

Planning & Design & Access Statement

The Courtyard

Old Hale Way, Ickleford, Hitchin, SG5 3UW

Redevelopment of a concrete yard, involving the demolition of a double garage
and the erection of a low level chalet bungalow

Drawing No.	458-PDA-01
Date	Sept 2026
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clear.

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Google Earth - Site Perspective

1. Design Team

Integrating the knowledge of experts from the concept of the design process, through to building the finalised new home, permits an informed approach. Creating a new home of exceptional calibre - in its visual and function.

The project has been designed by a highly experienced team of experts in the built design sector. Such experts include architecture, planning, drainage, sustainability and arboriculture. Bringing individual and collective expertise, ensuring the proposed dwelling is of exceptional quality and design that overcomes and works with the characteristics of the site and locale.

Clear Architects is an established award-winning architectural practice with an array of bespoke projects in highly protected areas, with two studios in Epping Forest and the New Forest National Park.

The practice was founded on the principle of creating buildings that enhance their surroundings. As members of the AECB (Association for Environment Conscious Building) and RIBA East Sustainability Group, each bespoke project strives to be as sustainable as can be achieved.

Clear Architects has been established since 2005. Its MD and Founder Melanie Clear forging away of working in the built environment; a collaborative way.

The collaborative approach extends to navigating the NPPF. Arron Breedon is a Chartered Member of the Royal Town Planning Institute.

Spillways: appointed to carry out a flood risk assessment and sustainable drainage strategy for the proposal. Spillways are a highly motivated team of engineers and technicians that have decades of industry experience to provide sustainable drainage consultancy services. They are always looking to excel in achieving high standards of design with an environmentally friendly approach in conjunction with the other design team members



The Courtyard Design Team

1. Design Team

T16: appointed to collaborate with Clear Architects in the overheating analysis and sustainability energy strategies. They are environmental consultants, engineers and technicians in the built environment who are passionate about incorporating sustainability at the earliest stages of building design.

Brindle & Green: is a trusted environmental and sustainability consultancy delivering clear, practical advice.

With a strong understanding of environmental responsibility, they have provide expert guidance from initial site appraisal through to design completion. Their services included an arboricultural assessment and tree protection plan which assesses potential impacts, and strategic input that supports. Their work also encompasses the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, which has provided expert guidance on how best to protect the local wildlife, as well as ensure the protection and enhancement of local wildlife in the area as a result of the development.

Highly respected by Architects and Planning Officers alike Brindle & Green ensures the surrounding environment is carefully considered, protected, and integrated into high-quality, future-proof landscapes.



Proposed Front Elevation from access road

2. Executive Summary

Following approval of permission in principle for a new home within the Courtyard, Clear Architects is pleased to have worked with the future homeowners and design team experts to bring forward this highly sustainable and elegant new bungalow within the existing concrete yard area.

The proposal continues the redevelopment of the 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 application 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 completion of Bury Lodge, the site has been used for the storage of materials in connection with maintenance of Ickleford Bury. With this maintenance now concluded, 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 Policy GB7e) and would utilise Grey Belt Land (NPPF Policy GB7g) given its detachment from the wider Green Belt setting.

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

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 available PDL instead of untouched green open land.

The proposal seeks to make efficient use of PDL whilst having no adverse impacts upon the

openness of the Green Belt or its neighbouring residential properties through thoughtful design. The site closely relates to Ickleford Village and is within a sustainable location. Through integration, the home will be nestled within its village location and will be complemented by the well-established surrounding built forms.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out redevelopment of PDL as an acceptable exception for development within the Green Belt providing it would not cause substantial harm to the openness.

The property is well contained by mature trees providing high levels of native screening , limiting the plots visibility from public vantage points.

2. Executive Summary

Benefits to the site and surrounding area

- Elegant design by award-winning architects and engineers, using high quality materials, incorporating fabric first construction techniques and innovative sustainable technologies following LETI Principles
- Design resulting in a home with an overall reduction in carbon emissions of 69%, more than double the carbon requirement under the Building Regulations of today.
- Well-considered orientation and outlook for future occupier comfort and to prevent overlooking of neighbouring properties.
- Sensitive landscape proposal removing low quality concrete hardstanding and incorporating new native soft landscaping and wild feature planting areas, designed to enhance existing green boundaries and provide a meaningful increase in biodiversity.
- Removed existing concrete from the root protection area of sensitive boundary trees, omitting existing stresses and creates an environment where the surrounding trees can thrive.
- Sustainable drainage strategy incorporated into the project design to improve surface water runoff management, enhancing the environment of neighbouring properties.
- Recessed glazing to the south elevation to passively restrict solar gain during summer months and prevent overheating, without the use of energy reliant systems
- PV solar panels on south-facing roofs, forming an on-site strategy for renewable electricity source that provides 91.85% of the dwellings energy requirements.
- Electrical battery storage system to further reduce reliance on the grid

The design has been carefully conceived to respond to the landscape context, minimise visual impact, and significantly improve environmental performance.

The proposal is compliant with the criteria set out in the NPPF 2026 and North Hertfordshire Local Plan, to achieve an exceptional dwelling within an existing site of little aesthetic value.



Proposed Ground Floor & Site Plan

3. Site Context

The site is within walking distance into the centre of Ickleford and its local amenities including shops, 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 application 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 is in a sustainable location as agreed by the council in the approved PIP application Ref: 26/00184/PIP

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, but has extant planning permission for new homes.

The application site is a walled concrete yard with no soft landscaping and is principally flat. It is part of the wider Ickleford Bury estate, and 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 having concluded, the yard is currently vacant.

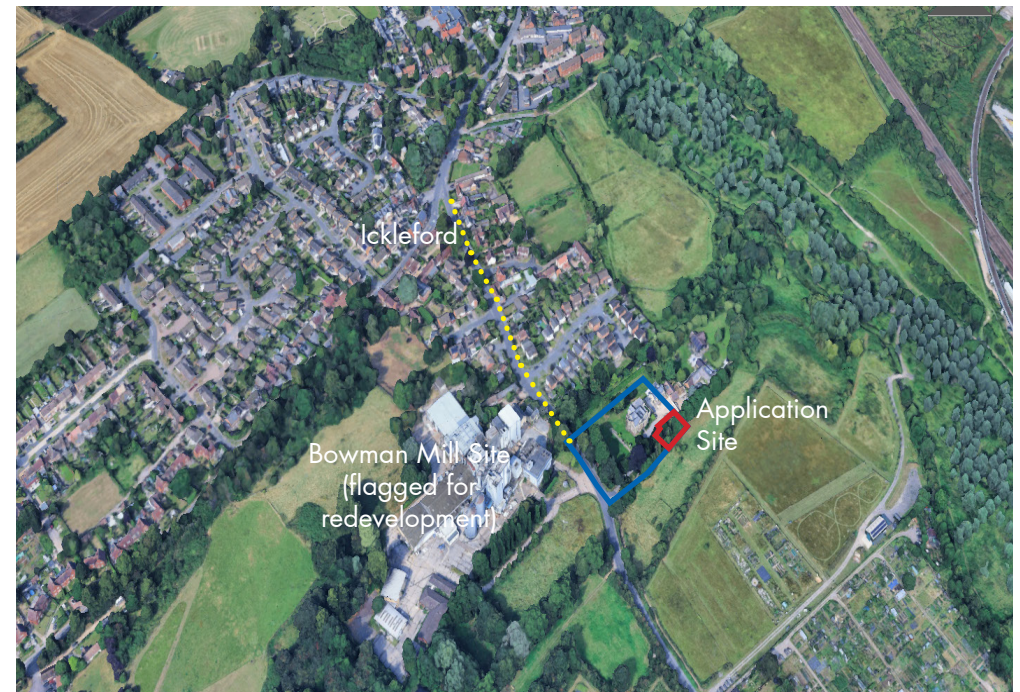
The concrete yard meets the NPPF definition of PDL and can be considered Grey Belt Land in that it does not contribute to the openness of the wider Green Belt setting.

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, strengthening privacy between the properties.

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.

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

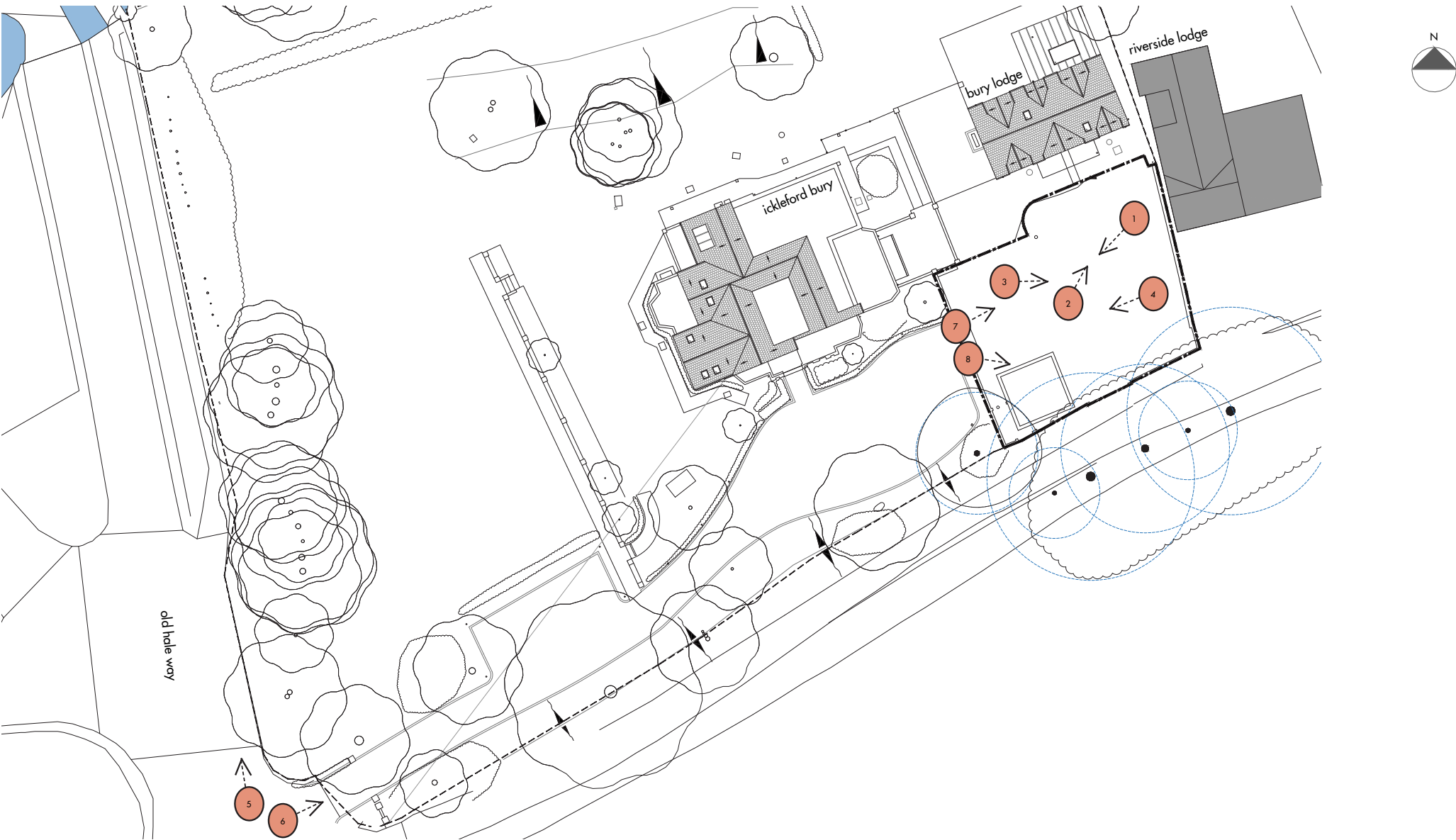


Aerial View of Local Area

— approx. Site boundary
— approx. Ownership boundary

..... footpath to Ickleford

4. Site Photographs



Location of imagery view points on existing site

4. Site Photographs

Photographs taken November 2025



1 The walled concrete yard, double garage and existing vehicle access



2 View from walled concrete yard towards neighbouring dwellings "Bury Lodge" and "Riverside Lodge"



3 View from vehicle access into the walled concrete yard



4 View from walled concrete yard towards "Ickleford Bury"

4. Site Photographs

Photographs taken November 2025



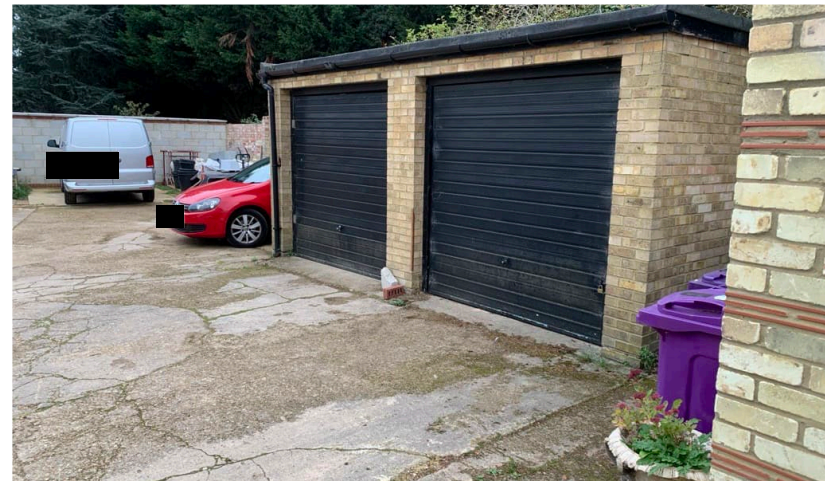
5 Footpath from the application site into Ickleford Village



6 Driveway entrance from Old Hale Way



7 View entering the application site from the access road



8 Disused vehicle garage flanking access

5. Design Proposals

Following PIP Stage 1 being approved, the proposal continues the redevelopment of the concrete yard/PDL by way of the demolition of the existing double garage and replacement with a two bedroom bungalow.

The proposed bungalow has been designed in a modern rural architectural style reflecting the highest standards of contemporary architecture and responding sensitively to the character of the site. Due to the design of the proposal architectural form, the bungalow will be relatively unseen from public vantage points.

The proposal has undergone collaborative and extensive design workshops to enable a new home which is not just aesthetically relevant for its location, but has high levels of practical sustainability features embedded into the fabric of the home to bring forwards an exemplar property in Ickleford and the wider North Hertfordshire area.

The proposed bungalow uses appropriate materials to nestle the holistic design within the plot, envisaged onto the existing concrete slab reusing and reducing loss of embedded onsite carbon.

Aesthetically the proposal takes on modern rural as its architectural type. Each element works hard for its place within the design which comprises:

- A low-profile form embedded within its own wrap around walled garden
- Careful uses of hard wearing materials consisting of brick and tile to provide a natural linkage from Ickleford Bury to Bury lodge and the neighbouring property at Riverside Lodge. Relationship in materiality and form are complimentary
- Modest glazed south east elevation into the private garden space providing a strong visual connection with soft landscaping from within the property
- Integration of solar shading to enable efficient building design in respect of overheating and as shown within the submitted overheating assessment
- Comprehensive SuDs designed scheme integrated



Proposed Loft and Site Plan

5. Design Proposals

The architecture draws inspiration from the world's modern design principles, where contemporary materials and simple forms are used to form energy-conscious buildings minimising energy consumption and focussing on high quality sustainability principles.

The proposed bungalow design, incorporates the highest standards of sustainable design within the core of the building. Architecture is more than the aesthetic. Its form needs to function efficiently. Sustainability embedded into the architecture includes:

- Fabric-first construction principles
- Envisaged re-use of the existing concrete slab to build the bungalow upon reducing waste to minimise loss of embodied on-site carbon
- Air Source Heat Pump for heating and hot water
- Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery (MVHR) for carbon efficiency and interior comfort
- Integrated photovoltaic solar panels for renewable electricity supply
- Battery energy storage system to store unused electricity on-site for use when required

The design features represent a substantial improvement in environmental performance compared with the existing building regulations resulting in an operational carbon reduction of 69%.

The architecture of the proposed bungalow, in conjunction with the designed wrap-around landscaped garden provides a sensitive landscape enhancement, resulting in a beautiful design.

As can be seen within the submission documents, the proposed bungalow will meld into the semi-rural landscape setting, enhancing this special part of Ickleford through its exceptional design.

External 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 including 1 disabled car parking space in compliance with the Council's standards.

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

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.

6. Planning Policies

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 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 application 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 application 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.
- Policy SP11 – Natural Resources and Sustainability
- Policy SP12 – Green Infrastructure, Landscape and Biodiversity – Supports greening of sites. A proposed site plan accompanies this planning application which demonstrates the greening improvements over the existing site. For Biodiversity, please refer to the PEA report which accompanies this planning application.
- Policy T2 – Parking provision in accordance with Appendix 4 of the Local Plan.
- Policy D1 – Sustainable Design - please refer to the Flood Risk Assessment and Sustainable Drainage Strategy which accompanies this planning application.
- Policy D3 – Protecting Living Conditions – To maintain neighbour amenity and prevent overlooking and privacy concerns, windows above first floor are restricted to face away from neighbouring amenities. The dormer window is also recessed to restrict sidelines towards neighbour properties, protecting existing amenity conditions.
- Policy NE4 – Biodiversity – proposal exempt from BNG due to lack of existing biodiversity and extensive concrete surfacing. Dispute the exemption, the proposal seeks to go above and beyond in the improvement of biodiversity and ecological enhancement to the site. Please refer to the PEA report which accompanies this planning application.
- Policy NE7 – Reducing Flood Risk - please refer to the Flood Risk Assessment and Sustainable Drainage Strategy which accompanies this planning application.
- Policy NE8 – Sustainable Drainage Systems - please refer to the Flood Risk Assessment and Sustainable Drainage Strategy which accompanies this planning application.

6. Planning Policies

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 neighbours just outside of the settlement boundary and exists on brownfield land, being 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.

NPPF 2026

- Policy S3 of the NPPF establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The policy provides that development proposals which accord with the development plan and relevant national decision-making policies should be approved without delay. The operation of the presumption is further articulated through Policies S4 and S5, which establish the national policy approach to development within and outside settlements.
- Policy DM1 of the NPPF requires planning decisions to be approached positively, proactively and constructively, with decision-makers seeking to work effectively with applicants and other parties to secure development that delivers sustainable outcomes.
- Policies HO1 and HO7 of the NPPF support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes and require planning authorities to plan positively for the delivery of the homes needed in their areas. The Framework seeks to ensure that a

sufficient supply and variety of land is available to meet identified housing requirements and to support the delivery of homes in appropriate locations.

- Policy HO8 of the NPPF recognises the important contribution that small and medium-sized sites can make to meeting housing requirements and supporting housing delivery. The policy supports bringing forward development on smaller sites and recognises their particular contribution to diversifying housing supply and enabling development to come forward relatively quickly. Importantly, Policy HO8 also supports the provision of self-build and custom-build housing, recognising the role that such development can play in diversifying the housing stock and meeting the needs and preferences of individual households.

The proposed dwelling is intended to be delivered as a self-build home and therefore directly responds to the objectives of Policy HO8. The proposal would provide a bespoke dwelling designed around the requirements of an individual household, whilst making a contribution, albeit modest in scale, towards the District's housing requirements. The development therefore represents an appropriate opportunity to utilise a small, previously developed site to deliver a high-quality self-build home in a sustainable location.

- Policy L2 confirms the importance that the Framework places upon making effective use of land, including previously developed and under-utilised land.
- Policy DP3 of the NPPF establishes the key principles for well-designed places. It requires development proposals to respond positively to the history, character and features of the site and its surroundings, integrate with and enhance their setting, and create places which function well over their lifetime. Development should be well designed, sustainable, attractive and responsive to local character, while providing safe, inclusive and accessible environments with appropriate levels of amenity.
- Policy GB7 of the NPPF establishes circumstances in which development within the Green Belt, including development on Grey Belt land, is not inappropriate. The policy provides a national policy route for housing development on previously developed land including Grey Belt land, subject to the relevant policy criteria and the proposal not fundamentally undermining the purposes of the Green Belt taken together across the area of the plan.

7. Assessment of Proposals

The Council within application ref: 26/00184/PIP approved Permission in Principle for a new home on the site finding it appropriate use of the land.

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.

The walled concrete yard meets the definition of PDL as prescribed within the NPPF. As such the proposal is in compliance with NPPF Policy GB7.1c and GB7.1e which enables an exception to Green Belt development for

“c. Limited infilling in villages lying within the Green Belt”

“e. The redevelopment of previously developed land (including material change of use to residential or mixed use including residential) 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 in 2025 and brought forward in 2026 for redevelopment of sites removed the need for such proposals to be located within villages.

Policy S2 seeks to resist new 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 has been deemed an accessible location in accordance with Local Plan Policies SP1, SP5, SP8, SP9 and the NPPF as a whole and planning in principle approved 26/00184/PIP.

It is proposed to replace the existing double garage building and build a bespoke Architect designed bungalow. Whilst the proposed building is larger than what it replaces, it is of a smaller footprint than that envisaged in application ref: 26/00184/PIP. The proposed bungalow 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 relatively 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.

7. Assessment of Proposals

Grey Belt Land

Policy GB7.1g of the 2026 NPPF was first introduced in the December 2024 NPPF under Paragraph 155 for the development of homes and commercial buildings in the Green Belt where a proposal would:

- i. The development would utilise grey belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan;
- ii. There is an evidenced unmet need for the type of development proposed;
- iii. The development would be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to policy TR3 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, Policy GB7.1g should be attributed great weight.

The following assesses the proposal against Policy GB7.1g of the NPPF:

Section i)

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 policy GB2.”

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 (d):

(a) “To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas”. The 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 policy GB7.1.g.i of the 2026 NPPF.

7. Assessment of Proposals

Section ii)

Section ii) requires an evidenced unmet need for the type of development proposed. The proposal is for a bungalow.

Taken directly from the Council's 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 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

"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 Government's increased housing numbers has led to an insufficient supply of land for new homes in the District.

The proposal is in compliance with policy GB7.1.g.ii of the 2026 NPPF.

7. Assessment of Proposals

Section iii)

Section iii) requires development to be in sustainable locations, with particular reference to NPPF policy TR3. The Council found the site during the approved PIP application ref: 26/00184/PIP to be in a sustainable location. 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 Policy TR3 directs patterns of growth within sustainable locations. 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.

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

The proposal is in compliance with policy GB7.1.g.iii of the 2026 NPPF.

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

7. Assessment of Proposals

Design and Appearance

The collaborative process of design has ensured the form, massing and scale achieves a proposal that works with the site, its neighbours and planning policy. A stylish piece of architecture that distinguishes itself from its surrounding neighbours, whilst contributing to the collective character of the site.

The architectural approach is informed by the principles of good design set out in Section 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which emphasises that planning decisions should ensure development functions well, adds to the overall quality of the area, is visually attractive and sympathetic to local character.

The proposed scale of the building has been carefully considered to address the existing height of neighbouring Bury Lodge by creating a form which compliments the approach into the site. Rather than the aspect of an empty, degraded concrete plot, the buildings form presents a striking gable end, which is sized and pitched to blend and compliment the gable end of “Riverside Lodge” which is also visible on the site approach. The gable end presents a softer massing, which tapers as the building height increases, maintaining the openness of the setting and skyline. The building height is positioned far below “Bury Lodge”, neatly positioning the form between the sizes of “Bury Lodge” and “Riverside Lodge”, contributing to the forms elegance of fitting in the context of the approach sight line.

The form also features a flat green roof to the rear of the building, which sets the rear gable away from the boundary, providing and maintaining visual relief to the “Riverside Lodge” amenity and respecting the openness and proximity of its neighbour.

As a result of being gable ended, the building can also take advantage of a south-facing plot, which is orientated and pitched to create a south-facing roof line that can ensure the maximum efficiency of PV panels inset within the roof lining.

Careful attention has been given to the position of the building. To ensure quality and respect to the surrounding environment, the footprint of the building was developed in relation to the neighbouring properties.

The established building line of “Bury Lodge” has been maintained and no portion of the building breaches or steps any closer towards Old Hale Way than what currently exists on site.

The building is also positioned 10m away from “Bury Lodge” to provide an adequate separation distance that wouldn’t restrict the existing privacy, sunlight and operations of the neighbouring property.

The proposal recognises that multiple architectural styles exist on the site and rather than try to imitate the styles present, the architecture is designed to compliment and enhance the existing forms, by leaning into a contemporary style that maximises quality, whilst incorporating a familiar palette, consisting of bricks, accented by timber cladding, with coloured zinc linings that play into the existing red tile roofing found across the surrounding area.

The design enhancements also extend to the block wall that currently encompasses the site, by dressing the wall in matching brick slips and timber cladding that reuses the existing characteristics of the site, without disrupting the neighbouring boundary.

The design of the proposal follows the aspirations of the Ickleford Neighbourhood Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework, which requires development to be visually attractive and sympathetic to local character. As such, the proposal respects the character and enhances its setting as a sensitive dwelling that works functionally and contextually, with materials chosen to compliment, not mimic.

7. Assessment of Proposals

Sustainability and Energy Strategy

Working in collaboration with our energy and sustainability consultant T16, we have designed the building to be sustainable from construction, to day-to-day use following a holistic approach to design. The proposal has undergone an energy and sustainability assessment to showcase the sustainability credentials, with the report and methods being in accordance with the North Hertfordshire Council Sustainability SPD.

The report is very detailed in demonstrating how the proposal encompasses the Local Plan objectives of providing high quality homes with high sustainability credentials and Part L. The proposal includes the following sustainability measures:-

- A North Hertfordshire Council Sustainability SPD sustainability level of “Silver”
- A regulated CO2 emissions reduction of 69%
- 91.85% of the energy to the development will be provided by renewable or low carbon technologies.
- Fabric first principles and passive design measures to maximise envelope efficiency
- A high performance fabric which exceed the ideal “notional dwelling” requirements under the Approved Document Part L
- High performance windows and doors
- Air Sourced Heat Pump system with modern underfloor heating, providing efficient and sustainable heating
- Energy produced by south facing solar photovoltaics
- Green roof for passive cooling

Please Refer to the Energy and Sustainability Statement by T16 which accompanies this planning application.

Overheating

Due to the south-facing nature of the plot, the application site receives plenty of uninterrupted daylight/ sunlight throughout the course of the day. Because of this, the proposal has been carefully designed to incorporate a fabric first approach to ensuring the properties internal temperature is controlled and overheating is prevented as much as possible through passive technique.

This has been achieved by carefully considering the glazing sizes in relation to the room sizes, as well as recessing the glazing to create solar shading that allows direct winter sunlight to enter, whilst restricting direct summer sunlight at the suns peaks, when it is the hottest.

To ensure our overheating compliance further, we have collaborated with our energy and sustainability consultant T16 in designing a building which sustains comfortable thermal comfort metrics all year round. The proposal has undergone an overheating assessment to provide evidence of the schemes conformity and compliance with Criteria 1 & 2 of CIBSE TM59.

Please refer to the Overheating Assessment by T16 which accompanies this planning application.

7. Assessment of Proposals

Daylight/ Sunlight

Due to the proximity of neighbouring properties, careful attention has been taken to ensure the proposed bungalow maintains rights to daylight and sunlight. To ensure this, the scheme has been designed in collaboration with our energy and sustainability consultant T16 to demonstrate no adverse impact on neighbouring residents in terms of daylight or sunlight.

Please refer to the Daylight/ Sunlight Report by T16 which accompanies this planning application.

Ecology

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal was carried out by Brindle & Green involving a desk study and site visit to map and identify any habitats, ecological constraints as well as any opportunities for biodiversity enhancements in the proposal.

The study concluded the existing site possessed no evidence of ecology presence. The site biodiversity was also concluded to be of low value, due to the hardstanding concrete. The proposal provides an opportunity to incorporate a greater biodiversity potential by breaking up the existing hardstanding, planting soft vegetation and providing additional spaces for various plant species on the site.

Due to site size, the proposal is exempt from statutory biodiversity net gain (BNG). Regardless of being exempt, biodiverse planting will provide meaningful ecological enhancements to the courtyard.

Please Refer to the Preliminary Ecological Assessment by Brindle & Green which accompanies this planning application.

Flood and Drainage

The sustainable drainage strategy (SUDS) demonstrates improvements to the site and neighbouring properties by way of the proposed development.

As mentioned previously, the site is entirely hard-landscaped in concrete, which currently provides little to no rainwater penetration. This leads to unmanaged rainwater runoff that disperses into neighbouring properties. The proposal presents an opportunity to address the uncontrolled surface water through the implementation of a well-designed sustainable drainage strategy.

Please refer to the comprehensive Flood Risk Assessment by Spillways which accompanies this planning application.

Parking + Cycle Storage

The following parking allowances have been provided in accordance with the North Hertfordshire Local Plan Appendix 4 Car Parking Standards.

- 2 Car parking spaces are provided, with 1 space being sized to function as a disabled parking bay, allowing for flexibility and future proofing for occupants.
- A covered and secure Cycle store is provided, which can accommodate 2 cycles. The store is located within the front drive, but provides the option of being relocated to the private garden if the occupant desires it.

7. Assessment of Proposals

Internal and External Space Standards

The proposed two-bedroom chalet bungalow has been designed to deliver exemplary internal and external spaces, fully responding to the objectives of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan and exceeding the requirements of the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS). The design prioritises occupant health, comfort, and wellbeing, ensuring that all habitable spaces are naturally lit, ventilated, and of generous proportions.

Internally, all rooms surpass NDSS minimum requirements. The two bedrooms, living areas, kitchen/dining space, and ancillary rooms provide substantial circulation, storage, and flexible living opportunities. Strategically located windows maximise daylight penetration and solar gain, in line with Local Plan Policy.

Externally, the proposed dwelling benefits from a well-designed garden and amenity space that exceeds the North Hertfordshire Design Code 2026 requirement expectations for private residential amenity space. The south facing garden is appropriately shaped and provides a high-quality and flexible setting for recreation, leisure, and private enjoyment, with a balance of soft landscaping, planting, and patio areas. The proposed garden space represents a functional and aesthetically excellent space that is flexible, creating a healthy and attractive environment for occupants.

By exceeding NDSS requirements and delivering light-filled, well-proportioned internal spaces, the proposed development demonstrates full compliance with the North Hertfordshire Local Plan policies and local Design Codes, providing a high-quality, sustainable, and future-proof home. The proposal exemplifies best practice in both internal and external space planning, ensuring a home that meets and exceeds policy expectations for modern residential development.



Proposed Loft and Site Plan

8. Conclusion

The principle for development has been approved by the council within application ref : 26/00184/PIP.

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

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

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

The proposal has demonstrated the suitability of the design approach for the site through bespoke architecture. It maintains neighbour amenity and enhances the locality.

We respectfully request for planning permission to be granted.



9. Application Drawings and Appendices

The associated planning application drawings consist of:

458-EX-01 - Existing Site and Roof Plan
458-EX-02 - Existing Garage Elevations

458-PL-01 - Site Location Plan
458-PL-02 - Proposed Block Plan
458-PL-03 - Proposed Ground Floor Plan
458-PL-04 - Proposed Loft and Roof Plan
458-PL-05 - Proposed Elevations
458-PL-06 - Existing and Proposed Street Scene
458-PL-07 - Proposed Sustainability Schematic

458-PDA-01 - Planning Design and Access Statement

Supporting documents:

Appendix 1 - Arboricultural Report and Tree Survey - Brindle & Green
Appendix 2 - Ecology Survey (PEA) - Enims Environmental
Appendix 3 - Sustainability and SAP/ Energy Assessment - T16
Appendix 4 - Overheating Assessment - T16
Appendix 5 - Flood Risk Assessment and SuDS - Spillway
Appendix 6 - Daylight/ Sunlight Report - T16