

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...Tom Rea.....

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
25/02769/FP	Change of use of a completed and occupied unit of ancillary accommodation (annexe) for use as a separate dwelling to be occupied by a family member.	Southfield Farm Broadfield Buntingford Hertfordshire SG9 9RD

Submitted Plan Nos

Location Plan MUR/25/01 MUR/25/02

1.0 Policies

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1.0 **Planning Policy**

1.1 North Herts District Local Plan 2011 – 2031

- ☐ Policy CGB1 – Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt
- ☐ Policy CGB4 – Existing buildings in the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt
- ☐ Policy D1- Sustainable Design
- ☐ Policy D3 – Protecting Living conditions
- ☐ Policy D4 – Air Quality
- ☐ Policy NE4 – Biodiversity and Geological sites
- ☐ Policy SP5 – Countryside and Green Belt
- ☐ Policy SP9 – Design & Sustainability

1.2 National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

- ☐ Section 2 : Achieving sustainable development
- ☐ Section 5: Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
- ☐ Section 9: Promoting sustainable transport
- ☐ Section 11: Making effective use of land
- ☐ Section 12: Achieving well designed places
- ☐ Section 14: Meeting the challenge of climate change
- ☐ Section 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

1.3 Neighbourhood Plan

Currently there is no adopted Neighbourhood Plan for Sandon Parish

2.0 **Site History**

- 2.1 22/03148/FP: Insertion of rooflights to existing side (north west) elevation, and doors and windows to existing side (south east) elevation to facilitate conversion of barn into habitable 1-bed ancillary accommodation. Granted 21.02.2023. Implemented.

3.0 **Representations**

- 3.1 Sandon Parish Council: No response

- 3.2 Site Notice/neighbours: No responses

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

- 4.1.1 The barn the subject of this application sits within the farmyard forming part of Southfield Farm, an agricultural holding located to the north east of Cottered village. The barn is approximately 60 sqm in floorspace. The barn has been re-built with new brick plinth, new timber framed walls and a pantile roof. A new concrete floor has been laid internally. The barn lies approximately 15m in front of the main dwelling on the site – Southfield Farmhouse. Currently the barn is used for as residential accommodation ancillary to Southfield Farmhouse (see above planning history).

4.2 **Proposal**

- 4.2.1 The proposal is for permission to use the existing building as a self contained one bedroom dwelling. The accommodation would provide one bedroom and associated living facilities such as kitchen bathroom and living room. Two parking spaces are provided and there would be an enclosed garden area. No external alterations are proposed.

4.3 **Key Issues**

4.3.1 **Planning Policy**

- 4.3.2 The site is the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt. There is no conservation area and none of the surrounding buildings are listed. Policy CGB1 states that planning permission will be granted for development (in the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt) subject to a number of criteria including d) if it relates to an existing rural building. I consider that the proposal will meet this criteria in that the barn is an existing rural building.

- 4.3.3 Furthermore, Policy CGB4 states the following:

- 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:
- 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 proposal would be in accordance with criterion b). The proposal does not require any major extension or reconstruction.

- 4.3.4 The proposals include a garden to the proposed dwelling which would have very little if any impact on the residential setting of Southfield Farmhouse indeed it would be a complementary use. The proposed vehicular parking area would be on land that is already hardsurfaced. No additional buildings are proposed. Therefore the proposed use of the existing building as a self contained dwelling would not have any materially greater impact on the openness, purposes or general policy aims of the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt than the original building. The proposal complies with criterion c).
- 4.3.5 In summary I consider that there can be no objection in principle to the conversion of the barn as independent residential accommodation as it relates to an existing rural building and the alterations are relatively minor. The proposal complies with Policies CGB1 d) and CGB4 b) & c).
- 4.3.6 Visual and spatial impact
- 4.3.7 The proposal relates to an existing barn and minimal external alterations are proposed. As such the proposal will have limited, if negligible, visual impact. The building is already in residential use as an annexe and the residential use will continue albeit there being no association with Southfield Farmhouse. The use of the barn as a dwelling would be compatible with the residential use of Southfield Farmhouse and the nearby dwellings at Needle Spring and Boldero all of which share the same access.
- 4.3.8 The barn forms part of a tight knit group of farm buildings comprising of the main farmhouse and associated farm buildings. There would be no physical expansion of development beyond the farmyard and no material impact on the intrinsic beauty and quality of the surrounding countryside.
- 4.3.9 The parking area is located close to the existing building on existing hardstanding. The garden area would be on an existing grassed area in front of the barn. The development will maintain the setting of the site and maintain the rural character of the area. The proposed development is therefore considered to comply with Policies SP9 and D1 of the Local Plan
- 4.3.10 Impact on residential amenity
- 4.3.11 The proposed one bed dwelling would provide 60 sqm of accommodation thereby meeting the minimum requirements of the Nationally Described Space Standards. More than adequate external amenity space would be provided within the outdoor garden area.
- 4.3.12 The proposed self contained dwelling is accessed separately from the main farm business access which is located west of Southfield Farmhouse. Accordingly there are very few if any commercial or agricultural vehicles operating within the vicinity of the building.
- 4.3.13 The barn is already in residential use. The two properties to the south west (Needle Spring and Boldero's) share the same vehicular access but are some distance from the barn but are also in a compatible residential use and are unlikely to be affected by an independent residential use of the existing annex. It is considered that the proposals

are unlikely to have any adverse impact on neighbouring properties in accordance with Policies D1 and D3 of the Local Plan.

- 4.3.14 No significant internal or external works are proposed and the existing grassed area will be re-used therefore there are no contamination issues to consider.

4.3.15 Access and parking

- 4.3.16 The dwelling will be accessed from an existing primarily residential access road shared by three other dwellings (Southfield Farmhouse, Needle Spring and Boldero's). Given that the access is already used to service the residential annexe there would be no discernible intensification of use of the site that might generate separate trips. Even so the site is short distance to Cottered village and slightly further away Buntingford where there are services that can meet the every day needs of the occupiers of the new separate dwelling. A bus stop exists in Throcking immediately to the south with a service to Buntingford.

- 4.3.17 Refuse collection will be via the service road and the existing arrangements used by the three existing dwellings

- 4.3.18 Given the advice in paragraph 110 of the NPPF regarding sustainable transport solutions for rural areas it is considered that the provision of one additional small dwelling will not have any significant impact on the road network. Furthermore, although the NPPF seeks to avoid isolated homes in the countryside, there are several exceptions as set out in paragraph 84 and this development would comply with c) where a development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting.

4.3.19 Sustainability

- 4.3.20 The barn has recently been refurbished and is thermally insulated to meet a high standard for the existing residential use. An EV charging point would be required by the Building Regulations. The existing accommodation has an air source heat pump installed and this will continue to operate with the residential use.

4.3.21 Ecology

- 4.3.22 The barn has recently been comprehensively re-built with new walls, roof and flooring. There is a new pantile roof. Because of the recent refurbishment works it is unlikely that the barn is a habitat for bats or other wildlife. Planning permission ref: 22/03148/FP required a bat box and one wild bird box (e.g. sparrow, swift or housemartin box) to be installed on the barn and permanently maintained as such for the lifetime of the development. New planting within garden area is likely to increase biodiversity habitat. The applicant has indicated that the works will be carried out as a self build project (see application form) therefore this application is exempt from the Biodiversity Net Gain Regulations.

4.3.23 Designated heritage assets

- 4.3.24 There are no heritage assets on site or within the vicinity of the site.

4.3.25 Climate change

4.3.26 The development is of a scale unlikely to impact on local climate change and can be implemented in accordance with the criteria set out in Policy D1 of the Local Plan.

4.3.27 Planning conditions

4.3.28 Other than the normal time limit and approved plans conditions it is suggested that permitted development rights for extensions and outbuildings are withdrawn given the location of the barn within an open setting within the farmyard and the potential impact on the rural amenities of the area.

4.4 **Conclusion**

4.4.1 The proposal is acceptable in planning terms.

4.5 **Alternative Options**

4.5.1 None applicable

5.0 **Recommendation**

5.1 That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out wholly in accordance with the details specified in the application and supporting approved documents and plans listed above.

Reason: To ensure the development is carried out in accordance with details which form the basis of this grant of permission.

3. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 as amended no development as set out in Classes A, B, C and E of Part 1 of Schedule 2 to the Order, (or any subsequent Statutory Instrument which revokes, amends and/or replaces those provisions) shall be carried out without first obtaining a specific planning permission from the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: Given the nature of this development, the Local Planning Authority considers that development which would normally be "permitted development" should be retained within planning control in the interests of the character and amenities of the area and to comply with Policy D1 and/or Policy D3 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 to 2031.

Biodiversity Net Gain

1. This development is not subject to the statutory Biodiversity Gain Plan condition because it is considered exempt under the statutory exemptions (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain-exempt-developments>) or transitional arrangements in respect of the biodiversity gain condition.

Proactive Statement:

Planning permission has been granted for this proposal. Discussion with the applicant to seek an acceptable solution was not necessary in this instance. The Council has therefore acted proactively in line with the requirements of the Framework (paragraph 38) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

Signed  Anne McDonald	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Determining Officer Date: 15 December 2025	