

Purley Cottage
Pottersheath Road
Welwyn
Hertfordshire
AL6 9SU

3 March 2026

Planning Control

North Hertfordshire District Council
PO Box 10613
NG6 6DW

Formal Objection to Planning Application Ref: 26/00104/FP

Erection of one detached dwelling with detached double garage and air source heat pump following demolition of existing stables and outbuildings, including landscaping, amenity space, layout of access and parking. Erection of detached double garage to serve existing dwelling.

Site: Lagonda Stud, Pottersheath Road, Pottersheath, Hertfordshire, AL6 9SU

I am a neighbouring resident and the owner of Purley Cottage, which adjoins the application site. I am writing to formally object to Planning Application 26/00104/FP. My objections, set out below, relate to material planning considerations. I therefore ask that the application be refused, or, if not, that it be referred to the Planning Committee for a decision rather than being determined under delegated powers.

1. Green Belt — Insufficient evidence to classify the site as grey belt.

The application site falls within the Metropolitan Green Belt. The applicant's agent argues that the site qualifies as 'grey belt' land under paragraph 155 of the NPPF (December 2024), and on that basis the proposed new dwelling is not inappropriate development. I contest this analysis on the following grounds:

Grey belt status isn't just about showing past development. According to the NPPF glossary, grey belt refers to land that has been developed before or land that doesn't make a strong contribution to the Green Belt's purposes (a), (b), or (d) listed in paragraph 143. The applicant's statement briefly dismisses these purposes in a table but offers little reasoning or evidence. No independent assessment by a qualified landscape professional has been provided to show the site contributes little to the Green Belt. Therefore, care should be taken by the Council before accepting the applicant's unsupported conclusions.

The sustainable location test is not met. Paragraph 155(c) requires that development on grey belt land be in a location that supports sustainable transport (see paragraphs 110 and 115 of the NPPF). The applicant's own statement acknowledges that there are no bus services within walking distance, and the nearest railway station (Knebworth) is a 6-minute drive away. This means any new dwelling here would rely

heavily on motor vehicles, which goes against the sustainable transport goals of the NPPF. The appeal decision cited by the applicant (Downs Barns, APP/X1925/W/24/3347012) involved a site with a bus stop immediately outside, so it is not comparable.

The 40% increase in building volume harms the openness of the Green Belt. The applicant acknowledges that the total volume would rise from 771 m³ to 1,085 m³. Even though the footprint is slightly smaller (down 8%), the larger volume and the addition of two double garages significantly intensify the built form. The Council should consider whether this, along with the separate new garage for the existing dwelling (Lagonda Stud), would substantially harm Green Belt openness.

The existing permission (23/02562/FP) cannot be treated as a direct fallback. That consent was for a smaller 3-bedroom dwelling through conversion with only a modest extension. This is very different from the larger 4-bedroom new-build now proposed, with a GIA of 269 m². Approval of the earlier scheme does not automatically justify a bigger, more extensive development.

2. Residential Amenity — Impact on Purley Cottage

As an adjoining neighbour, my primary concern is the impact of the proposed development on quality of living conditions for Purley Cottage. The planning statement (paragraph 3.7) asserts that facing elevations would be separated by 'over 35m' and that there would be 'no harm to nearby residents' amenity.' I dispute this claim on the following grounds:

Lack of detailed overlooking assessment. The application provides no shadow diagrams, no detailed section drawings showing the relationship of the proposed new dwelling, and no assessment of daylight and sunlight impacts. The plans show the proposed dwelling positioned to the rear of our property, and with the 1.5-storey form with first-floor dormer windows, there is a risk of overlooking into our garden and potentially our rear habitable rooms. The assertion of 35m separation is insufficient. The council should require a full neighbouring amenity assessment before granting permission.

Construction disturbance. The development would involve demolition of multiple buildings and construction of a new dwelling near to Purley Cottage. No Construction Management Plan (CMP) has been submitted covering hours of working, noise, dust, vehicle movements, or storage of materials. A condition requiring a CMP approved prior to commencement should be imposed if the application were to be approved.

Shared access concerns. The proposed new dwelling would share vehicle access with Lagonda Stud, with the access route running along the south-eastern boundary. Increased vehicle movements along this shared access particularly given the proposal for 5 parking spaces for the new house alone would generate noise and disturbance affecting the amenity of our property.

3. Land Contamination — No assessment submitted

The Environmental Health Officer (memo dated 16 February 2026, Ref: 6572/26) states that the application does not include any information about possible land contamination. The Officer recommends that planning conditions should require a Phase 1 Desk Study, followed by a Phase 2 Site Investigation and a Phase 3

Remediation Scheme if needed. As the site has previously been used for equestrian purposes — including stabling and storage — there may be contamination from fuels, pesticides, or animal waste. The application form also confirms that contamination is “suspected.” As a neighbouring resident, I am concerned about risks to human health if construction disturbs contaminated ground, and about the possible spread of pollutants to nearby land. We have our own vegetable plot at the rear of our garden which is directly on the boundary of the proposed site. The application should not be approved until a full Phase 1 Desk Study has been submitted and properly reviewed.

4. Ecology — Bat survey limitations

The Bat Emergence Survey (MS Ecology, Report No. 3303) was completed once, on 08/07/2025, and only for Building B. The report says bats are “likely absent,” but Natural England advises at least two surveys in different seasons (spring/summer and autumn) for buildings with low potential. One survey on a single night is not enough to be sure, especially for older agricultural buildings that could provide bat roosts. The Council should follow Natural England’s guidance and have its ecologist check whether the survey is sufficient before approving the application.

5. Highway access — Inadequate assessment of shared access

The proposal would have the new dwelling share a single access with the existing property, Lagonda Stud, onto Pottersheath Road. This would increase the total parking from 3 to 7 spaces using the same access. No traffic or safety assessment has been provided. The Highways Authority should review whether the shared access can safely handle the extra use and whether visibility at the junction with Pottersheath Road is adequate. This road is already used as a cut through to Hitchin, Knebworth and Stevenage, and visibility for vehicles joining the road can be challenging for residents especially when there are vehicles parked on the road.

6. Trees — Removal of Category B tree and boundary hedgerow Pruning

The Arboricultural Survey (Andrew Cunningham, July 2025) confirms that one Category B (moderate quality) tree would be removed. Category B trees by definition have a useful life expectancy of at least 20 years and are of moderate arboricultural and amenity value. The report argues the loss is ‘negligible’ as the tree is screened by adjacent trees — however, as a directly affected neighbour, I would note that boundary trees provide important screening, privacy and amenity value for adjacent properties including Purley Cottage and other adjacent properties.

7. Scale and character — Overdevelopment of the site

The application proposes a new 4-bedroom house (269 m²) plus two double garages, one for the new house and one for Lagonda Stud. This would significantly increase the amount of built development on the site. Pottersheath is characterised by spacious homes on large plots, and adding a house behind the existing properties, along with multiple outbuildings, could change the area’s rural character. The Council should consider whether the combined impact of the new house, the

two garages, and the ASHP unit would amount to overdevelopment and conflict with Policies D1 and NE2 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan.

8. Surface water drainage — No scheme submitted

As a neighbour, I am concerned about extra surface water running onto my property. The application mentions SuDS and soakaways, but no detailed surface water drainage plan has been submitted. The new house would add a large area of impermeable surfaces (driveway, paving, and parking), so in line with Policy NE8, the Council should require a full drainage plan to be approved before building.

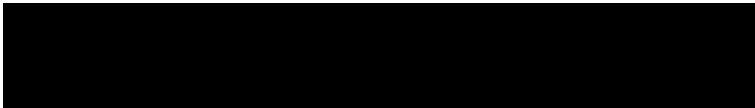
9. Request for committee determination

Given the number and substance of the objections raised above, and the significant material planning considerations involved, including Green Belt policy, contamination, ecology, and amenity impacts on neighbouring residents. I respectfully request that this application be referred to the Planning Committee for determination rather than being decided under officer delegated powers.

Conclusion

For these reasons highlighted above, I ask North Hertfordshire District Council to refuse planning application 26/00104/FP. The applicant has not shown that the site is suitable grey belt land or that the location is sustainable. The development would harm the Green Belt, neighbouring residents' living conditions, and the area's character. Important information is missing, including a land contamination assessment, a surface water drainage plan, sufficient bat surveys, and a construction management plan.

Yours faithfully,



Graham Angell, Sandra Angell

Owners, Purley Cottage, Pottersheath Road, Welwyn, Hertfordshire, AL6 9SU