Not required at Stage 1. Required details to be provided at Stage 2.

Ickleford Neighbourhood Plan

- Policy E1 – Maintaining separation of Ickleford and Hitchin by maintaining the undeveloped gap.
- Policy E2 – Protecting the landscape and enhancing ecological and landscape value through native planting.
- Policy E3 – Maintaining the rural character.
- Policy E4 – Biodiversity Enhancement.
- Policy SD1 – Supports Development within the settlement boundary where infilling and redevelopment of brownfield. The proposal site is just outside of the settlement boundary and very closely related to Ickleford.
- Policy SD2 – New Housing Development will support smaller new homes of 1-3 bedrooms.
- SD3 – High Quality Design.
- SD4 – Energy Efficient Buildings.

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NPPF 2024

- Paragraph 11 sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- Paragraph 39 directs local planning authorities to approach proposed development in a positive and creative way and decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.
- Paragraph 61 supports the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes and highlights that it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay.
- Paragraph 73 identifies that small sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirements of an area as they are built out relatively quickly and advises that local authorities should seek opportunities through policies and decisions to support small sites for self-build housing.
- Paragraph 125 states that planning decisions should give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, proposals for which should be approved unless substantial harm would be caused. The proposal being just outside of the settlement boundary, still is part of the village of Ickleford. An arbitrary black line on a map does not define the physical view of how land is related to the village as a whole.
- Paragraph 135 states that planning decisions should ensure that developments will function well and add to the overall quality of the area and are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping. It is further stated that development should optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development and create spaces that are safe inclusive and accessible.
- Paragraph 154 states that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. A number of exceptions are identified as development which may be appropriate. For the purpose of this application paragraph 154g – Infilling and partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land which would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt
- Paragraph 155 provides for the delivery of new homes which utilise Grey Belt land. Land which is previously developed and/or land which does not contribute to the purpose of the Green Belt, where the Council has a need for the housing type and is within a sustainable location.

Assessment of PIP Stage 1 Proposal

The assessment of the proposal is focussed on the principle of erecting a single dwelling on the site.

Infilling and Redevelopment of Previously Developed Land

Following the building of Bury Lodge, the walled concrete yard has been in use to store materials for the refurbishment to Ickleford Bury. With these works coming to an end, attention is drawn to how this area of land can be used efficiently.

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The walled concrete yard meets the definition of PDL as prescribed within the NPPF. As such the proposal is in compliance with NPPF policy 154g which enables an exception to Green Belt development for

"limited infilling or partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land (including a material change of use to residential or mixed use including residential), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt."

The proposal represents both infilling and redevelopment of PDL. The positioning of the plot within the cluster of homes would utilise a vacant gap within a walled setting. Its setting within this cluster of homes is restricted in size and would not expend further into the wider open Green Belt to the south.

The purpose of Green Belt exceptions is to enable suitable development where it will not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

The alteration of wording within the NPPF for infilling and redevelopment of sites removed the need for such proposals to be located within villages. It is acknowledged the proposal is outside of the Ickleford settlement boundary which Local Plan Policy S2 seeks the majority of new homes to be within. Policy S2 was put in place to resist homes in open countryside and for new homes to be within sustainable locations.

The location of the residential plot has been shown within the "Site Description and Surroundings" section of this Statement as being very closely related to Ickleford being a 1 minute cycle ride or 5 minute walk to the village shop and its many facilities and amenities including a bus network into Hitchin and beyond.

The location of which can be deemed an accessible location in accordance with Local Plan Policies SP1, SP5, SP8, SP9 and the NPPF as a whole.

It is proposed to replace the existing double garage building and build a bespoke low level bungalow in its place. Whilst the building is envisaged to be slightly larger than what it replaces, its replacement will not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt due to positioning. The positioning of the bungalow within an existing walled yard, the walls and existing landscaping to provide setting and screening and the modest size of the bungalow including its height is likely to be unseen from outside of the property boundaries.

These elements in combination with the envisaged landscaping will improve the appearance of this section of the site and as such improve the openness of the Green Belt by design.

With no changes outside of the sites redline boundary, the proposal will have near no adverse effect upon the locality.

Grey Belt Land

Paragraph 155 of the NPPF was introduced in December 2024 for the development of homes and commercial buildings in the Green Belt where a proposal would:

- a) Utilise Grey Belt Land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan;
- b) There is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed;

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- c) The development would be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to paragraphs 110 and 115 of this Framework

Other criteria become relevant if the application is a major. In this instance, the application is a minor which triggers compliance with the above three points.

With Grey Belt Land designation and development being more recent than the Local Plan, Paragraph 155 should be attributed great weight.

With Grey Belt development being in more rural locations by way of characteristic, it is likely to be in near all times outside of settlement boundaries.

The following assesses the proposal against Paragraph 155 of the NPPF:

Section a)

Grey Belt is defined within the NPPF as:

"land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b) or (d) in paragraph 143."

The land itself meets the definition of PDL being a walled concrete yard with brick built double garage. It also does not strongly contribute to any purpose (a), (b) or 9d):

- (a) "To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas". The PIP site is closely related to Ickleford Bury and Bury Lodge and contained within tall boundary walls. It also relates well with Riverside Lodge to the east. Due to its location, it would not contribute to sprawling development into the open Green Belt setting to the south.
- (b) "To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another". The proposal is aligned to the village of Ickleford which is not a town by definition. The Green Belt PPG 2025 makes it clear that the wording reflects the merging of towns and not smaller settlements.
- (d) "To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns". The proposal is not close by any historic towns and as such as prescribed within the Green Belt PPG 2025, the proposal would not affect such characteristic.

The proposal is in compliance with Part a) of paragraph 155 of the 2024 NPPF.

Section b)

Section b) requires a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed. The proposal is for a bungalow.

Taken directly from the Councils website on 19/01/2026 for the purpose of housing land supply; the Council are currently between 3.4 and 3.7 years. With this number being well below the 5 year target set by Government, there is a clear demonstrable unmet need for new residential development. Even small sites such as this application can help make the difference as prescribed within the Local Plan such as policy S8. The Council's website states:

Five Year Land Supply

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"The 5-year housing land supply is a calculation of whether there is a deliverable supply of homes to meet the planned housing requirement. The Position Statement below sets out the Council's latest land supply position. An addendum to the Position Statement has been produced following the release of new affordability ratios on the 25 March 2024.

New Standard Method for calculating local housing need

In December 2024, the Government published a new methodology for calculating local housing need. Using this methodology, the Council's housing requirement has increased from 1,041 new homes per annum to 1,265 homes per annum.

For the purpose of calculating Five Year Housing Land Supply (5YHLS), the NPPF also requires a 5% buffer to ensure choice and competition in the market. This means that the Council's overall housing need requirement for 5YHLS purposes is currently $1,265 + 63 = 1,328$ new homes per annum.

The consequence of this increase is a supply deficit. The Council is currently reviewing its land supply trajectory to understand the deliverable supply of homes over the next five years and will publish an updated Five Year Housing Land Supply Position Statement in due course. An interim calculation, based on completions up to late February 2025 and a reassessment of the Council's District Plan allocated sites in the housing trajectory, suggests that the housing land supply calculation is currently between 3.4 and 3.7 years."

It has been shown by the Council publishing the above, there is a demonstrable unmet need for new homes in the District. This aligns with the concerns expressed in Local Plan policy SP8 which sought higher new home completion numbers than preceding years. It is evident that the creation of new homes together with the Governments increased housing numbers has led to an insufficient supply of land for new homes in the District.

The proposal is in compliance with Part a) of paragraph 155 of the 2024 NPPF.

Section c)

Section c) requires development to be in sustainable locations. It is evident with the footpath running into the centre of the village and being very close to the shops, facilities and services, the proposal is within a sustainable location.

NPPF paragraph 110 directs patterns of growth within sustainable locations. It mostly directs such growth for "significant development". This proposal being 1 dwelling cannot be considered significant development. It does however stress that sustainable transport options vary between urban and rural areas and this should be taken into account when decision making.

The proposal is walkable and cyclable into the centre of Ickleford. Such on its own represent sustainable transport options locally. This together with the bus network demonstrate the proposal to be in a sustainable location.

NPPF paragraph 115 considers transport options further. It seeks suitable transport modes for the development type and location, safe access to and from the site, suitable street design and mitigation in the event of significant impacts from development.

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The proposal has good access to sustainable transport modes, walking, cycling and the bus network. Such modes are suitable for the location and scale of the development.

The proposal maintains the safe vehicle and pedestrian access from Old Hale Way.

The proposal is small scale and as such will not impact local transport modes.

The proposal is in compliance with Part c) of paragraph 155 of the 2024 NPPF.

It is shown through this assessment which is in line with the requirements of the Green Belt PPG 2025 that the proposal is a suitable exemption to development within the Green Belt and the site can be considered as Grey Belt development.

Site Layout and Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS)

The proposal will comply with the NDSS.

The proposed indicative site layout demonstrates vehicle access to Bury Lodge is unaffected, and the proposal can accommodate two car parking spaces.

It is also shown that the proposal would have a courtyard style garden for private amenity as well as use of the Ickleford Bury Estate providing generous outside amenity spaces for future residents.

Full details to be provided at Stage 2 PIP.

Sustainability and Ecology

At Stage 1 PIP these elements are not a consideration. These elements will be designed for Stage 2 PIP application, but will include meaningful ecological enhancements and a fabric first building shell to be energy efficient.

Conclusion

The principle for development has been demonstrated to be suitable for the plot.

It will not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt and will make efficient use of PDL and Grey Belt Land.

The proposal brings opportunity for greening of this part of the site whilst delivering a new home on a windfall plot.

The new home is in an accessible and sustainable location being very close to the centre of Ickleford.

It is shown on the submitted drawings and this statement that the proposal should receive PIP Stage 1. We respectfully request this application to be approved.