

Planning Support Statement

Land to rear of Worbey's Farm, 83
Whitehill Road, Hitchin, SG4 9HP

Proposed Pair of Semi-detached
Dwellings

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Support Statement, together with associated drawings are submitted for Full planning permission in respect of a two semi-detached dwellings on part of the land to the rear of Worbey's Farm, 83 Whitehill road, Hitchin.
- 1.2 This application seeks permission subject to conditions.
- 1.3 The subject site occupies land to the West of Worbey's Farm on Whitehill road, currently occupied by an old storage barn, container and open storage.
- 1.4 This specific parcel of land is best described as derelict and used for storage of surplus building materials and machinery related to the applicant's construction business.
- 1.5 The site has no known special designation.
- 1.6 The site is located in Hitchin, a town as set out in the adopted local plan where development, such as here proposed, will be permitted, subject to complying with other relevant policies.
- 1.7 Whilst the above (1.6) sets the principle, it is fully acknowledged and accepted that this will be subject to individual context and all important detail.
- 1.8 This specific proposal takes a strong lead from planning permission reference 19 / 00687 / FP granted 03/07/2019 for two detached 4-bed dwellings of contemporary design.
- 1.9 With this wealth of information, rather than take the formal pre-application route, we believe that all the pre-application advice has already been offered in detail through the above planning permission.
- 1.10 Accordingly, this application seeks confirmation of acceptability not only of the principle, which is already established, but also the detail submitted on the application plans.
- 1.11 Noting that NHC have adopted a proactive policy, it is asked that the Council looks positively at ways in which this or a similar form of development could be supported and enabled and if necessary, dialogue opened with regard to the detail of siting, materials and sundry design issues. However, it is regretted to note that, contrary to this policy, NHC have recently elected to deny post application dialogue and amendments to applications, other than in exceptional circumstances. It is hoped that the Council will reconsider their stance on this matter.
- 1.12 This planning application takes the formal step, having assimilated the empirical data from the previous planning permission, and trust that it will be supported by the planning authority at least in principle and hopefully detail too. However, as above as part of the Council's proactive policy, as noted above, it is hoped that there will nevertheless be

engagement if any queries or if any beneficial changes are recommended to areas that can readily be resolved.

2.0 Site Analysis

2.1 The existing overall curtilage of Worbey's Farm equates to c. 1096m² (0.27 acres).

2.2 Within the proposal this is subdivided as follows:

The host house, Worbey's Farm 367m² and the proposed site, 585m² with a shared area of 144m².

2.3 As noted in 1.5, neither the site nor the host house nor any neighbouring property enjoys any special status that would have any germane influence on the proposal.

2.4 The existing property comprises a detached two storey dwelling, the original farmhouse, with pitched roofs that has more recently been extensively extended with a substantial more contemporary two storey extension.

2.5 The ground levels fall significantly from the Whitehill road frontage to the rear boundary, with the fall from East to West across the application site of almost 1m.

2.6 The locality is predominantly residential with neighbouring dwellings.

2.7 There are no trees on the site except neighbouring trees and vegetation to the Southern boundary. See appended photographs.

APP 1

2.8 In respect of the previously approved application for two dwellings 19 / 00687 / FP the application site was subject of a phase 2 Contamination Risk Assessment carried out by expert consultants, Ground and Environment Services Ltd. Conclusions and recommendations attached.

APP 2

2.9 From this I would highlight that whilst there were toxic metals and hydrocarbons found within the site that could pose a health risk, there was a simple remedy by a cover system of c. 550mm of soil topping and a contamination marker layer be placed below the 550mm of imported soil below all soft landscaped areas. It can be seen from appended photographs that an amount of soil has already been deposited on site.

APP 1

2.10 Additionally, whilst the identified asbestos has been removed, it is argued that suitable testing for this element together with remedial action outlined in 2.9 will be more than acceptable as a pre-commencement condition appended to the planning permission notice.

- 2.11 The site lies within Environment Agency's Flood Zone 1 within which there is a negligible risk of flooding. See EA Flood Map, appended.
- 2.12 It is noted that in the previous approved application for two × 4 bed houses, that County Highways did not wish to restrict the grant of permission. Accordingly, it follows that this application for a single 4 bed house should receive a common response
- 2.13 Similarly, HCC Archaeology did not raise any comment as the site does not lie within an area known to be archaeologically significant.

3.0 Development Proposals

- 3.1 From review of the previous scheme for two detached two storey dwellings with basements, although clearly acceptable in planning terms in both principle and detail, it was felt that a two smaller dwellings would be more appropriate in this location, less cramped and fit in better with the local grain.
- 3.2 This was reinforced by the applicant considering this as a self-build project for his own occupation, which would have the associated benefit of a modest contribution to NHC's shortfall.
- 3.3 The site is fundamentally similar to that previously proposed being the Western half of the overall plot, the area currently used for open storage and outbuildings.
- 3.4 Access, as before and accepted by County Highways for the two dwellings, is from Whitehill Road and shared with the host house, Worbey's /farm.
- 3.5 There is parking provision for at least four cars together with vehicle turning, allowing access onto the highway in forward gear.
- 3.6 Three parking spaces are provided for Worbey's Farm and turning via the shared access, with the two properties being separated by a secure electric sliding gate to the new dwelling.
- 3.7 Secure cycle storage is provided.
- 3.8 Refuse and recycling bins and collection point are indicated with waste collection precisely as existing for Worbey's Farm.
- 3.9 An EV charging point will also be provided.

- 3.10 The proposal takes the form of two two storey semi-detached three bed family houses, contemporary styled to be sympathetic with the neighbouring portion of the host house. Not a slavish copy but pulling up a number of details and choice of materials. All indicated on the application drawings.
- 3.11 The overall N.I.A. are 157m², per dwelling and provides well proportioned and sized living space on the ground floor with lounge, kitchen/diner together with separate study and utility.
- 3.12 A separate hallway provides the staircase access to the first floor.
- 3.13 The upper storey provides three good sized double bedrooms including a master suite, with ensembles.
- 3.14 Noting the advent of Biodiversity Net Gain, irrespective of its requirements here, the almost non-existent biodiversity currently on the land, the need to improve the situation is acknowledged, so in addition to the soft landscaping, it is proposed to plant a number of native and soft fruit trees and extensive hedging.
- 3.15 In any event, the application is supported by our own landscape / biodiversity proposal.
- 3.16 The remaining existing outbuildings would be removed and the site completely cleared a) by necessity to facilitate the development and b) in order to carry out the recommended contamination remedial work.
- 3.17 The shared drive and hard standing will all be of a porous material meeting the criteria for SUDs.

4.0 Summary

- 4.1 From the officer's agenda report for the two dwellings 19 / 00687 / FP the key issues were identified as 1) principle 2) siting and design 3) impact on neighbour amenity 4) future living conditions 5) highways and parking 6) trees and landscaping.

- 4.2 Principle – it is recognised in the Local Plan that, subject to other considerations, the principle of residential development in this location would be acceptable and would not be in conflict with these policy aims.
- 4.3 Siting and design – The proposed new dwellings would be a substitute for the two approved and as previously noted would allow the single storey outbuildings, container and general open storage to be removed. Accordingly, redevelopment would allow a controlled regeneration of a derelict site and should, as before, be welcomed.

The location, set behind Worbey's Farm, would have a neutral effect on the streetscene, being wholly observed. Additionally, any glimpse would be minimised the falling topography. However, I am uncertain why we should seek to mask good design.

Since the previous adoption of a highly contemporary approach was deemed acceptable, it must follow that there is no design objection to these proposals, which also empathise with the neighbouring portion of Worbey's Farm.

- 4.4 Neighbour amenity – although this proposal is closer to the boundary with 73 Whitehill Road, than the previous proposal, but only by an average of 3-4m. It is noted that objection was not raised from no. 73 nor NHC.
- 4.5 Moreover it is proposed under not only BNG but good neighbourliness that the Northern boundary be landscaped to provide a soft barrier between the two properties of generally an evergreen nature.
- 4.6 Additionally it is anticipated that any permission granted will have a landscape condition appended.
- 4.7 It is noted that there were only three objections received to the 2019 application, with the major concerns being related to two dwellings being over ambitious, which this addresses, and the effect on wildlife. This latter point being covered by BNG which identifies very little existence of ecology on the site currently with the proposal increasing the opportunity for wildlife habitats, etc.
- 4.8 Concern was also raised about contamination, which has been full addressed by the consultant's report and recommendations, which we are happy to see as a pre-commencement condition.
- 4.9 The stepping down of the proposed property together with a traditional pitched roof will help minimise any visual impact to neighbouring properties.
- 4.10 The difference of levels between neighbouring properties also assists.

- 4.11 Naturally any development changes the inter property visual aspect and as is common knowledge, there is no entitlement to a view.
- 4.12 Future Living Conditions – The dwelling are located sufficiently far from neighbouring dwellings and by design of upper storey windows will not cause any loss of privacy.
- 4.13 Boundary treatment will also help to reverse any perceived overlooking from lower storey windows which generally are not a consideration with Permitted Development Rights, allowing a 2m high boundary barrier.
- 4.14 The South facing garden to the new houses provides generous soft and hard landscaping for comfortable family living.
- 4.15 Highways and Parking – Since County Highways raised no objection to the provision of two dwellings and the use of the existing access as a street access, clearly a single dwelling will not now raise any concern.
- 4.16 The host house is able to accommodate three car parking spaces with turning on the shared drive allowing exit onto Whitehill Road in forward gear.
- 4.17 Similarly the proposed houses can park 2 cars with turning for forward gear access onto the highway.
- 4.18 It is therefore suggested that there will be no substantive HCC highway objection.
- 4.19 Trees and landscaping – There are currently neither trees nor vegetation on the site. The BNG plan indicates a combination of landscaping dictated by BNG and normal domestic requirements. It is accepted that if this does not satisfy planning policy, a landscape condition will be appended to the Permission Notice.
- 4.20 In final summary and noting that NHDC does not necessarily have a proven deliverable housing land supply, this would make a modest contribution whilst helping to meet the Council's shortfall in the provision of self-build houses.
- 4.21 It also cannot be ignored that the new NPPF24 which deals with previously developed land supports these proposals with the land, its numerous outbuildings, container, open storage and hard standing used for business use, satisfies the qualifying criteria. See site location plan that identifies the plethora of outbuildings and structures which corroborates this. APP 4
- 4.22 This is more clearly identified on the CSL Topographical Survey. APP 5
- 4.23 Accordingly, it is trusted that this application can be dealt with in a timely manner under delegated powers, not requiring time consuming conservation consultation or heritage

assets. NB: County Archaeology has already confirmed that the site is unlikely to have any significant impact on archaeological heritage assets.

4.24 However, if the Council maintains its proactive policy, it is asked that any queries or suggested amendments be communicated as soon as possible,

5.0 Appendices

APP 1: Photographs

APP2: Contamination Risk Assessment

APP 3: EA Flood Risk Assessment

APP4: MN00 Site Location Map

APP5: CSL Topological Survey

APP 1: Photographs













APP 2: Contamination Risk Assessment

Land to the rear of 83 Whitehill Road, Hitchin *Phase 2 Contamination Risk Assessment*



10 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Ground and Environmental Services Ltd undertook a Phase 2 Contamination Risk Assessment on land to the rear of 83 Whitehill Road, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG4 9HP. The purpose of the Contamination Risk Assessment was to provide an assessment of contamination issues based on current Contaminated Land Legislation with regards to the proposed construction of 2 houses constructed over three stories including a basement with associated private gardens, soft landscaping and parking

- The ground investigation found the anticipated geology with Made Ground over soils typical of Glaciofluvial Deposits encountered.
- The site is located above a Secondary A Aquifer in the superficial deposits and a Principal Aquifer in the underlying chalk. It is within an Environment Agency defined groundwater Source Protection Zone 3.
- Concentrations of toxic metals were found to be below their respective soil guideline values with the exception of elevated lead, arsenic and zinc.
- Elevated PAH concentrations, including Naphthalene, Benzo(a)anthracene, Benzo(b)fluoranthene, Benzo(a)pyrene and Dibenzo(a,h)anthracene were encountered at a level that could pose a significant risk of significant harm to human health.
- The modelling results indicates that a simple cover system of approximately 550 mm soils would be required to sever the linkage of pollutants in the soil below in the proposed garden areas based on the worst-case contamination recorded on site. It is recommended that a contamination marker layer should be laid in all garden and soft landscaping areas, beneath the clean imported soils.
- Concentrations of TPH were generally low within soil across the site and would therefore not be considered to pose a significant risk of significant harm to human health.
- The risks posed to workers involved in any future redevelopment of the site are not considered significant providing standard health and hygiene practices are adopted.
- It is likely that any new services, in particular potable water, will require protection, however it is advisable to seek service provider confirmation of this.
- Based on gas monitoring results, the site has been given a classification of CS1 which has a very low hazard potential and therefore no gas protection measures need be incorporated into any new buildings constructed on the site.
- The risks to groundwater in the underlying Secondary A and Principall Aquifers are considered to be low due to the lack of any significant mobile organic contamination.
- Asbestos was identified in near surface made ground in concentrations which would make the soils on site hazardous waste in terms of off-site disposal.
- It is recommended that a watching brief is implemented on this site during enabling works and should any contamination or potentially contaminative sources be discovered during the proposed enabling works all site works would cease and

Land to the rear of 83 Whitehill Road, Hitchin
Phase 2 Contamination Risk Assessment



suitably competent consultants/engineers will attend site to agree a formal remediation strategy.

Based on the principles and definitions outlined under section 57 of the Environment Act 1995, the site would not be considered to be "Contaminated Land" based on its proposed residential redevelopment end use following implementation of the above remedial measures.

APP 3: Environment Agency Flood Risk Map

11/8/24, 5:20 PM

Flood risk information for this location - Flood map for planning - GOV.UK

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This location is in flood zone 1

What flood zone 1 means

Land within flood zone 1 has a low probability of flooding from rivers and the sea.

Most developments that are less than 1 hectare (ha) in flood zone 1 do not need a flood risk assessment (FRA) as part of the planning application. The site you have drawn is 0.1 ha.

Find out more about [flood zones and what they mean \(/flood-zone-results-explained?zone=FZ1\)](#).

There is a risk of flooding from surface water at this site. You should check one of the following:

- [the surface water map on the check your long term flood risk service](https://check-long-term-flood-risk.service.gov.uk/map?easting=519168&northing=228640&map=SurfaceWater) (<https://check-long-term-flood-risk.service.gov.uk/map?easting=519168&northing=228640&map=SurfaceWater>)
- [the risk of flooding from surface water dataset on the data services platform](https://environment.data.gov.uk/dataset/51a5c4e7-10d3-4f34-bb0e-558835ab8c85) (<https://environment.data.gov.uk/dataset/51a5c4e7-10d3-4f34-bb0e-558835ab8c85>)

To find out about other factors that might affect the flood risk of this location, you should also check:

- [groundwater and reservoir flood risk](https://check-long-term-flood-risk.service.gov.uk) (<https://check-long-term-flood-risk.service.gov.uk>)
- North Hertfordshire planning authority's strategic flood risk assessment (SFRA), which includes future flood risk

Flood map showing the flood zone your site is in

The map shows the flood risk to your site and the surrounding area.



[https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/flood-zone-results?polygon=\[519144,228628\],\[519182,228665\],\[519193,228648\],\[519161,228615\],\[...](https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/flood-zone-results?polygon=[519144,228628],[519182,228665],[519193,228648],[519161,228615],[...) 1/3



► [What the flood map shows](#)

Download the flood map for this location

The flood map is suitable for a local planning authority to use when checking a planning application to see if a development is:

- in flood zone 1, 2 or 3
- within 20 metres of a main river or a flood defence
- a water storage area (also likely to be flood zone 3b in the SFRA)

► [Add a reference to the flood map and set the scale](#)

[Download this flood map \(PDF\)](#)

Decide what you need for your planning application*

You only need an FRA in flood zone 1 when one or more of these points apply:

- the development has a site area of 1 ha or more
- it's in an [area with critical drainage problems](https://www.data.gov.uk/dataset/d10fb8e5-f3af-48c1-a489-8c975b0165de/areas-with-critical-drainage-problems) (<https://www.data.gov.uk/dataset/d10fb8e5-f3af-48c1-a489-8c975b0165de/areas-with-critical-drainage-problems>)
- the local planning authority's SFRA shows it'll be at increased flood risk in future
- the site is at risk from other sources of flooding and its development would increase its vulnerability classification

Order flood risk data for rivers and the sea

Your site is in flood zone 1, so it's unlikely we'll have any flood risk data for it. But you can place an order and we'll email you if none is available.

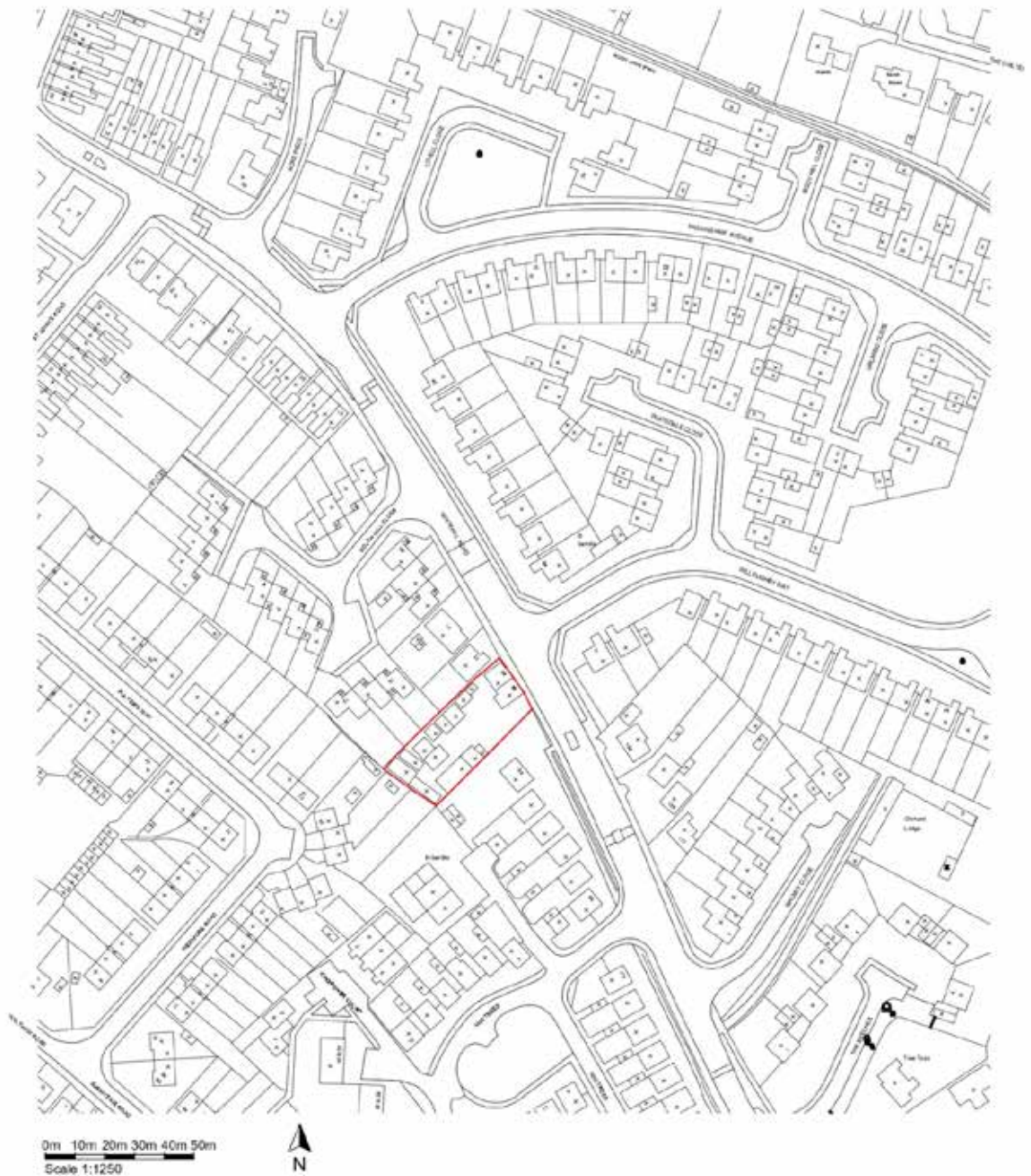
We aim to email you the data within 20 working days or sooner if we can.

Order flood risk data ([/contact?easting=519168&northing=228640&polygon=\[\[519144,228628\],\[519182,228665\],\[519193,228648\],\[519161,228615\],\[519144,228628\]\]¢er=\[519168,228640\]&location=SG4%20%20HP&zoneNumber=1](https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/contact?easting=519168&northing=228640&polygon=[[519144,228628],[519182,228665],[519193,228648],[519161,228615],[519144,228628]]¢er=[519168,228640]&location=SG4%20%20HP&zoneNumber=1))

Get help deciding what flood risk information you need

[https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/flood-zone-results?polygon=\[\[519144,228628\],\[519182,228665\],\[519193,228648\],\[519161,228615\],\[519144,228628\]\]](https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/flood-zone-results?polygon=[[519144,228628],[519182,228665],[519193,228648],[519161,228615],[519144,228628]]) 2/3

APP 4: MN 00 Site Location Plan Worbey's Farm



COLIN EADES & AMY MOSS		Client : Mr M Norgan	
Project: New Dwelling, Land to the Rear of 83 Whitehill Road, Hitchin	Drawing : Existing Site Location Plan	Scale : 1:1250 @ A3	
		Date : NOV 2024	Drwg: MN 00

APP 5: CSL Topological Survey Worbey's Farm

