

Planning Statement for a Retrospective Revised Scheme for A School Conversion at East Hall School SG4 8DL

This statement has been prepared to accompany a Full Planning Application for a Change of Use from Agricultural Building to Education (D1) – retrospective revised scheme. Approved Scheme ref - 25/02022/FP.

Applicant: St Pauls Walden Bury Estate, The Calf House East and Calf House West, Easthall Farm, St Pauls Walden, Herts SG4 8DJ

Agent: Dorli Newbery, Shingle Hall, Ongar Road, Dunmow, CM6 1JB

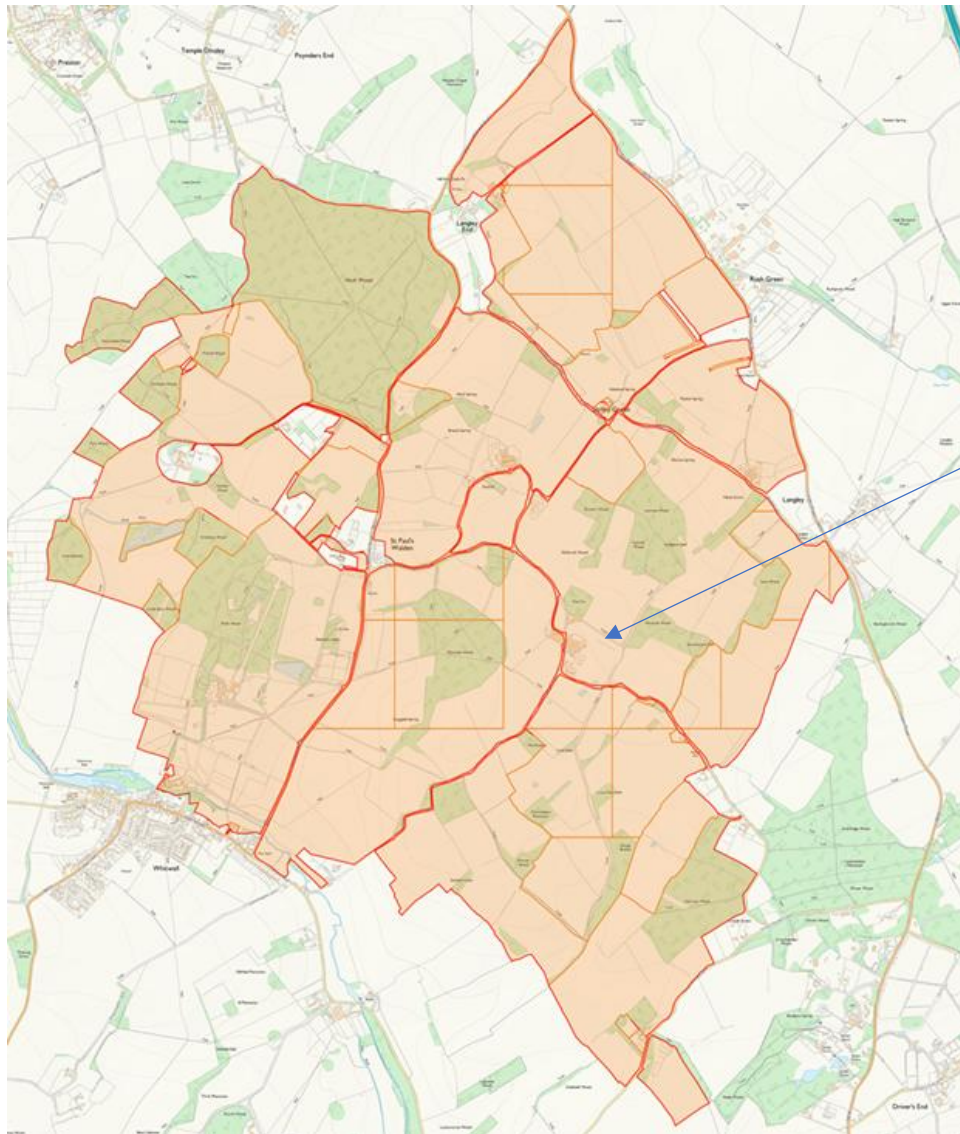
1.0 The Calf House East and West	Key points
1.1 Location – Easthall Farm is located within the Parish of St Pauls Walden and Ward of Hitchwood, in a rural part of North Hertfordshire. It is within the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt. The site is approximately 1km to the east of the B651 and approximately 1km west of the B656. The address is associated with the nearby town of Hitchin.	• Not in the Metropolitan Green Belt • Rural Location
1.2 Site history – The site is part of a large group buildings of mixed uses, including agricultural, former agricultural, stabling and a domestic dwelling. The dwelling and stables have a separate access and are part of a separate tenancy. The dwellinghouse is Grade II listed East Hall Farmhouse, which dates from the early 18th Century. There is an associated listed stable and listed barn. All the buildings on the site are under the ownership of the applicant.	• Existing school on site • Mixed use site • Away from dwelling house • Approved scheme 25/02022/FP in place

The application site is part of the unlisted former calf-house known as ‘The Calf House’, which is one of the agricultural or former agricultural buildings. It is located to the north of the listed farmhouse and barn (currently used as a stable). The part of the Calf House related to this application is called ‘The Calf House East and The Calf House West’. A school operates adjacent to the site; East Hall School. This is an established Special Education Needs (SEN) school.	
1.3 Access - There is a network of rural lanes surrounding Easthall Farm which connect the site to the wide area. There is access to the national grid of motorways and A roads to the east, A1(M) and Stevenage. St Pauls Walden & Whitwell are located to the west and south-west respectively. There are few residential properties accessed off the rural lanes of Bulluck’s Hill and Norton St Lane which have a low level of traffic movements. Hertfordshire Highways had the following response to the previous application (25/02022/FP): “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.”	• Hertfordshire County Highways were consulted on the previous scheme and had no objection • See transport and parking sections of planning justification
1.4 Proposed usage – The proposal is for a change of use of a former agricultural building to use as a school for children and young people with special educational needs (Use Class D1). A historic proposal was approved in 2020 – ref 20/00724/FP. This proposal provided some classroom areas. The school wishes to expand and approval is sought for extra classroom space. See details of the proposal below and statement by East Hall School.	• Application 25/02022/FP approved in October 2025 for the change of use from agricultural building to school • Retrospective permission now sought for changes to the approved scheme • Approved site area = 0.08ha (780m²)

The ethos of the school is based around the proximity to equine facilities and this approach has been seen to be very successful. The existing classrooms are located in The Calf House and the flow between the parking, classrooms and equine facilities works well. There was a redundant former agricultural unit adjacent to the existing classrooms within The Calf House building. A proposal was therefore put forward and approved in October 2025 to expand the school into this space. This retrospective application is a change to the approved 2025 scheme.	• Additional site within red line = 16m² therefore total of 796m² – rounded up to 0.08ha
1.5 Proposed changes of approved scheme – subsequent to the approval of the scheme for the conversion, and during the Building Regulation process/build phase, it became clear that the space could be better used if it was split internally to form 2 smaller classrooms and a store area. This led to a requirement for an additional door. This allowed each classroom to have a dedicated door to outside, providing an improved fire safety arrangement. Due to the nature of the school users a ramp was required to access the additional door. This area was previously outside the red line defined development boundary and therefore an additional change of use including this access footprint was required. There has also been a change in the red line boundary due to a realignment of a new fence line in front of the school extension to form a secure courtyard.	• Internal partitions • Additional external fire door and access ramp • Site boundary amended to include the area required for a ramp to the additional door • Site boundary amended to create a new secure courtyard • No increase in internal footprint

2.1 Farm Estate

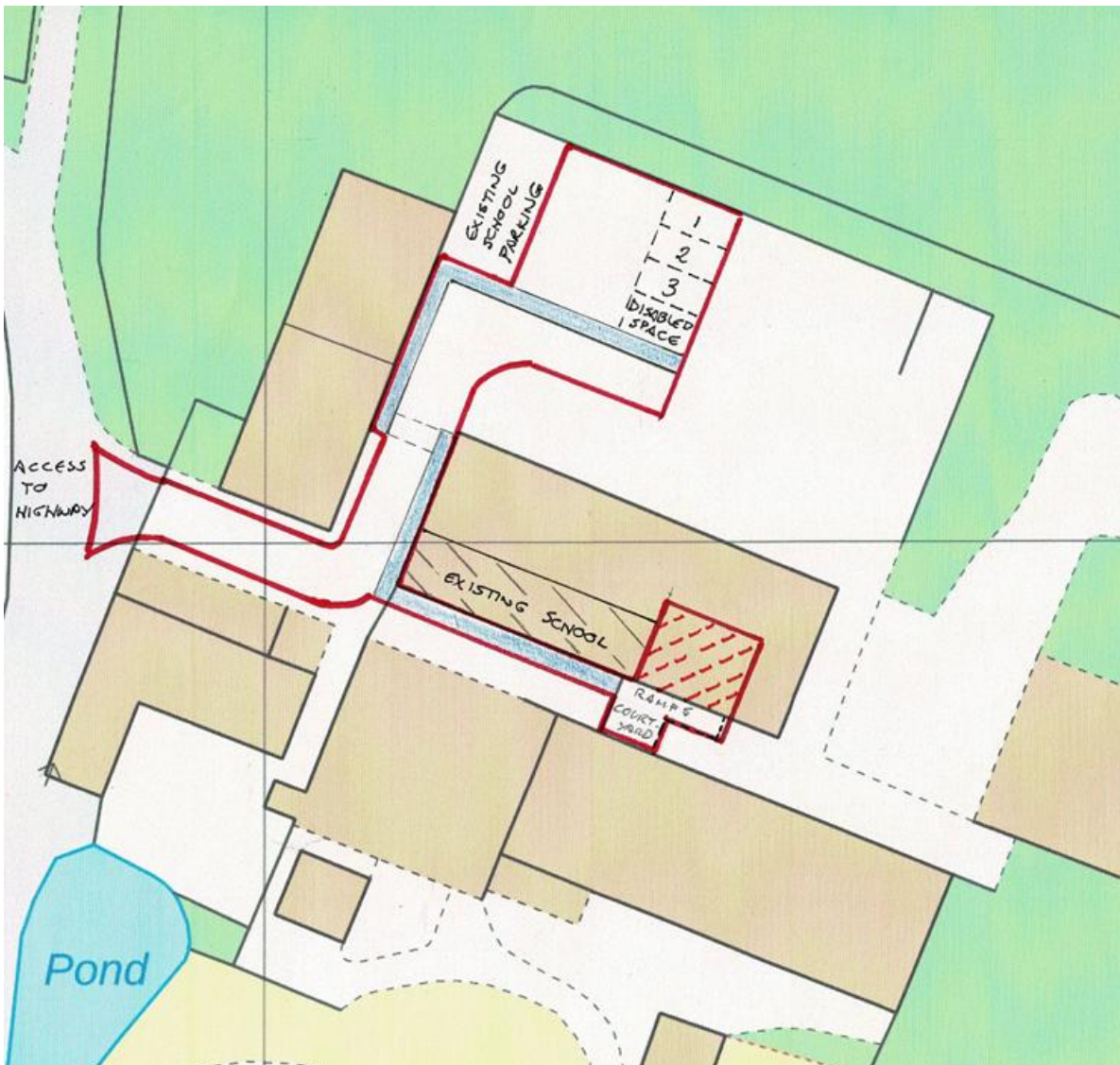
NTS – see planning documents for full size scaled map



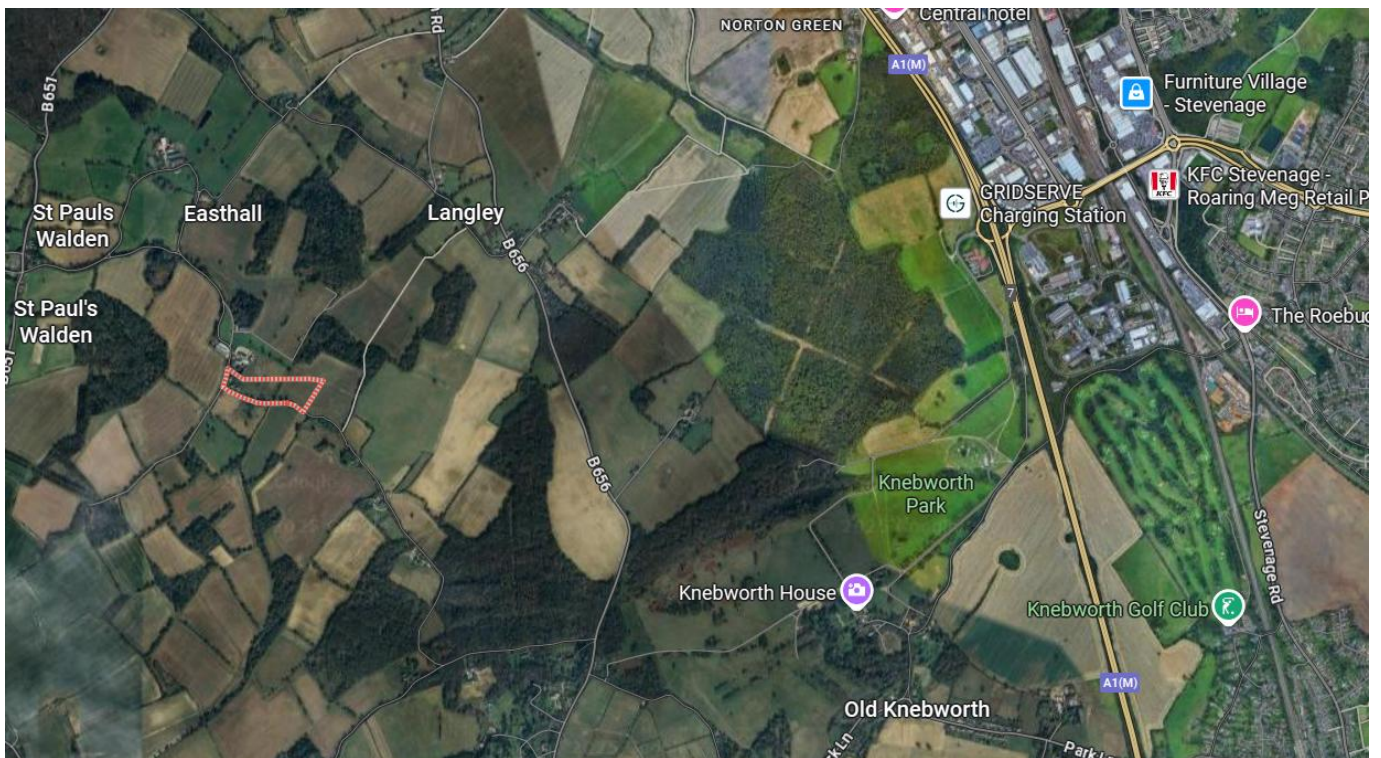
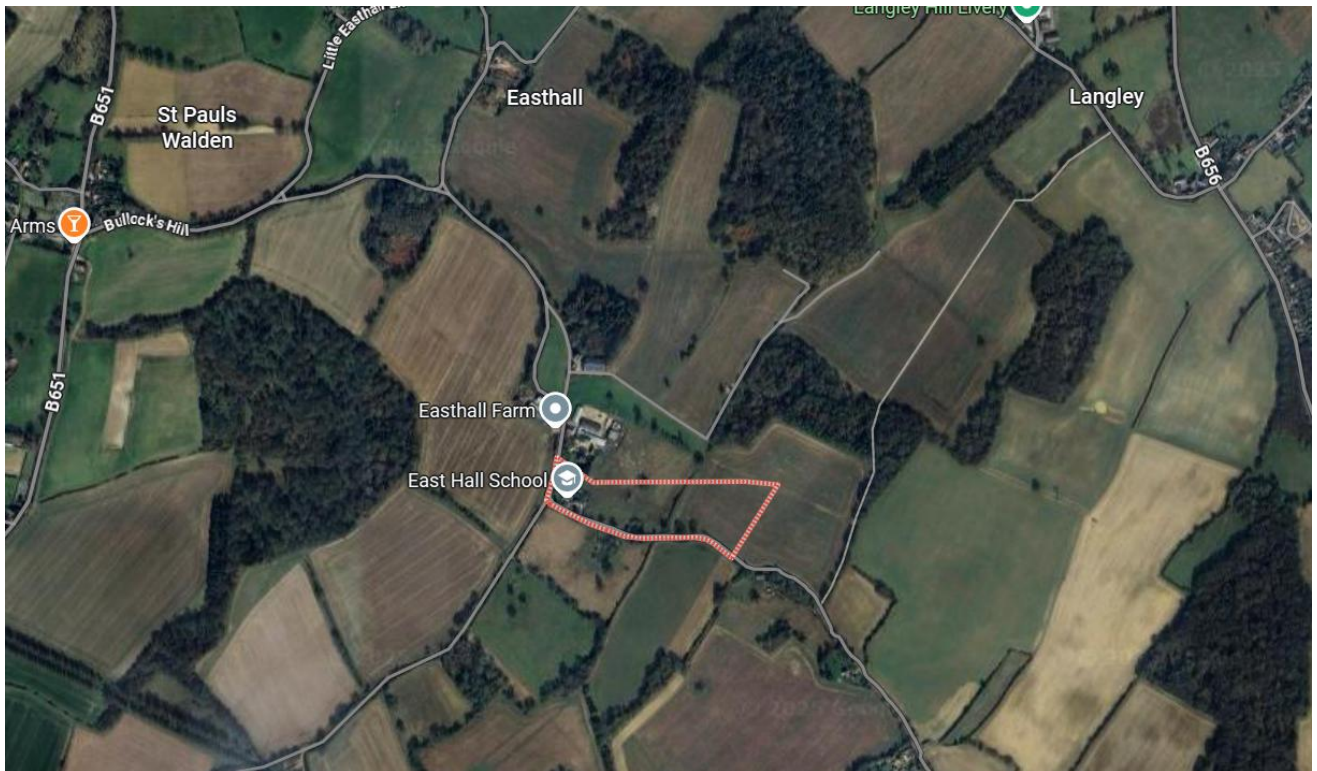
Easthall Farm

2.2 Site Plan (NTS)

See drawing 2026/414/01-02



3.0 Aerial Photographs – google earth pro imagery 19/9/2025



4.0 East Hall School	Key points												
4.1 Amount – East Hall School is Ofsted regulated and has been operating for 4 years. It is a small independent school supporting children and young people with special educational needs (SEN). It currently operates out of 2 classrooms in the former calf-house, as well as having access to the horse/stables. Due to the immense need for the facility, the waiting list for places and for continuity of care for the next key stage there is now a need to expand the school. With this proposed increase in the numbers of students there follows a need for more space. The current approval was for a single classroom, however the space was better used by forming 2 classrooms and a store room in the same footprint. This retrospective application illustrates the ‘as built’ floor plan.	• Existing successful school • Requirement to expand • Proposal is for 2 extra classrooms and a store area utilizing the same area as the previously approved single classroom extension												
4.2 Ofsted – School report  Inspection of East Hall School The Calf House, East Hall Farm, St Pauls Walden, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG4 8DL Inspection dates: 3 to 5 December 2024 <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Overall effectiveness</th><th>Good</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>The quality of education</td><td>Good</td></tr> <tr> <td>Behaviour and attitudes</td><td>Outstanding</td></tr> <tr> <td>Personal development</td><td>Good</td></tr> <tr> <td>Leadership and management</td><td>Good</td></tr> <tr> <td>Does the school meet the independent school standards?</td><td>Yes</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Overall effectiveness	Good	The quality of education	Good	Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding	Personal development	Good	Leadership and management	Good	Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes	• 2024 – overall Good rating
Overall effectiveness	Good												
The quality of education	Good												
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding												
Personal development	Good												
Leadership and management	Good												
Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes												
4.3 Principle of Development – It is proposed that another unit of the former calf-house is converted to a teaching space. This unit is adjacent to the classrooms which were converted following planning approval for the change of use. There will be no change to the pedestrian school access, and extension to the existing boundary fence will contain the new classroom within the same courtyard as the existing school rooms.	• No change to pedestrian access • Additional teaching space required to the original school • Retrospective permission sought for changes to 2025 approved scheme – no increase in footprint												

4.4 – Increase in Pupil Numbers - It is proposed that an additional 6 students be invited to attend the special educational needs school. The current number of students accessing the school is 16.	• Additional 6 pupils stated/approved in 2025 application • No additional pupils as a result of this retrospective rescheme application
4.5 Staffing - It is anticipated that, as a result of the additional pupil numbers and to maintain an acceptable teaching ratio, two additional members of staff will be required.	• 2 additional members of staff stated/approved in 2025 • No additional pupils as a result of this retrospective rescheme application
4.6 Parking – the additional parking will be as per the previous application – 3 standard spaces and 1 disabled space. The parking and walkways will utilize the existing areas. There will be 3 spaces provided – 2.7m x 6.0m and 1 space 3.5m x 6.0m.	• Existing parking area utilized • Additional spaces added to reflect the additional students and members of staff

5.0 Planning Policy	Key points
5.1 National Policies – Summary of most relevant 1. Supporting Sustainable Rural Development The NPPF supports sustainable growth and diversification in rural areas, including the re-use of existing buildings. • Paragraphs 85–88 (Rural Economy) encourage sustainable economic growth in rural areas and support the sustainable reuse of existing buildings. • The conversion of an existing agricultural building is generally viewed more favourably than constructing a new building because it makes use of existing resources and can reduce environmental impacts. 2. Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities Schools are important community infrastructure. • Paragraph 100 states that planning policies and decisions should promote healthy, inclusive and safe places. • Paragraph 102 requires planning policies and decisions to plan positively for community facilities and services, including educational facilities. • Paragraph 103 recognises the importance of ensuring sufficient choice of school places to meet local needs. 3. Achieving Well-Designed Places • Paragraphs 129–139 deal with design quality. • The conversion should respect the character of the agricultural building and surrounding countryside. • Any extensions, external alterations, parking areas, fencing, lighting or play areas should be sensitively designed. 4. Sustainable Transport • Paragraphs 110–116 address transport impacts. • The local planning authority will require the application to address: i. Highway safety.	• Development in accordance with NPPF

ii. Vehicle movements at school start and finish times. iii. Access arrangements. iv. Walking, cycling and public transport opportunities. v. Parking and drop-off provision. 5. Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment • Paragraphs 186–194 are relevant where ecological or landscape impacts arise. • Considerations may include: ○ Biodiversity impacts and Biodiversity Net Gain requirements (if applicable). ○ Protected species. ○ Lighting impacts. ○ Landscape character. ○ Trees and hedgerows.	
5.2 Local Planning Policy and Planning Justification 1) North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031(Adopted November 2022) 2) North Hertfordshire Parking SPD 2011 – Vehicle Parking at New Developments Policy SP1: Sustainable development in North Hertfordshire This Plan supports the principles of sustainable development within North Hertfordshire. We will: c) Grant planning permission for proposals that, individually or cumulatively: i. deliver an appropriate mix of homes, jobs and facilities that contribute towards the targets and aspirations in this Plan; ii. create high-quality developments that respect and improve their surroundings and provide opportunities for healthy lifestyle choices; iii. provide the necessary infrastructure required to support an increasing population; iv. protect key elements of North Hertfordshire’s environment including biodiversity, important landscapes, heritage assets and green infrastructure (including the water environment); and v. secure any necessary mitigation measures that reduce the impact of development, including on climate change; and d) Support neighbourhood plans and other local planning initiatives where they are in general	The expansion of the school will re-use a building formerly in agriculture with no new built development or increase in footprint. The growth of the school is important for the education and well-being of young people in the local community with special education needs. There will be no detrimental impacts on the local environment.

conformity with the strategic policies of this Local Plan.	
Policy SP5: Countryside and Green Belt We support the principles of the Green Belt and recognise the intrinsic value of the countryside. Green Belt and Rural Areas Beyond the Green Belt are shown on the Policies Map. We: d) Will operate a general policy of restraint in Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt through the application of our detailed policies.	As part of the new local plan the Green Belt has been extended. The new Green Belt area does not cover the site in question. See Appendix A. However, the site is within the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt and therefore special consideration is given to new development. We feel that this change of use application operates within the general policy of restraint and is acceptable in this rural area. There is no built development and the proposal is beneficial to the wider community.
Policy SP6: Sustainable transport We will deliver accessibility improvements and promote the use of sustainable transport modes insofar as reasonable and practicable. We will: a) Comply with the NHDC Transport Strategy and the provisions of the Local Transport Plan and other supporting documents as relevant; e) Assess development proposals against the parking standards set out in this Plan and having regard to relevant supplementary advice; f) Require applicants to provide assessments, plans and supporting documents to demonstrate the safety and sustainability of their proposals; and g) Protect existing rights of way, cycling and equestrian routes and, should diversion be unavoidable, require replacement routes to the satisfaction of the Council.	The nature of the education for the proposed pupils is such that specialist facilities are rarely available on their doorstep, and therefore transport movements are generally associated with their education. The young people who access and benefit from specialist education such as East Hall School may not be suited to public transport and the safeguarding issues that may result. This generally means that public transport is not a viable option for the students. In this location there is no suitable public transport network which would enable this method of attending the school.
Policy SP13: Historic environment The Council will balance the need for growth with the proper protection and enhancement of the historic environment. When considering the impact of a	There are three Grade II listed buildings within the Easthall Farm building cluster. East Hall Farmhouse is a substantial dwellinghouse,

proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight will be given to the asset's conservation and the management of its setting. We will pursue a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment.	however it is sufficiently remote to the building where change of use is sought to be considered as being unaffected by the proposal. It has a separate access and therefore traffic movements would also not affect the building or its fabric. Nearest to the development site is a listed barn - List Entry Number: 1347453 - BARN AT EASTHALL FARM (40 METRES TO EAST NORTH EAST OF POND). This open-fronted barn is opposite The Calf House. It is in equine use both domestically by the residents of the farmhouse, but also associated with East Hall School. The use of the barn would not change as part of this change of use application, and there would be no additional impacts. The existing school buildings are closer to the barn than the proposed additional classroom and by their historic use have not evidenced any adverse effect on the listed asset or it's setting.
Policy CGB1: Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt. In the Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt, as shown on the Policies Map, planning permission will be granted provided that the development: b) Meets a proven local need for community facilities, services or affordable housing in an appropriate location; d) Relates to an existing rural building; e) Is a modest proposal for rural economic development or diversification; or	There re-use of an existing agricultural building is in accordance with the policy for Rural Areas beyond the Greenbelt. The increase of a single classroom is considered to be a small development. The increase in SEN facilities is beneficial to the local community and as such in accordance with Policy CGB1.

Policy CGB4: Existing buildings in the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt a) Planning permission for the re-use, replacement or extension of buildings in the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt will be granted provided that: 92 Paragraph 55 of the 2012 NPPF North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 121 b) Any existing building to be converted for re-use does not require major extension or reconstruction; c) The resultant building(s) do not have a materially greater impact on the openness, purposes or general policy aims of the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt than the original building(s); and d) Any outbuilding(s) are sited as close as possible to the main building(s) and visually subordinate to them.	The re-use of a small section of an existing building, with a building adjacent under the same use complies with Policy CGB4. There is only cosmetic work required to convert the building from the former agricultural storage use to SEN schooling (D1). There structure will be retro-fitted to bring it up to standards for thermal efficiency/fire resistance and other current Building Regulations relevant to a school. No major structural works are required or extensions/addition of outbuildings. There will be no impact on the openness of the countryside/setting. The use would have a low number of students and staff and would therefore not place significant demand on the capacity of the local road network. Sufficient off-road parking and turning area is available within the site to ensure that proposed users would not come into conflict with the safe operation of the adjacent highway. The new classroom is near to the stables and horses and it will be a good use of a redundant building which is conveniently located, not derelict to a point where it will require extensive renovation, and is fit for purpose.
Policy T1: Assessment of transport matters Planning permission will be granted provided that: a) Development would not lead to highway safety problems or cause unacceptable impacts upon the highway network;	• increase to the traffic movements due to increase in number of pupils/staff • 16 additional movements (term time)

b) Mechanisms to secure any necessary sustainable transport measures and / or improvements to the existing highway network are secured in accordance with Policy SP7;	Hertfordshire Highways had the following response to the previous application (25/02022/FP): “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.” • the proposed use would not have a significant effect on the highway either in terms of congestion, safety, or with respect to air quality.
Policy T2: Parking Planning permission will be granted provided that: b) Parking for non-residential development is provided having regard to the standards for non-residential development set out in the relevant Supplementary Planning Document; c) Proposals have regard to relevant Supplementary Planning Documents, strategies or advice and; d) Applicants clearly identify how they provide for all likely types of parking demand and demonstrate that parking will be safe and of a design and layout that will function satisfactorily.	• In accordance with the Council’s Vehicle Parking at New Development SPD September 2011 • a maximum of 4 parking spaces would be required including 1 disabled space. • no detriment to the safe and free flow of traffic on the adjacent highway. Due to the nature of the young pupils accessing this education setting they will generally be driven to the site and dropped-off/ collected by a carer/parent or private taxi. The allocated additional parking is near to the unit. The vehicles bringing/ collecting students are able to be safely accommodated away from the highway. This area would also be sufficient for the additional staff member. There is a safe and dedicated de-marked pedestrian route from the parking area to the unit, which is already in place and has

	been successful in terms of providing safe passage from the dedicated parking area.
Policy D3: Protecting living conditions Planning permission will be granted for development proposals which do not cause unacceptable harm to living conditions North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031. Where the living conditions of proposed developments would be affected by an existing use or the living conditions of an existing development would be affected by a proposed use, the Council will consider whether there are mitigation measures that can be taken to mitigate the harm to an acceptable level. If the Council is not satisfied that mitigation proposals would address the identified harm, development proposals will not be permitted.	The development under consideration is an extension to an existing facility. There is already precedent for the change of use at this location and the operation of the SEN school has been welcomed into the wider site by other users and local residents. The nearest resident to the school is the managing director of East Hall School and she is very supportive of the expansion. She resides in East Hall Farmhouse which is approximately 60m to the south. She does not have any concerns about the harm to the living conditions of her and her family. There is a further cluster of residential properties approximately 150m from the development (and with the farmhouse and farm between them and the site). It is not anticipated that any other resident in the locality will be negatively affected by the change of use proposal to increase the number of SEN young people being access the site. It should be noted that the operations relating to the additional classroom are generally confined to the indoors further negating any impact on other residents in the locality.
Policy D4: Air quality Planning permission will be granted provided that development proposals: North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 144 a) Give consideration to the potential or actual impact on local air quality, both during the demolition/	The only impact on air quality will be as a result of additional traffic. This will be very limited as discussed above and unlikely to cause any harm. There is no increase in footprint or building operations planned as part of

construction phase and as a result of its final occupation and use; b) Propose appropriate levels of mitigation to minimise emissions to the atmosphere and their potential effects upon health and the local environment; and c) Carry out air pollution impact assessments, where required, to determine the impact on local air quality of the development. Where an air quality impact assessment demonstrates that a development is unacceptable from a local air quality perspective the development will be refused. Where air pollution impact assessments are not required there will still be a requirement on developers to provide appropriate levels of mitigation to address emissions of pollutants to the atmosphere.	this proposal. There will be re-fitting works to the interior of the building and come external cladding; neither operation will result in an increase in dust or other pollution.
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6.0 Design and Details	Key points
6.1 Size -The unit for conversion is adjacent to the existing classrooms. The internal dimensions of the empty unit are 8.9m x 7.5m. The ceiling is sloping with a minimum internal height of 3.4m rising to 5.6m. The unit is deeper than the existing school.	• GIA 67m² – approved scheme • GIA 67m² – revised scheme
6.2 Appearance/Remedial Works - The pre-development unit had a roller shutter (approx. 4.4m wide) and a separate door 0.9m wide. The walls are generally masonry with a section of timber to the south east internal elevation. The roof is profiles cement fibreboard sheets with 2 corrugated pvc rooflights. The roller shutter has been removed in accordance with approved application 25/02022/FP and 2 fire doors added to the infilled front elevation. The original approval was for a single door. Each door has a disabled access ramp associated with it. All the elevations, internal ceiling and floors have had additional insulation added to comply with current	• remedial works required for the change of use are considered to be minor • works have been carried out in accordance with approval 25/02022/FP • an additional door, ramp and internal partitions have been constructed for which retrospective approval is now sought

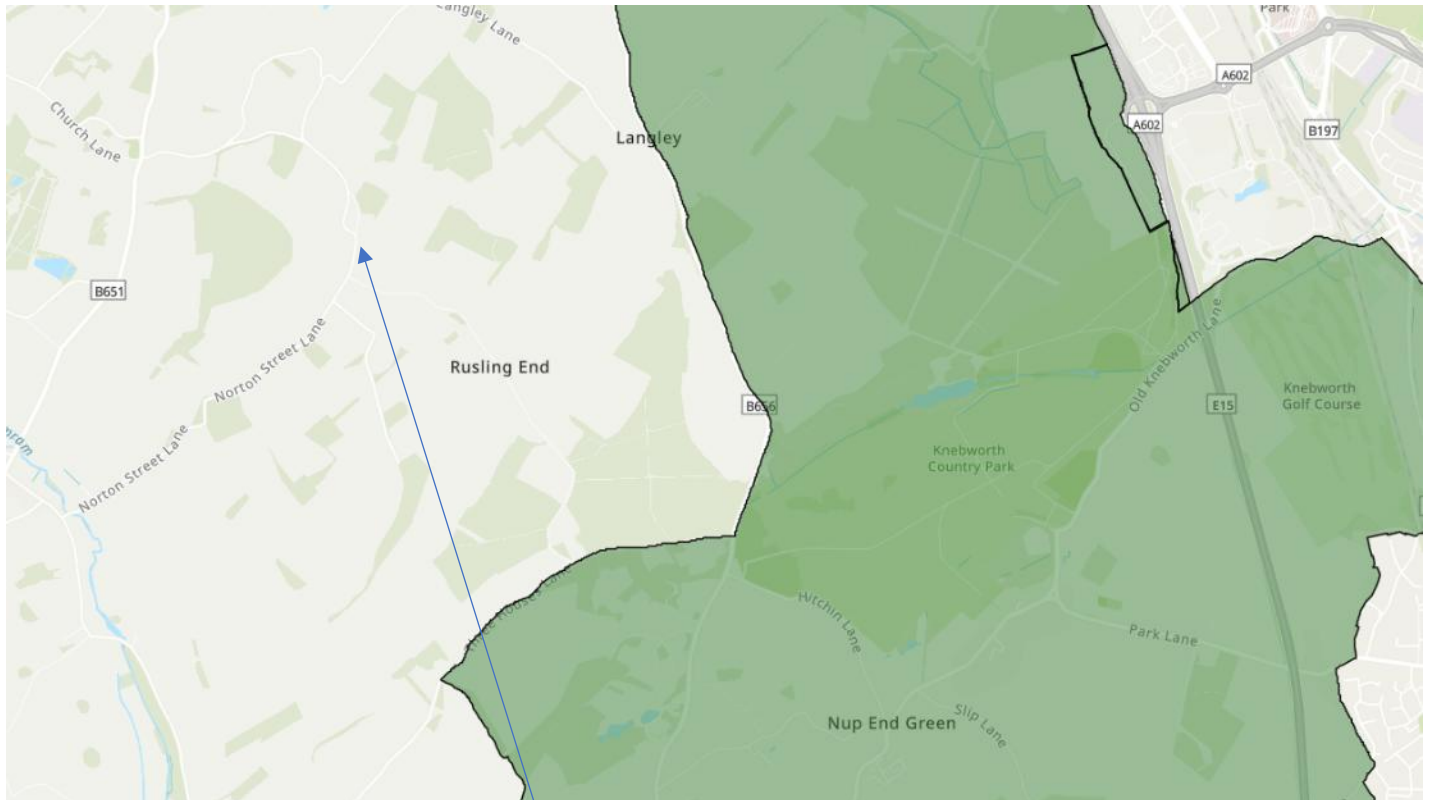
Building Regulations. Other works have been carried out in accordance with approval 25/02022/FP.	
6.3 Lighting - External lighting to allow safe access will be implemented. Lighting will be bat friendly down lights which support Dark Sky guidelines.	• Bat friendly lighting
6.4 Access - The new classroom will be accessed via a 1 in 12 ramp (as recommended for independent wheelchair use), with a 1.5m landing for turning. The access is 1.2m wide.	• An additional ramp is required to the extra door
6.5 Ecology - There is no evidence of any priority species or protected habitats within or adjacent to the vacant unit. Project is not subject to BNG.	• No ecological implications

7.0 Conclusion

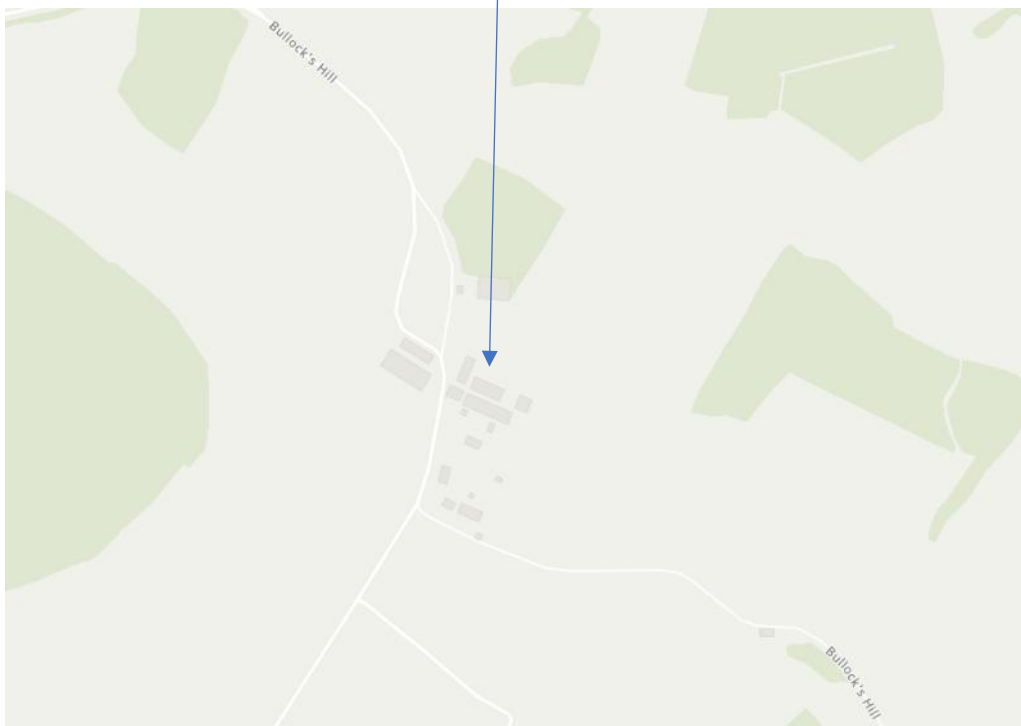
The re-use of the vacant agricultural unit for the extension of a specialist school is in accordance with national local planning policy. The re-use of a building no longer required for agricultural use and diversification of a rural business is one of the fundamental aims of the Framework. The change of use from agricultural to D1 has already been approved at this site – 25/02022/FP. Changes have been made to original permission as a result of on-site requirements, and the site boundary revised. Therefore, retrospective permission is requested for the revised scheme.

This statement has set out the details of the proposed change of use and has demonstrated how the proposal is compliant with the national framework. In addition, the details of the changes to the existing permission are detailed and justified and we therefore respectfully request that permission is granted.

Appendix A – Green Belt Map (nts)



Easthall Farm – Calf-House
(development site)



Appendix B – Parking Standards – North Herts SPD

5.4 Parking Standards for Use Class D

Table 5.4 Non residential parking standards – Class Use D

Class Use	Maximum Car parking Standard (includes visitor spaces)	Minimum Cycle parking standard
D1 – Non residential institutions		
Public halls/places of assembly (excluding D2)	1 space per 9 m2gfa or 1 space per 3 fixed seats plus 3 spaces per 4 staff members	1 space per 4 staff plus visitor parking on individual merit
Community/family centres	1 space per 9 m2gfa plus 1 space per full-time staff members or equivalent	
Day centres	1 space per 2 staff members plus 1 space per 3 persons attending or 1 space per 9 m2gfa	
Places of worship	1 space per 10 m2gfa	
Surgeries & clinics	3 spaces per consulting room plus 1 space per employee other than consulting doctors/dentists/vets	1 space per 4 staff plus 1 space per consulting room
Libraries, miscellaneous cultural buildings	1 space per 30 m2gfa of freestanding development (otherwise assessed on merits)	1 space per 4 staff plus visitor parking on individual merit
Miscellaneous cultural Buildings	2 spaces plus 1 space per 30 m2 of public floorspace	1 space per 4 staff plus visitor parking on individual merit
Educational establishments (including residential) schools,	1 space per full-time member of staff plus 1 space per 100 pupils plus 1 space per 8 pupils over 17 years old plus 1 space per 20 pupils under 17 years old	1 space per 5 staff plus 1 space per 3 students
further education	1 space per full-time member of staff plus 1 space per 5 full-time students	

Appendix C - Flood Risk - <https://check-long-term-flood-risk.service.gov.uk/risk>

Surface water [More about your surface water flood risk](#)

Yearly chance of flooding

Very low

Low

Medium

High

Yearly chance of flooding between 2040 and 2060

Very low

Low

Medium

High

What surface water is
Surface water flooding is sometimes known as flash flooding. It happens when rainwater cannot drain away through normal drainage systems.
[▶ Why surface water flooding is a problem](#)

Rivers and the sea [More about your rivers and sea flood risk](#)

Yearly chance of flooding

Very low

Low

Medium

High

Yearly chance of flooding between 2036 and 2069

Very low

Low

Medium

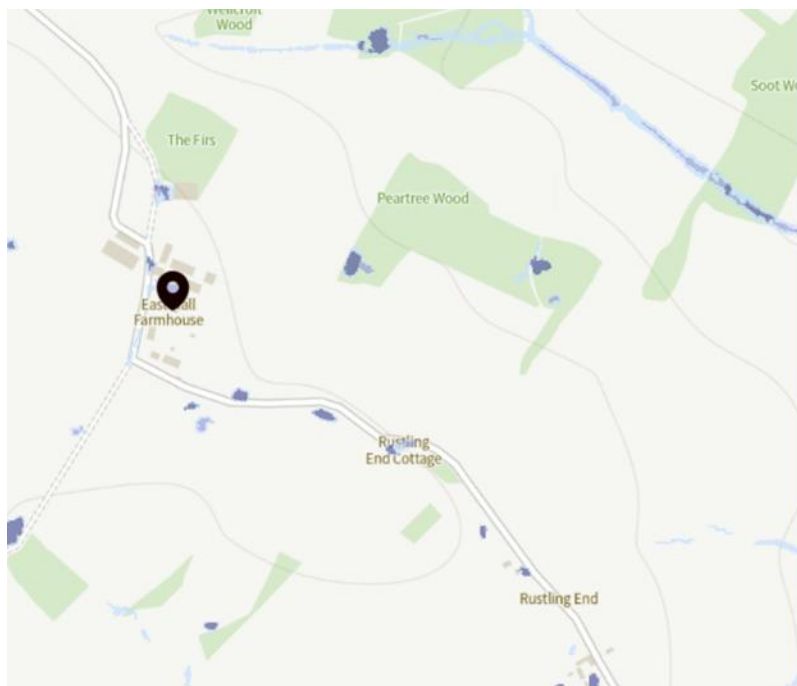
High

What makes rivers and sea flooding more likely
Low-lying areas that are close to rivers or the sea are more likely to flood when water levels rise.
This information takes into account any flood defences.
[▶ Why flood defences cannot completely prevent flooding](#)

Other flood risks [More about groundwater and reservoirs](#)

Groundwater
Flooding from groundwater is unlikely in this area.

Reservoirs
Flooding from reservoirs is unlikely in this area.



Surface water map

Yearly chance of flooding

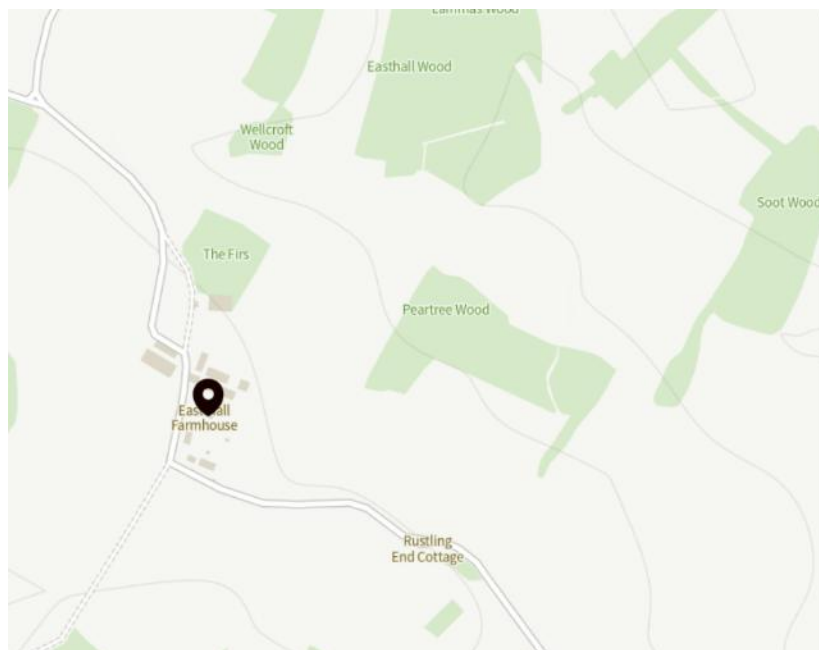
- ☒ Flood area (extent)
 - High chance
 - Medium chance
 - Low chance

Yearly chance of flooding between 2040 and 2060

- ☐ Flood area (extent)

Map details

- ☒ Show flooding
- ☒ Selected address



Rivers and sea map

Yearly chance of flooding

- ☒ Flood area (extent)
 - High chance
 - Medium chance
 - Low chance
 - Very low chance

Yearly chance of flooding between 2036 and 2069

- ☐ Flood area (extent)

Map details

- ☒ Show flooding
- ☒ Selected address

Appendix D – Photographs

Pre-Development



Post Development (25/02022/FP)



Access and Street Scene

