

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...Melissa Tyler.....

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
26/01514/FP	Change of use of former agricultural building to special educational needs school (Use Class D1). Installation of access ramps and associated parking (development already carried out) (revision of previously approved planning permission 25/02022/FP granted 22.10.2025)	East Hall School East Hall Farm St Pauls Walden Hitchin Hertfordshire SG4 8DL

Submitted Plan Nos

2026-414-03 2026-414-04 2026-414-05 2026-414-06 2026/414/06 roof and section 2026/414/02
2026-414-01

1.0 Policies

2.0 **Relevant site history**

2.1 **20/00724/FP** Change of use of former agricultural building to use as a school for children and young people with special educational needs (Use Class D1) **Conditional Permission**

2.2 25/02022/FP Change of use of former agricultural building to special educational needs school (Use Class D1) Installation of access ramps and associated parking **Conditional Permission**

3.0 **Representations**

3.1 **Parish Council** – No comments received

3.2 **Hertfordshire County Council highways** – Notice is given under article 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 that Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority does not wish to restrict the grant of permission.

3.3 **Environmental Health (Noise)** – I have no objections to the application.

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

4.1.1 The site is part of a former agricultural building, located next to the existing School that was granted in 2020. The site is part of a larger group of agricultural buildings forming Easthall Farm. The character of the locality, with the majority of the farm buildings and a small number of dwellings to the south. A Grade II listed building is opposite the site. The site is within the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt.

4.2 **Proposal**

4.2.1 Change of use of former agricultural building to special educational needs school (Use Class D1). Installation of access ramps and associated parking (development already carried out) (revision of previously approved planning permission 25/02022/FP granted 22.10.2025)

4.3 **Key Issues**

4.3.1 The key material considerations are whether the development is acceptable in principle, character and appearance, impacts on neighbour amenity, and parking.

Principle

- 4.3.2 The site is within the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt and therefore special consideration is given to new development. The proposed change of use application operates within the general policy of restraint and is acceptable in the rural area.
- 4.3.3 The re-use of a small section of an existing building, with a building adjacent under the same use complies with Policy CGB4. The expansion of the school will re-use a building formerly in agriculture with no new built development or increase in footprint. I consider the principle of the proposed change of use acceptable. There would also be economic benefits from rural diversification, and community and health benefits in providing the type of education and help to children proposed.

Character and appearance

- 4.3.6 The additional door and ramp is small in scale and would not be considered out of character in this location given its location within a much larger farm complex. The proposal would not harm the setting of the listed building to the south and would not harm the character and appearance of the locality.

Neighbour amenity

- 4.3.7 The additional use and door and ramp would be small in size and scale, would have relatively limited operating hours, would not be considered to generate harmful amounts of noise and other disturbance, and is relatively far from dwellings south of East Hall Farmhouse. Impacts on residential amenity are therefore considered acceptable, and it is not considered necessary to restrict the operation of the use by condition. D1 uses encompass a variety of uses, therefore I consider it necessary to restrict the D1 use to that specified to enable the LPA control over the use of the site.

Parking and highways

- 4.3.8 The applicant proposes to increase the existing school capacity from 16 to 22 pupils through the addition of 6 SEMH students. The school was previously granted planning permission (Ref: 26/01514/FP) for the change of use of a former agricultural building to a school for children and young people with special educational needs (Use Class D1). The Highway Authority considers the proposal to be small in scale and, taking all factors into account, does not anticipate any significant impact on the adjacent highway network. Therefore, no objection is raised.

Climate change mitigation

- 4.3.10 The proposed development is not considered of a scale whereby any practical climate change measures can be secured via the grant of planning permission.

4.4 Conclusion

4.4.1 In the absence of material planning reasons to the contrary it is my view that planning permission is **GRANTED**.

5.0 **Recommendation**

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

2. The use of the site shall be restricted to a D1 use as a school for children and young people with special educational needs as proposed.

Reason: To allow the Local Planning Authority to retain control over the use of the site.

Biodiversity Net Gain

This development is not subject to the statutory Biodiversity Gain Plan condition because it is considered exempt under the statutory exemptions (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain-exempt-developments>) or transitional arrangements in respect of the biodiversity gain condition.

Proactive Statement:

Planning permission has been granted for this proposal. Discussion with the applicant to seek an acceptable solution was not necessary in this instance. 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  Shaun Greaves Determining Officer	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Date: 10 September 2026	

