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Ben Glover
Senior Planning Officer
North Herts District Council
Gernon Rd
Letchworth
SG6 9SQ

6th August 2026

Dear Ben,

Site Address: Land On The South Of, Oughtonhead Lane, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG5 2NA
Planning Ref. 23/00563/FP – Erection of 43 dwellings, access from Lower Innings, associated internal roads, parking, landscaping, amenity space and open space.

Planning Portal Reference: PP-15134100

Please find enclosed our Non-Material Amendment application, which seeks to amend the number of solar panels shown on the approved plans.

Background

Full planning permission was granted planning permission on 22nd April 2025, reference 23/00563/FP, which is described as follows:

‘Erection of 43 dwellings, access from Lower Innings, associated internal roads, parking, landscaping, amenity space and open space’.

This application submission comprises the following (in addition to this cover letter):

- Planning Fee of £400 (£309 fee + £91 service charge, paid via the Planning Portal)
- Application Form
- Revised Drawing Package comprising:
 - Planning Site Layout - 23/003/011 - PL11
 - Refuse Strategy Layout - 23/003/012 - PL05
 - Street Elevations A & B - 23/003/015 - PL06
 - Street Elevations C & D - 23/003/016 - PL06
 - Type A - Elevations - 23/003/021 - PL04
 - Type B - Elevations - 23/003/023 - PL04
 - Type C - Elevations – 23/003/025 - PL04
 - Type D - Elevations - 23/003/027 - PL04
 - Type E - Elevations - 23/003/029 - PL05
 - Type F - Elevations - 23/003/031 - PL05
 - Type G1 - Elevations - 23/003/033 - PL05

- Type G2 - Elevations - 23/003/035 - PL05
- Type H - Elevations - 23/003/037 - PL04
- Type J - Elevations - 23/003/039 - PL05
- Type K - Elevations - 23/003/041 - PL05
- Type L1 - Elevations - 23/003/043 - PL05
- Type L2 - Elevations (Plot 9) - 23/003/045 - PL05
- Type L2 - Elevations - 23/003/047 - PL05
- Tenure Plan - 23/003/070 - PL05
- M4(2), M4(3) Plot Location Plan - 23/003/071 - PL04
- Public Open Space Plan - 23/003/072 - PL04

Proposed Non-Material Amendment

This non-material amendment application seeks to reduce the number of solar panels shown on the approved plans to two per dwelling across the development, with the exception of Plots 32 and 33 which were approved without solar panels under the detailed permission (Ref. 23/00563/FP).

The proposed amendment seeks to rationalise, rather than remove, photovoltaic provision across the development. Whilst solar panels would continue to be incorporated within the scheme, experience gained through the detailed design process has identified that the number of panels which had been shown indicatively on certain approved house types exceeds the amount necessary when considered with the other sustainability measures being employed – which includes adopting a fabric first approach, using techniques to maximise insulation, air tightness and heat recovery and the installation of air source heat pumps.

There is no specific policy requirement for solar panels. Local Plan Policy D1 seeks to reduce energy consumption and encourage sustainable design measures, rather than prescribe any particular renewable energy technology. The Committee Report confirmed that the detailed application (Ref. 23/00563/FP) was supported by an Energy Statement, demonstrating that all 43 dwellings would incorporate Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHPs). The Energy Statement assessed a range of renewable and low-carbon technologies and concluded that ASHPs represented the most appropriate energy strategy for the development. Solar panels were considered as part of that assessment but were not relied upon to demonstrate policy compliance.

The proposed reduction in the number of solar panels would not alter the conclusions of the approved Energy Statement or the overall sustainability credentials of the scheme. The development would continue to adopt a fabric-first approach to reducing energy demand and would retain ASHP technology throughout the site. As a result, the amendment would not affect the approved development's compliance with Local Plan Policy D1 or any other relevant planning policy.

In accordance with the advice contained within the National Planning Practice Guidance, the Local Planning Authority must have regard to the effect of the proposed changes. In our opinion, the amendments sought under this application are minor in scale and would not materially alter the approved scheme. The proposed reduction in the number of solar panels would not alter the overall character, appearance, or functionality of the development and would therefore have no material planning consequences.

It is therefore our view that the proposed amendments are non-material in nature and, as such, are capable of being considered through an application made under Section 96A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Accordingly, we respectfully request that the Local Planning Authority

approve the amendment as submitted.

I trust that you find the enclosed details acceptable and we look forward to receiving confirmation that the application has been registered as valid.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any additional information or wish to discuss the application.

Yours sincerely

James Angus MRTPI
Planning Manager
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