

# North Hertfordshire Council

## Tree Officer comments

**File Ref:** 26/00752/PIP

**Date:** 21/04/2026

**Planning Officer:** Harriet Sanders

**Address:** Land Adjacent To Model Farm, Village Street, Hexton, Hitchin,  
Hertfordshire, SG5

3JE

**Subject:** Permission in Principle : Erection of up to three dwellings

### **1.0 Policy position: NPPF / Local Plan / Supplementary Planning Document**

- 1.1 Paragraph 136 of the Achieving well-designed places chapter in the current Framework, addresses the integration of trees within new development. Draft NPPF Policy N3 (December 2025) proposes that trees in new development is included within the natural environment section to ensure consistency and alignment with wider environmental objectives.
- 1.2 North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 Chapter 11 deals with the natural environment.

Policy NE2: Landscape Planning permission will be granted for development proposals that: a) Respect the sensitivities of the relevant landscape character area and have regard to the guidelines identified for built development and landscape management; b) Do not cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area or the landscape character area in which the site is located, taking account of any suitable mitigation measures necessary to achieve this; c) Are designed and located to ensure the health and future retention of important landscape features; and d) Have considered the long-term management and maintenance of any existing and proposed landscaping

### **2.0 Identified tree impacts in application**

- 2.1 **Conservation Area:** Hexton Conservation Area
- 2.2 **Tree Preservation Order:** No TPO

### **3.0 Trees**

- 3.1 The proposed development site plan locates dwellings potentially close to exiting trees and the impact of any development to these will need to be fully

assessed. It is not clear on the plan whether the trees depicted are existing or new replacement planting. It is beneficial to retain as many good quality existing trees on site as possible, particularly along the West boundary abutting Village Street where they are highly visible and offer public amenity.

- 3.2 Existing semi-mature to mature tree cover is generally already at or close to its peak environmental benefit and so vitally important in this time of climate crisis. Any mitigation planting takes decades before it delivers significant environmental benefits and even longer to reach the same peak benefits in replacing like for like canopy cover currently provided by existing trees. New tree planting should look to enhance existing tree cover, rather than merely be used to mitigate tree cover lost to a development.

#### **4.0 Conclusion**

- 4.1 I have no arboricultural objections to the proposed development however the site is located within a Conservation Area and it appears that some tree removal may be proposed. The LPA would not support the removal of moderate or high quality trees without good reason. Any retained trees on site are also likely to be within influencing distance of the proposed development and could be negatively impacted by construction works.

*“Construction works often exert pressures on existing trees, as do changes in their immediate environment following the construction. A tree that has taken many decades to reach maturity can be damaged irreparably in a few minutes by actions that might be unwitting, negligent or wilful. The early provision of physical protection from damage is therefore critical”(BS5837:2012)*

Tree protection measures will therefore be necessary.

#### **5.0 Recommendation**

- 5.1 I recommend an Arboricultural Implication Assessment (AIA) and Tree Constraints Plan (TCP) in accordance with British Standard 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations is carried out to assess the quality of trees on site and the potential constraints they would have on a development. The results of this survey, together with other survey information, should inform feasibility studies and design options. In the event of a full planning application being submitted an Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) and Tree Protection Plan (TPP) in accordance with British Standard 5837:2012 will also be required to ensure retained trees are afforded adequate protection during the construction and demolition of the proposed development.

Reason:

To prevent damage to or destruction of trees to be retained on the site in the interests of the appearance of the completed development and the visual amenity of the locality, and to comply with Policy NE2 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 to 2031

- 5.2 As part of any full planning application, I recommend the submission of a landscaping scheme and management plan, which should include a comprehensive variety of tree species to compliment the development in addition to details of planting preparation, planting method and aftercare for long-term maintenance and to ensure successful establishment.

Reason:

To safeguard and enhance the appearance of the completed development and the visual amenity of the locality, and to comply with Policy NE2 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 to 2031.

Francis Mabbett

Tree & Landscape Officer (Planning)