

PLANNING, DESIGN, ACCESS & HERITAGE STATEMENT

Hexton Manor, Hexton Hertfordshire SG5 3JH



July 2026



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning, Design, Access and Heritage Statement has been prepared by INTOUCH PLANNING LTD regarding a householder planning application for: Installation of underground plant bunker to rear of garage building. The site address is Hexton Manor, Hexton, Hertfordshire SG5 3JH.
- 1.2 The Statement provides an assessment of the planning policy framework relevant to the proposal, as well as other relevant material considerations and explains the design process and principles based on a contextual understanding of the site and the locality.

2. Site description

- 2.1 The site comprises a large detached main dwelling building of Hexton Manor, which is grade II listed, with various substantial outbuildings, separate cottages, lake, extensive gardens, walled garden and internal access roads, as part of the overall Hexton Manor Estate.
- 2.2 In regard to planning policy designations, the building is within the Green Belt, is within the Hexton Conservation Area and, within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 2.3 The grounds of Hexton Manor are designated as a historic park and garden. The following image shows the location plan of the site.



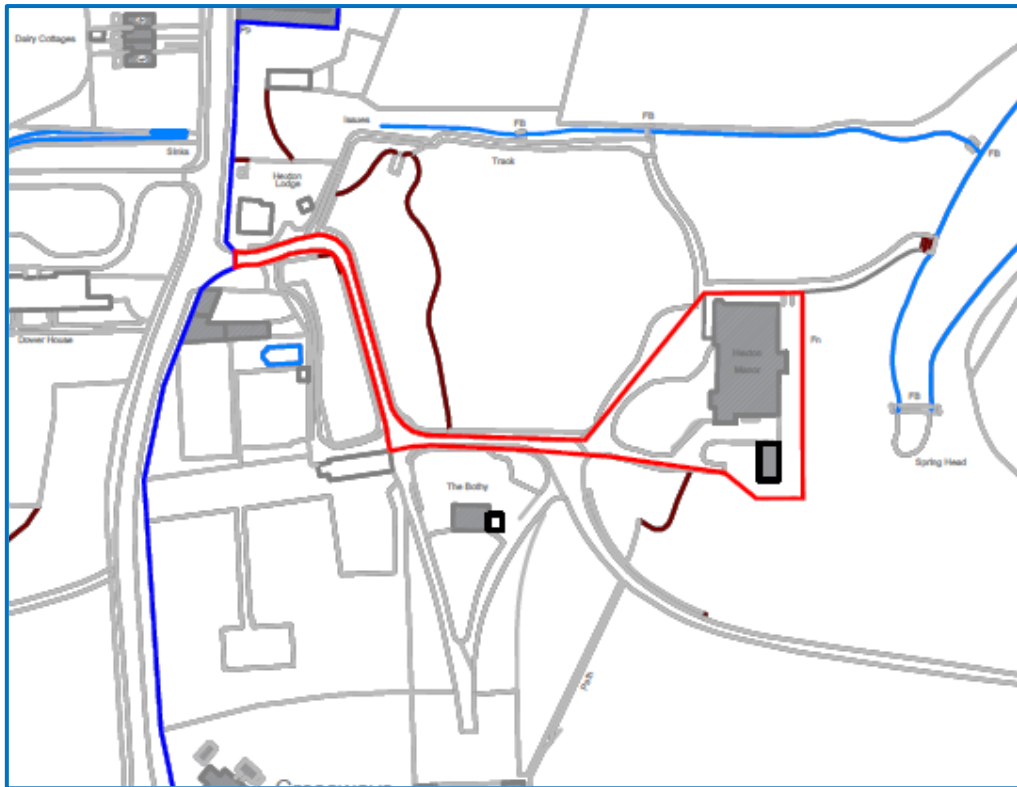


Figure 1 – Location plan of the application site and surroundings

3. Planning history

3.1 The most relevant recent planning history for the site is:

24/00254/FPH – Demolition of existing front conservatory and rear colonnade. Alterations to fenestration and external render – Planning permission granted.

24/00255/LBC - Internal and external alterations following demolition of front conservatory and rear colonnade. Alterations to fenestration – Listed building consent granted.

24/01466/FPH and 24/01467/LBC - Erection of garage outbuilding, following demolition of existing service outbuilding (revised plans submitted 14/10/2024) – Planning permission and Listed building consent granted.



4. The proposal

- 4.1 The proposal consists of installation of an underground plant bunker. The plant is to comprise air source heat pumps and air conditioning units, to serve the large dwellinghouse of Hexton Manor.
- 4.2 The location would be to the immediate rear of the new garage building, set into the ground level, with the sloped earth bund above graduating away from the garage and bunker. There would be no above ground development and no visual impact aside from two access grates.
- 4.3 The proposal consists of the following plans:
2023-32-2001 - Proposed plan and section detail
2023-32-2002 - Existing plan
2023-32-2003 - Location and site plans
- 4.4 The following image shows the plant bunker location in relation to the Manor and the recently constructed garage building.



Figure 2 – Plant bunker location rear of garage



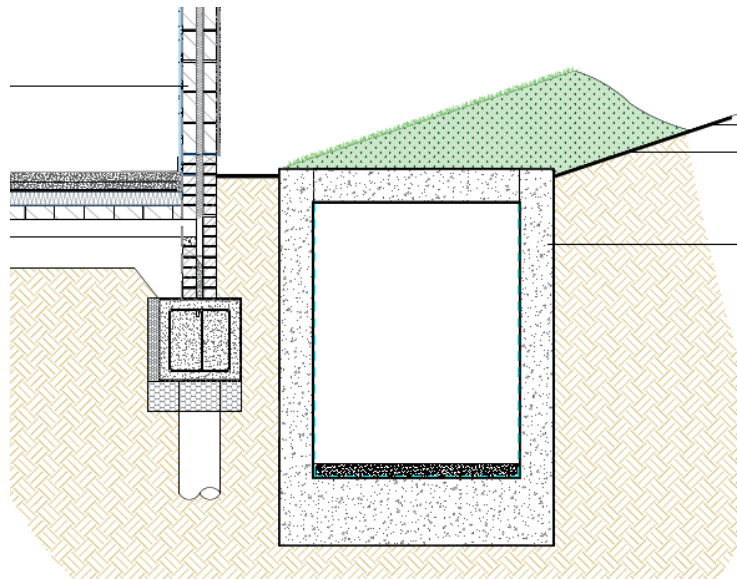


Figure 3 – Proposed section detail

5. Relevant planning policy

5.1 The relevant planning policies at the local and national level, are as follows:

5.2 North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 – 2031

Policy SP5 - Countryside and Green Belt

Policy SP9 - Design and Sustainability

Policy HE1 - Designated heritage assets

Policy HE4 - Archaeology

Policy NE3 - Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

5.3 Supplementary Planning Guidance

Design

5.4 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Section 12. Achieving well-designed and beautiful places

Section 13. Protecting Green Belt land

Section 15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Section 16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment



6. Green Belt

- 6.1 The application site lies within the Green Belt, being just outside of the Hexton settlement envelope and is washed over by this designation. The only visible change to the ground and surroundings would be the two access grates, which will be flush at ground level, behind the detached garage building.
- 6.2 The bunker would be completely underground and has no above ground impacts at all. Therefore, there is no harm to Green Belt openness and the development would have no conflict with any of the five purposes of Green Belts.
- 6.3 In view of the above, the proposal is considered to constitute appropriate development within the Green Belt, being in accordance with Section 13 of the NPPF, together with Policy SP5 of the Local Plan.

7. Design and character

- 7.1 In regard to design and impact upon the character of the area, as stated above, given the bunker would be entirely underground with just access grates visible at the ground level, there is no impact upon the character of the area, from this ideal solution for the required plant items, having no above ground impact of its design and form. The scheme is therefore considered to be in accordance with the Policies SP9 and D1 of the Local Plan.
- 7.2 In regard to the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), it is likewise considered there is no adverse impact upon the AONB in this case, from this underground installation.
- 7.3 The proposal would conserve the AONB's special qualities, distinctive character and biodiversity, tranquillity and remoteness, in accordance with national planning policy and the overall purpose of the AONB designation. The proposal



therefore also accords with the requirements of Local Plan Policy NE3 for the Chilterns AONB and, with Section 12 of the NPPF.



8. Impact upon neighbouring living conditions

- 8.1 There are no nearby neighbouring properties. The development would therefore have no detrimental impact on the living conditions of any nearby occupiers. The proposal complies with D3 of the Local Plan and, with Section 12 of the NPPF.

9. Heritage assets

- 9.1 In regard to heritage assets, Hexton Manor is a grade II listed building. Other listings within the overall Manor Estate are the Medieval Cross Base adjacent Hexton Manor, which is also grade II listed, with the Walls to the Walled Gardens also being grade II listed. The site is located within the Hexton Conservation Area and the grounds of Hexton Manor are designated as a historic park and garden.
- 9.2 Given the entirely underground nature of the development, with the service hatches having no impact either, the development would have no impact at all upon heritage assets of the site and locality.
- 9.3 There would therefore be no harmful impact upon heritage assets and the scheme does not conflict with any provisions of the Local Plan, or Section 16 of the NPPF.

10. Access and parking provision

- 10.1 There are no alterations required to access. The development has no adverse impact upon the safe and free flow of the highway network.



11. Trees and landscaping

- 11.1 No trees are required to be removed for the bunker. Landscaping has been enhanced by the provision of fresh grass seed, in addition to the extensive new planting scheme of the whole Hexton Manor Estate.

12. Conclusion

- 12.1 In conclusion of the proposed development, the scheme comprises appropriate development in the Green Belt, by having no above ground impacts. There is consequently no harm upon the character and setting of the site, or the visual quality of the AONB.
- 12.2 The development would have no harm upon the living conditions of any neighbouring properties. No heritage assets would be adversely affected in their setting or special character.
- 12.3 The proposal is therefore compliant with Policies of the North Herts Local Plan, supplementary guidance and with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework. The development is therefore considered to be acceptable for the grant of planning permission accordingly.

