

Linda Eaton
Mildens
Snailswell Lane
Ickleford
Herts
SG5 3TS

To:
Thomas Howe
Planning Department
North Hertfordshire Council

20th August 2025

Dear Mr Howe

Subject: Formal Objection to Planning Application [Ref: 25/01790/FP] – Proposed Self-Build Dwelling at “The Orchard”, Adjacent to Mildens, Snailswell Lane, Ickleford

I wish to formally object to the above-referenced planning application on the following grounds. This objection draws upon the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011–2031, the Ickleford Neighbourhood Plan 2011–2031, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and relevant case law.

1. Conflict with Green Belt Policy (NHDC Policy SP5; NPPF 147–149)

The application site lies outside the defined settlement boundary of Ickleford and within the Green Belt.

Policy SP5 and NPPF 147–149 state that development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless justified by “very special circumstances,” which are absent here. The proposal would harm the openness of the Green Belt, both visually and spatially. Case law (Turner v SSCLG [2016] EWCA Civ 466) confirms that openness relates not only to volume but also to visual intrusion.

Grey Belt reclassification is not justified:-

- The site is not previously developed land.
- It has not been designated for reclassification.
- It contributes positively to the openness and rural setting of the Green Belt.

2. Breach of Settlement Boundary Policies (NHDC Policy SP2; Ickleford NP Policy SD1)

Policy SP2 restricts development in Category A villages such as Ickleford to within the defined boundary. This proposal is entirely outside.

NP Policy SD1 allows exceptions only for affordable housing or essential community facilities. A private self-build market dwelling does not meet these criteria.

3. Failure to Respect Local Character (Ickleford NP Policy SD3; NPPF 130)*

The proposal does not relate to existing built form and would introduce a discordant, isolated dwelling within an open orchard plot. This conflicts with SD3, which requires development to respect street form and spaces.

The visual character of Snailswell Lane is defined by generous gardens, open green spaces, and low-density housing. This scheme would undermine that.

[*Refer to accompanying photographic submission document for supporting evidence.](#)

4. No Justification Under Exception Policies (NHDC Policy CGB2)

Policy CGB2 permits some limited development outside boundaries only where there is proven local need or significant community benefit. This proposal meets none of those tests.

5. Harm to Character, Openness & Visual Amenity

The proposal represents overdevelopment of a small plot in a low-density area. It would erode the semi-rural character of Snailswell Lane and set a precedent for further infill.

The openness of the Green Belt would be diminished.

6. Adverse Impact on Residential Amenity (NPPF 130f)

The Orchard's siting would directly harm neighbours' living conditions due to proximity of boundaries. The **1.5** storey pitch is situated closely to the boundary of the **1.0** storey pitch of Mildens, impacting on privacy and overshadowing. The self-build would also over-look habitable rooms of the **1.0** storey pitch of Glemore (directly opposite). The 2 storey pitch of Glendale has no relevance and should not be used as a comparison as it is not visual from the site and situated much further from the boundary.

Mildens (our property):

Loss of daylight to habitable rooms (including kitchen, 2 bedrooms, family bathroom, utility), particularly in mornings and in winter. (supporting photos 1,2,

Mildens enjoys rural views across open land but will be replaced with the very close proximity of a blank brick wall.
Overshadowing of garden during mornings, reducing usability.
First-floor windows directly overlooking private amenity space, causing loss of privacy.

Glenmore (directly opposite):

Potentially overlooking habitable rooms of a single-storey bungalow from the first floor. See supporting photo 5

General:

Noise, artificial light, and domestic activity in a currently undeveloped plot would erode the area's tranquillity.

[*Refer to accompanying photographic submission document for supporting evidence.](#)

7. Highway Safety & Access Concerns – BOAT (Byway Open to All Traffic)*

Snailswell Lane is a BOAT. A BOAT is legally a highway for vehicles but primarily used by walkers, cyclists and horse riders. The BOAT is narrow, single-track, unsurfaced and without footways. It is unsuitable for residential intensification. The Construction vehicles would cause significant damage, disruption, blocking in residents beyond the siting and poses significant danger to vulnerable users. The access point is constrained, forcing vehicles to reverse directly onto the lane, contrary to Hertfordshire County Council Highways guidance and Manual for Streets standards.

[*Refer to accompanying photographic submission document for supporting evidence and further comment.](#)

8. Loss of Biodiversity (NHDC Policy NE6; NPPF 174)*

The orchard supports habitats for birds, (including a barn owl that nests on adjoining land), bats, and other species. Its removal conflicts with NE6 and NPPF 174, which require conservation and biodiversity net gains.
No ecological survey has been submitted, contrary to policy and statutory duty.

[*Refer to accompanying photographic submission document for supporting evidence.](#)

9. Flooding & Surface Water (NHDC Policy NE7; NPPF 159–169)

The site is prone to surface water pooling (see evidence in Annex).
Replacing permeable ground with buildings and hardstanding would increase run-off, raising flood risk on-site and to neighbouring properties.
No Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) or mitigation strategy has been presented.

*Refer to accompanying photographic submission document for supporting evidence and further comment.

10. Precedent & Cumulative Harm

Approval would set a precedent for other garden/orchard plots along Snailswell Lane to be built on.

This cumulative effect would irreversibly erode the Green Belt and the character of Ickleford.

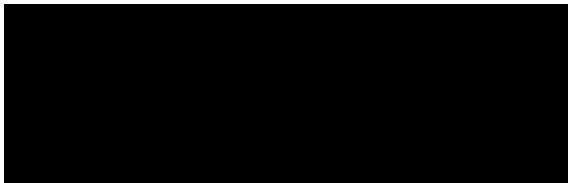
Conclusion

This proposal is in direct conflict with NHDC Policies SP5, SP2, CGB2, NE6, NE7, Ickleford NP Policies SD1 & SD3, and the NPPF.

It fails to meet Green Belt policy tests, undermines settlement boundaries, damages local character and amenity, increases flood and highway risks, and harms biodiversity.

I therefore respectfully request that North Hertfordshire Council refuse this application in full.

Yours sincerely

A large black rectangular box redacting the signature of Linda Eaton.

Linda Eaton