

Client	Mr. R. Heap
Project	Waterdells, Pottersheath Road, Welwyn, AL6 9TA
Project No.	ST-4119/TN-2607-Rev0
Date of Issue	July 2026
Author	Kevin Sykes
Checked By	Stuart Wilson

Waterdells, Pottersheath Road, Welwyn, AL6 9TA

Technical Note

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Stomor Ltd has been commissioned by Mr. R. Heap to prepare a Technical Note (TN) in response to Hertfordshire County Council's (HCC) highways consultation response (HCC ref: NH/28234/2026) relating to the Permission in Principle (PIP) application (ref: 26/00415/PIP) for the erection of a single dwelling on land at Waterdells, Pottersheath Road, Welwyn, AL6 9TA.
- 1.2. The highways consultation response highlights several matters to be addressed in relation to sustainability and accessibility, and the proposed access arrangements to serve the site.
- 1.3. A copy of the highways consultation response, dated 17 February 2026 is provided at **Appendix A**.
- 1.4. This Technical Note responds to the highways comments and provides updated and / or additional information, where necessary.

2. Review of Highways Comments

- 2.1. This section presents a review and response to the highways comments received from HCC. The comments are reproduced in bold italics below followed by the Stomor response. For ease, the heading used in the consultation response have also been used here.

Sustainability and Accessibility

The proposed site is located along Pottersheath Road, where:

- ***There are no footways,***
- ***No street lighting,***
- ***No formal crossing facilities,***
- ***And no public transport services within an acceptable walking distance, with the nearest bus stop being more than 1.6km away along an unlit rural road.***

This application is for a change of use to 'Building 2' to use class E, but the development proposals are unclear including the existing use class of Building 2 and what the impact of splitting the site into two will have on existing operation on the site.

The location is therefore entirely car dependent and provides no safe or suitable access for

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pedestrians or cyclists, contrary to:

- ***National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2025) - Sections on sustainable transport and promoting active travel.***
- ***HCC Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) - Policies supporting reduction of private car reliance.***
- ***HCC Place & Movement Design Guidance - Requiring development to be situated where safe, sustainable, and inclusive movement can be achieved for all users.***

The HA acknowledges that there are existing residential properties in the wider area; however, these do not set a precedent for further development under current policy frameworks, which place greater emphasis on sustainable location and accessibility.

The development fails to demonstrate that it can meet contemporary sustainability and movement objectives.

- 2.2. The absence of a full range of services, facilities or public transport opportunities within walking distance of a proposed dwelling does not, in itself, justify a conclusion that development is inherently unsustainable.
- 2.3. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires planning decisions to be taken against the Framework as a whole and recognises that the application of sustainable transport principles must reflect the differing characteristics of urban and rural areas. Paragraph 110 of the NPPF confirms that whilst significant development should be directed towards locations that are or can be made sustainable, *“opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas”* and this must be taken into account in decision-making.
- 2.4. The NPPF therefore expressly acknowledges that rural residents will often have a greater reliance on the private car and that sustainability cannot be assessed solely through proximity to public transport or local services.
- 2.5. In determining whether development constitutes sustainable development, the NPPF requires consideration of its economic, social and environmental dimensions in a balanced and integrated manner.
- 2.6. A single dwelling makes a positive contribution towards the supply and choice of housing, supporting the Government’s objective of significantly boosting the delivery of homes. The proposal would provide economic benefits through construction activity, support local employment within the building sector and generate ongoing expenditure in nearby settlements, helping sustain rural businesses and services.

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- 2.7. Socially, it would contribute to meeting local housing needs and support the vitality of rural communities, objectives which are directly supported by Section 5 of the NPPF relating to housing delivery and rural housing provision.
- 2.8. When assessed against the Framework's overarching objective of achieving sustainable development, the proposal therefore delivers identifiable economic and social benefits that must be afforded weight in the planning balance.
- 2.9. From a transport and highways perspective, the scale of development is a critical consideration. A single dwelling is expected to generate only a very limited number of daily vehicle movements, typically 4-6 over an average day, and therefore cannot reasonably be regarded as causing any material effect on the operation, capacity or safety of the surrounding highway network. Paragraph 116 of the NPPF is clear that development should only be refused on transport grounds where there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety or where the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe.
- 2.10. The traffic generation associated with one dwelling is negligible in comparison with thresholds normally associated with transport impacts and falls substantially below the level at which a severe impact could be demonstrated. Accordingly, there is no policy basis within the NPPF for resisting a development of this scale on transport sustainability grounds alone.
- 2.11. This position is consistent with the objectives of HCC, as local highway authority, through Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4). Whilst LTP4 seeks to maximise opportunities for walking, cycling and public transport use where feasible, the strategy also recognises that travel patterns vary significantly across the county and that the private car remains the only realistic transport option for many journeys, particularly within rural areas. HCC's approach is therefore not founded upon an overarching presumption against development in rural locations, but rather on securing development that is proportionate, accessible and compatible with local transport characteristics. LTP4 acknowledges the need to balance aspirations for modal shift with the practical realities of rural living and transport provision.
- 2.12. Furthermore, the assessment of sustainability should take account of changing patterns of living and working. Increased levels of home working and improved digital connectivity have reduced the need for some journeys and altered traditional travel behaviour. Sustainability should therefore be assessed holistically, taking account of the proposal's overall economic, social and environmental benefits, rather than solely by reference to walking distance from services or public transport.
- 2.13. The NPPF supports a broad and flexible approach to sustainable development, requiring decision-makers to consider all relevant economic, social and environmental factors. In this context, a degree of reliance on private vehicle use within a rural environment does not automatically render development unsustainable.

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- 2.14. Having regard to the provisions of the NPPF, the objectives of HCC's Local Transport Plan and the established characteristics of rural Hertfordshire, the proposed single dwelling represents a proportionate and sustainable form of development. It's very limited traffic generation would not prejudice highway safety or the efficient operation of the local highway network; it would contribute to housing delivery objectives; and it would support the social and economic vitality of the rural area.
- 2.15. When assessed against the Framework as a whole and taking account of the specific circumstances of rural development envisaged by both national and local policy, the proposal should properly be regarded as sustainable development and accords with the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained within the NPPF.
- 2.16. It should also be noted that HCC, as local highway authority, have provided a highways consultation response (HCC ref: NH/28158/2026), dated February 2026 to the planning application (ref: 26/00104/FP) for the erection of a single dwelling along Pottersheath Road to the south of the application site. Under 'Accessibility' within the highways response, the following comments are provided:

"Planning for Walking, issued by the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation (CIHT), emphasises that developments should be located and designed, where practical, to prioritise pedestrian and cycle movements and provide access to high quality public transport facilities. In accessibility terms, a walking distance of 400 m to a bus stop is generally considered a reasonable catchment, with 800 m regarded as acceptable for access to a railway station.

*In this case, there are no bus stops or shops within an easy walking distance of the site. As a result, the proposals conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021), Local Transport Plan 4, and Hertfordshire County Council's Place & Movement Planning Design Guidance (adopted in March 2024). **However, given that the site is situated within a large residential area, it would not be appropriate to recommend refusal on this point alone.**"*

- 2.17. Given that the application site is also proposed to accommodate a single dwelling and is situated within the same established residential area, it is reasonable to conclude that the same site assessment and planning considerations should apply.

Access and Highway Safety

Pottersheath Road is subject to a 30mph speed limit, and as such, visibility splays of 2.4m x 43m are required in accordance with Manual for Streets guidance. From site inspection and aerial evidence:

- ***There is significant vegetation and foliage on both sides of the proposed access point.***

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- ***It will need to be demonstrated that visibility splays can be achieved within the extent of the public highway and/or within the applicant's land ownership, can operate safely and would not be prejudicial to highway safety.***
- ***Proposals for vegetation clearance, cutting back, or boundary realignment will/may be required.***

Therefore, the applicant will need to demonstrate that a safe and suitable access can be delivered, to comply with:

- ***NPPF 2025 - requirement for safe and suitable access for all users,***
- ***HCC Highways Design Guide,***
- ***Road Safety considerations for new or intensified access points.***

- 2.18. A topographical survey was undertaken along Pottersheath Road in the vicinity of the proposed site access by C J Surveys Ltd in July 2026. The survey captured the extent of the existing carriageway and vegetation along both sides of the road.
- 2.19. This topographical survey has been used to prepare a detailed Means of Access plan to demonstrate that a safe and suitable site access can be provided to serve the application site.
- 2.20. Stomor drawing **ST-4119-700** 'Proposed Means of Access', which is provided at **Appendix A**, shows that a verge crossing detail, in accordance with HCC's standard detail drawing no. HST/1100/021 RevA, can be accommodated. Visibility splays of 2.4m x 43m can also be accommodated at the proposed site access in both directions within the extent of the adopted highway and land under the control of the applicant.
- 2.21. The Means of Access drawing demonstrates that the visibility splay to the north is unobstructed. To the south, only limited vegetation trimming is required to achieve the required visibility envelope.
- 2.22. In light of the above, it has been demonstrated that safe and suitable access to the site can be accommodated.

Highway Authority Position

Given the site's unsustainable location, with no pedestrian facilities, no street lighting, no public transport, and complete reliance on the private car, together with insufficient evidence regarding access geometry and visibility, the HA considers the proposal to be contrary to national and local transport policy. The development would result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety and would not support opportunities for safe or sustainable travel.

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In conclusion the site provides no footways, no lighting, no safe pedestrian or cycle routes, and no accessible public transport. As such, the proposal conflicts with key policy requirements relating to safe access, sustainable movement, and the prioritisation of walking and cycling, and is therefore unacceptable on highway grounds.

Accordingly, the HA would object in principle.

- 2.23. The local highway authority's concerns are noted; however, it is considered that the proposal has been assessed without sufficient regard to the provisions of the NPPF relating to rural development and the very limited scale of the proposal.
- 2.24. Whilst the site is located in a rural area with limited access to services and public transport, the NPPF recognises that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas and that a greater reliance on the private car is often unavoidable. Sustainability should therefore be assessed against the economic, social and environmental objectives of the Framework as a whole, rather than solely on accessibility by non-car modes.
- 2.25. The proposal comprises a single dwelling, which would make a modest contribution to housing supply and support the local rural economy. In transport terms, it would generate only a very small number of vehicle movements and would not materially affect the operation, capacity or safety of the local highway network. Accordingly, there is no evidence that the development would result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety or severe residual transport impacts, as required by the NPPF to justify refusal.
- 2.26. HCC's concerns regarding access and visibility have also been addressed through a topographical survey and detailed access design. The Proposed Means of Access drawing demonstrates that a safe and suitable access can be provided with visibility splays of 2.4m x 43m achievable in both directions, with only minor vegetation trimming required to the south.
- 2.27. Having regard to the NPPF, Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan and the site's rural context, the proposal represents a proportionate and sustainable form of development. Safe access has been demonstrated, highway impacts would be negligible, and the development would deliver recognised housing and economic benefits. As such, the development proposal should not be refused on highways grounds as it satisfies the requirements of paragraph 115 of the NPPF.

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Appendix A

HCC Highways Consultation Response



Mark Youngman
Development Management Group Manager
Hertfordshire County Council
Postal Point CHN115
Farnham House
Six Hills Way
Stevenage
SG1 2ST

Response to Planning application from Hertfordshire County Council (T and CP GDP Order 2015)

Director of Planning

North Hertfordshire Council
Council Offices
Gernon Road
Letchworth Garden City
Hertfordshire
SG6 3JF

District ref: 26/00415/PIP
HCC ref: NH/28234/2026
HCC received: 17 February 2026
Area manager: Manjinder Sehmi
Case officer: Senober Khan

Location

Waterdells, Pottersheath Road, Welwyn, Hertfordshire, AL6 9TA

Application type

Permission in Principle

Proposal

Permission in Principle : Erection of one detached dwelling

Recommendation

Notice is given under article 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 that Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority recommends that permission be refused for the following reasons:

The HA does not support the proposed development in principle for the above given reasons as it fails to comply with national and local transport policies.

Highways comments:

The applicant is seeking permission in principle to erect a single dwelling accessed off Pottersheath Road, the Highway Authority (HA) has reviewed the information provided in the planning statement and the plans submitted and has the following comments to make:

1. Sustainability and Accessibility

The proposed site is located along Pottersheath Road, where:

- There are no footways,
- No street lighting,
- No formal crossing facilities,
- And no public transport services within an acceptable walking distance, with the nearest bus stop being more than 1.6km away along an unlit rural road.

The location is therefore entirely car dependent and provides no safe or suitable access for pedestrians or cyclists, contrary to:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2025) - Sections on sustainable transport and promoting active travel.
- HCC Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) - Policies supporting reduction of private car reliance.
- HCC Place & Movement Design Guidance - Requiring development to be situated where safe, sustainable, and inclusive movement can be achieved for all users.

The HA acknowledges that there are existing residential properties in the wider area; however, these do not set a precedent for further development under current policy frameworks, which place greater emphasis on sustainable location and accessibility.

The development fails to demonstrate that it can meet contemporary sustainability and movement objectives.

2. Access and Highway Safety

Pottersheath Road is subject to a 30mph speed limit, and as such, visibility splays of 2.4m x 43m are required in accordance with Manual for Streets guidance. From site inspection and aerial evidence:

- There is significant vegetation and foliage on both sides of the proposed access point.
- It will need to be demonstrated that visibility splays can be achieved within the extent of the public highway and/or within the applicant's land ownership, can operate safely and would not be prejudicial to highway safety.
- Proposals for vegetation clearance, cutting back, or boundary realignment will/may be required.

Therefore, the applicant will need to demonstrate that a safe and suitable access can be delivered, to comply with:

- NPPF 2025 - requirement for safe and suitable access for all users,
- HCC Highways Design Guide,
- Road Safety considerations for new or intensified access points.

3. Highway Authority Position

Given the site's unsustainable location, with no pedestrian facilities, no street lighting, no public transport, and complete reliance on the private car, together with insufficient evidence regarding access geometry and visibility, the HA considers the proposal to be contrary to national and local transport policy. The development would result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety and would not support opportunities for safe or sustainable travel.

In conclusion the site provides no footways, no lighting, no safe pedestrian or cycle routes, and no accessible public transport. As such, the proposal conflicts with key policy requirements relating to safe access, sustainable movement, and the prioritisation of walking and cycling, and is therefore unacceptable on highway grounds.

Accordingly, the HA would object in principle.

Recommendation:

The HA does not support the proposed development in principle for the above given reasons as it fails to comply with national and local transport policies.

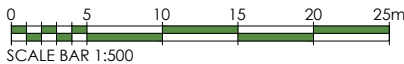
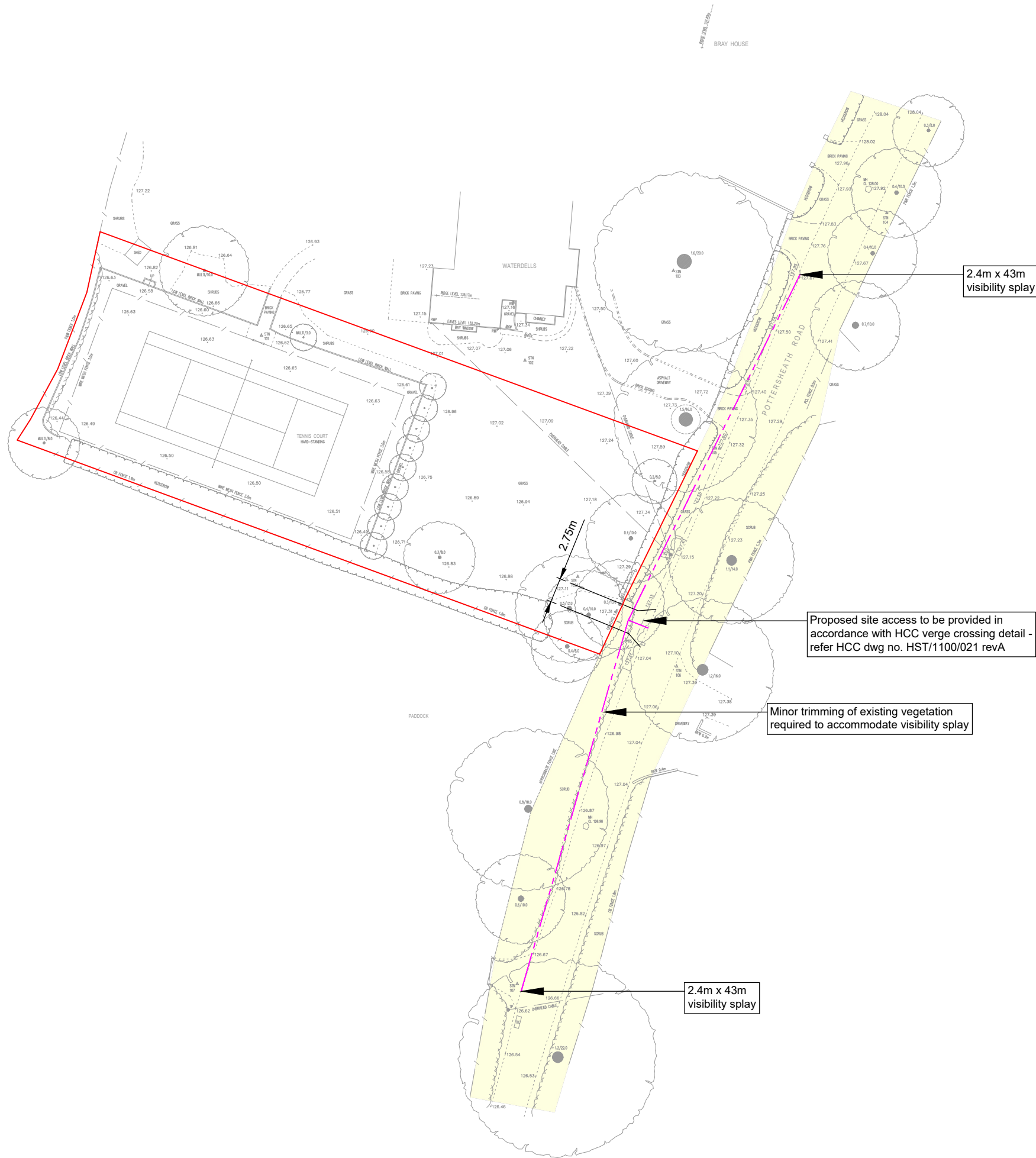
Signed

Senober Khan
11 March 2026

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Appendix B

Proposed Means of Access



Notes:

1. Do not scale from this drawing. All dimensions are in metres, unless stated otherwise.
2. This drawing has been based upon the topographical survey undertaken by CJ Surveys Ltd in July 2026.

Key:

- Application site boundary
- Extent of adopted highway maintainable at public expense
- Vehicle visibility splays

Rev	Description	Date	Drawn	Checked	Approved
Project					
Welwyn Pottersheath Road Waterdells					
Drawing Description					
Proposed Means of Access					
Project Number		Drawing Number			
ST-4119		700			
Scale	Date	Drawn	Checked	Approved	
1:500@A3	07.07.26	KPS	SW	SW	
Client		Architect			
Mr. R. Heap					

Do not scale off the drawing.
Only written dimensions should be taken.
Any discrepancies or errors should be brought
to the attention of the engineer immediately.
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