



PLANNING STATEMENT

Site: The Orchard
Snailswell Lane
Ickleford
SG5 3TS

For: Mr S Patel

Project Ref: 25031

Date: July 2025

Prepared by:

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PLANS AND DOCUMENTS ACCOMPANYING THE APPLICATION

APPLICATION FORM
PLANNING STATEMENT, PREPARED BY BARKER PARRY TOWN PLANNING
LOCATION PLAN, DWG REF. 1153-01C
BLOCK PLAN AND STREET ELEVATION, DWG REF. 1153-PL03A
FLOOR PLANS, DWG REF. 1153-PL01A
ELEVATIONS D, DWG REF. 1153-PL02

1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of our client, Mr S Patel (the Applicant), in support of an application for full planning permission at The Orchard, Snailswell Lane, Ickleford, SG5 3TS.

1.2 The description of development for the proposed scheme is as follows:

Erection of a self-build, infill dwelling with associated works.

1.3 This Statement demonstrates that the proposed scheme complies with all relevant planning policy and guidance and constitutes sustainable development, by virtue of providing much needed housing that will not result in significant or demonstrable harm. Section 2 of this Statement outlines the site context. Section 3 provides a summary of relevant planning policy and Section 4 outlines the scheme proposals in detail. Section 5 assesses the proposals against the relevant planning policy with final conclusions set out at Section 6.

2.0 **SITE CONTEXT**

Site and Surroundings

- 2.1 The Application Site is located on the northern edge of the village of Ickleford, a small village situated to the north of Hitchin on the west bank of the River Hiz.
- 2.2 The Site itself is an undeveloped land parcel located on the northern side of Snailswell Lane between two properties called The Milders and Glendale. Immediately south of the Site is a further dwelling named Glenmore. Five houses down, c. 140m to the west of the Site is 'Sycamore Cottage The Cottage', a grade II listed building. However the application Site is considered to lie outside of the setting of this dwelling (see annotated extract of Historic England Map below).
- 2.3 It is believed that the Site has historically been used for ancillary activities associated with The Milders (such as dog agility) and as paddock land.

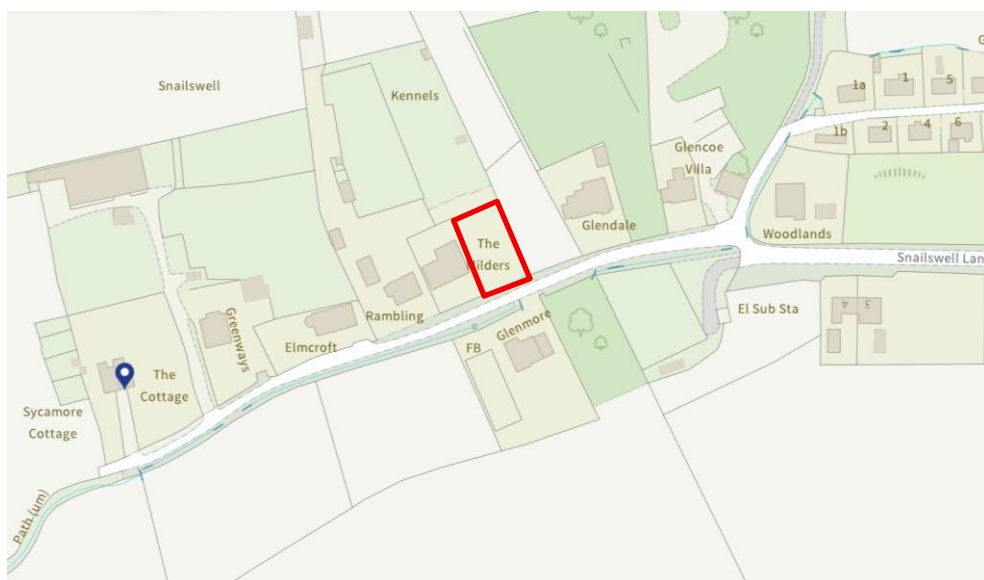


Figure 1 – Extract of Historic England Map with Site Location annotated showing distance to The Cottage

Planning Designations

- 2.4 The Site is located in the Green Belt as designated within the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 but forms part of a continuous ribbon of residential development extending from the settlement boundary of Ickleford.

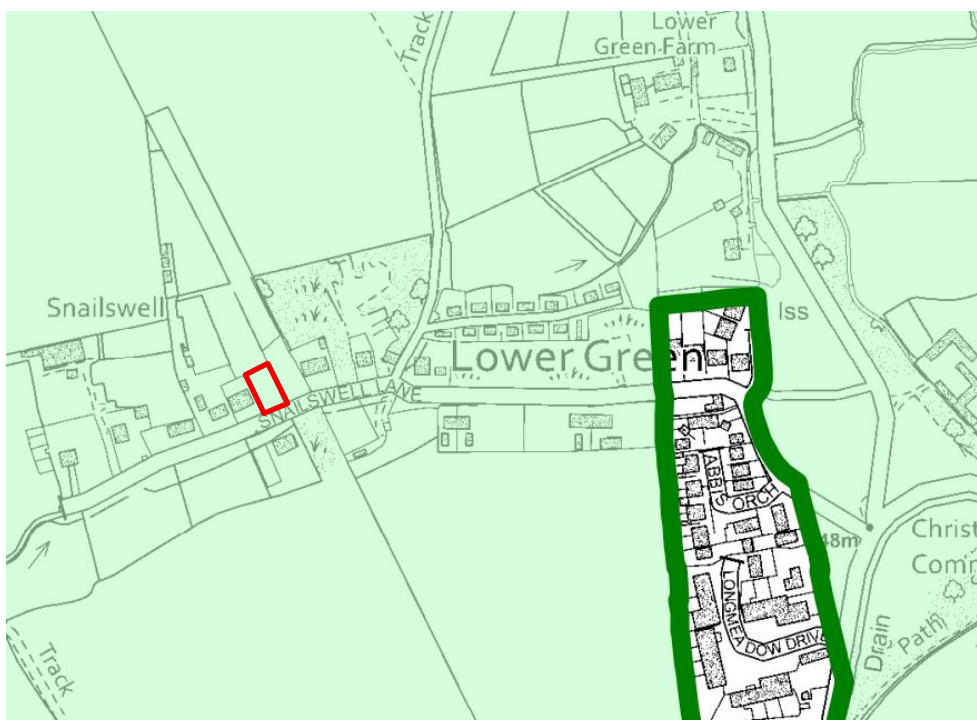


Figure 2 - Position of the site, marked in red in relation to the settlement boundary

- 2.5 The Site is in Flood Zone 1 and has a low probability of flooding from rivers and the sea and is also not at risk from surface water flooding.

Planning History

- 2.6 The Application Site was subject to an appeal related to an outline application in the 1980s for a single dwelling (Ref. 82/00525/1) but given the change in all levels of planning policy over the last 40 years, this planning history is not considered relevant to the current proposal.

3.0 **DEVELOPMENT PLAN CONSIDERATIONS**

North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 ('The Local Plan')

3.1 The North Hertfordshire Local Plan was adopted in November 2022. The following policies are relevant to the proposed development scheme:

- Policy SP1: Sustainable Development in North Hertfordshire
- Policy SP2: Settlement Hierarchy and Spatial Distribution
- Policy SP5: Countryside and Green Belt
- Policy SP6: Sustainable Transport
- Policy SP8: Housing
- Policy SP9: Design and Sustainability
- Policy SP10: Healthy Communities
- Policy T1: Assessment of transport matters
- Policy T2: Parking
- Policy HS3: Housing mix
- Policy D1: Sustainable design
- Policy D3: Protecting living conditions
- Policy NE2: Landscape
- Policy NE4: Biodiversity and geological sites
- Policy NE7: Reducing flood risk
- Policy NE8: Sustainable drainage systems
- Policy NE10: Water conservation and wastewater infrastructure

Ickleford Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2035 ('INP')

- Policy E2: Protecting the landscape
- Policy E3: Rural character
- Policy E4: Biodiversity
- Policy SD1: Development within the settlement boundary

- Policy SD2: New Housing Development
- Policy SD3: High Quality Design
- Policy SD4: Provision of energy efficient buildings
- Policy SD5: Water management
- Policy MTT2: Car parking

Supplementary Planning Guidance/ Other Material Documents

- Vehicle Parking at New Development SPD
- Design SPD
- Draft Developer Contributions SPD

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024)

3.2 The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and advises that Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) should have regard to these policies when making decisions on planning applications.

3.3 A presumption in favour of sustainable development is set out at paragraph 11 of the NPPF. For decision-taking this means:

"c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or

d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date⁸, granting permission unless:

i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance⁷ provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or

- ii. *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination⁹.*

3.4 Footnote 8 states that this includes, for applications involving the provision of housing, situations where: the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites (with the appropriate buffer as set out in paragraph 78); or where the Housing Delivery Test indicates that the delivery of housing was substantially below (less than 75% of) the housing requirement over the previous three years.

3.5 Chapter 13 sets out policy regarding protecting the Green Belt, relevant paragraphs from this chapter and other chapters are set out below.

3.6 Paragraph 153 – *When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness⁵⁵. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.*

3.7 Paragraph 154 – *Development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless one of the following exceptions applies:*

.... e) *limited infilling in villages;*

3.8 Paragraph 155 - *The development of homes, commercial and other development in the Green Belt should also not be regarded as inappropriate where all the following apply:*

a. The development would utilise grey belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan;

b. There is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed⁶⁶;

c. The development would be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to paragraphs 110 and 115 of this Framework⁵⁷; and

d. Where applicable the development proposed meets the 'Golden Rules' requirements set out in paragraphs 156-157 below.

3.9 Paragraph 110 - The planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.

3.10 Paragraph 115 - In assessing sites that may be allocated for development in plans, or specific applications for development, it should be ensured that: a) sustainable transport modes are prioritised taking account of the vision for the site, the type of development and its location; b) safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users; c) the design of streets, parking areas,

other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflects current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code⁴⁸; and d) any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree through a vision-led approach.

- 3.11 Paragraph 73 - recognises the important contribution that small sized sites can make to meeting the housing requirement of an area and that LPAs should support the development of windfall sites through their policies and decisions; and

4.0 **THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

- 4.1 Full planning permission is sought for the erection of a 1.5 storey, 3-bedroom, self-build dwelling with associated access and landscaping. The proposed site layout can be seen in Figure 3 below.



Figure 3 – Proposed Site Layout

- 4.2 A new vehicular crossover to Snailswell Lane will be created to facilitate the three car parking spaces at the front of the house. Dedicated locations for bin storage and secure cycle parking are also provided.
- 4.3 The height and design of the dwelling has been developed to enable it to respond to the context of adjacent built form with its ridge height sitting between that of The Mildens to the west and Glendale to the east.

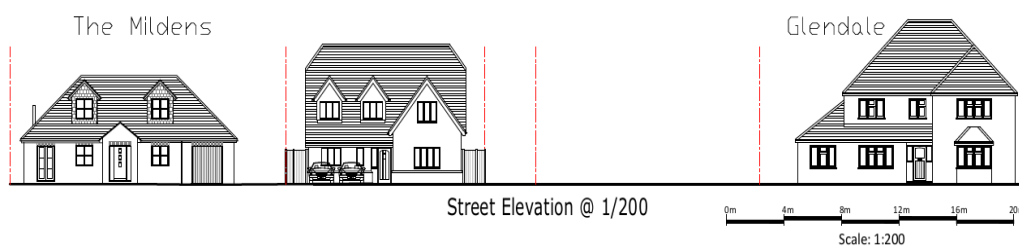


Figure 5 – Proposed Snailswell Lane Streetscene

5.0 **PLANNING ASSESSMENT**

Principle of Development

- 5.1 The Local Plan sets a target of 11,600 homes to be delivered over the plan period (Policy SP8 - Housing). However, the LPA are currently unable to demonstrate a sufficient five-year housing land supply. The Local Plan also states that proposals for development within the Green Belt will be considered against national policy and when considered acceptable in principle, the detailed policies of the Plan will be used to determine whether permission should be granted.
- 5.2 Paragraph 154e) allows for limited infilling in villages as appropriate development in the Green Belt. Furthermore, Paragraph 155 is also clear that the development of homes in the Green Belt should also not be regarded as inappropriate development, where all of the following apply:
- a. The development would utilise grey belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan;
 - b. There is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed;
 - c. The development would be in a sustainable location.
 - d. Where applicable the development proposed meets the 'Golden Rules'.
- 5.3 In terms of 155a), grey belt is defined in the NPPF glossary as land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) in paragraph 143.

- 5.4 It is considered that the proposal is infill development on grey belt land. Whilst the Application Site is washed over by the Green Belt, it falls just outside the defined settlement boundary of Ickleford. The Neighbourhood Plan outlines that infill sites are defined as spaces between existing houses where new housing will repeat or respect the surrounding pattern of development. Generally, 'infill' sites can be acceptable for 1 to 2 new houses, provided that the amenities of the adjacent properties are not adversely affected and that the street scene and pattern of development remains appropriate to the rural character of the village. It should be noted that INP Policy SD1 supports such development within the village settlement boundary, but no explicit objection is set out to infill development outside the village boundary.
- 5.5 The courts have previously held that settlement boundaries as defined in a Local Plan may not be determinative for this purpose, and necessary regard needs to be had for the situation on the ground. The Application Site represents a clear continuation of the built form from within the settlement boundary; the prevailing character surrounding the Site is still that of an established residential area. There is no clear separation between the Site and its surroundings and the more built-up area towards Ickleford. It is therefore considered the Site is still within the village of Ickleford for the purposes of paragraph 154e) of the NPPF. The Site is considered to represent a traditional infill plot in that it has a street frontage with existing development on both sides. The proposal would result in a 'limited' amount of development equating to a net gain of one additional dwelling. The Site for the proposed dwelling is considered to be part of Ickleford visually and geographically.
- 5.6 Furthermore, the same reasons that the Site is considered to be infill, are also applicable to why the Site is considered to be grey belt. Due to its direct connection to Ickleford, the Application Site makes only a very limited contribution to Green Belt purpose c) and no contribution at all to purposes

a) or b) and does not undermine the purposes of the remaining Green Belt. As a limited infill plot, development on the Site will not contribute to unrestricted urban sprawl and will not affect the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment. The Site is located on the north end of a village away from the neighbouring town of Hitchin and so cannot influence purpose b). The proposal therefore fully complies with paragraph 155a) of the NPPF.

- 5.7 In terms of 155b), there is clear need for housing in North Herts given that the LPA cannot currently demonstrate a 5YHLS and the tilted balance is engaged under paragraph 11d) for housing proposal. Additionally, there is a further unmet need in the district for self-build dwellings.
- 5.8 In respect of 155c), Ickleford is one of five villages where a greater level of growth is permitted by the Local Plan. They sit above Category A villages in the settlement hierarchy under Policy SP2 reflecting their accessibility and range of services. The Site is therefore clearly a sustainable location for additional housing. 155d) is not relevant to the proposal as the application is for minor development and as such the golden rules do not apply.
- 5.9 Overall, it is clear that the proposed scheme fully complies with both paragraph 154e) and 155 of the NPPF, meaning the proposed self-build dwelling is appropriate development in the Green Belt. On this basis, paragraph 11d) applies and planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. The remainder of this Statement will demonstrate that there are no adverse impacts arising from the proposal and therefore permission should be granted.

Design & Landscape

- 5.10 Local Plan Policy D1 requires development proposals to respond positively to a Site's local context. INP Policy SD3 confirms that proposals for good quality new development will be supported, where they are in accordance with the design principles set out in the Ickleford Design Codes.
- 5.11 The dwelling is sited in its plot with similar separation to its boundaries as the surrounding built form, meaning it is compatible with the character of the area and will not appear cramped. It is also sited to align with the established building line of The Mildens and Glendale. It is therefore considered to relate well to the existing pattern of surrounding development and be of an appropriate scale and density for its setting. As the layout continues the established linear form of development and the dwelling aligns with neighbouring properties, the proposal will also not result in any harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of adjacent properties.
- 5.12 Material details can be secured by condition but it is intended for the dwelling to be constructed in red brick with a clay tile roof, to tie in with surrounding built form which is predominantly constructed in these materials. The proposal will therefore contribute towards this distinctive local character.
- 5.13 Landscape details will also be finalised by condition but the proposed Block Plan shows that generous front and rear gardens allow for a sensitive planting scheme to help the proposal assimilate into the rural edge character of the area. A section of the existing paddock curtilage is also excluded from this application to retain an access to the field beyond the dwelling to the north, helping retain a spacious character.
- 5.14 Overall, the proposal is considered to comply with INP SD3 and Local Plan policies D1 and DS3.

Quality of Accommodation

5.15 The proposal is for a 3-bedroom home for which there is recognised need in the Neighbourhood Plan. However, as this proposal is for a self-build dwelling it is most relevant that the size, layout and design of the property have been customised to the Applicant's needs.

5.16 The dwelling will provide a high quality of internal accommodation as demonstrated by its exceedance of the National Minimum Space Standards (NDSS), a comparison to which is set out in the below table.

Dwelling Type	Required NDSS	Proposed GIA
3 Bed, 5 Person	93sqm	152sqm

Table 1 – Comparison between NDSS and Proposed GIA

5.17 Even if the dwelling was treated as a 4 bedroom, 6-person dwelling, due to the first-floor study, it would still exceed the minimum space standard of 106sqm.

5.18 Further, the dwelling is provided with a generous rear garden area providing sufficient space for a patio, lawn and planting, along with a further south facing front garden.

5.19 As such, the proposed scheme will provide a high quality family sized dwelling.

Sustainability

5.20 INP Policy SD4 outlines that the design and standard of any new building should meet a high level of sustainable design and construction and be optimised for energy efficiency, targeting zero carbon emissions. This includes:

- Siting and orientation to optimise passive solar gain,
- The use of high quality, thermally efficient building materials,
- Installation of energy efficiency measures such as loft and wall insulation and double glazing.
- Any new development should incorporate on-site energy generation from renewable sources such as solar panels.

5.21 INP Policy SD5 requires that development proposals should respond positively to best practice on water efficiency, including using water efficient fittings and appliances, water harvesting, grey water recycling, and providing water storage features.

5.22 As a self-build property, the Applicant intends for the dwelling to exceed building regulation requirements for water efficiency and to provide a range of energy efficiency measures. This includes EV charging, Air Source Heat Pump, double glazing, solar PV panels and rainwater butts. The proposal therefore complies with INP policies SD4 and SD5.

Access and Parking

5.23 INP Policy MTT2 outlines that development proposals should not result in the loss of publicly accessible off-street car parking and proposals for new development that provide additional off-road car parking spaces will be supported.

5.24 There is an existing gated access to the Site in the location of the new proposed vehicular crossover. As such, the proposal will not result in any loss of on-street parking as cars would already not park to block this gate. The proposal includes three off-street parking spaces to serve the new dwelling. This provision also accords with Appendix 4 of the Local Plan which requires a minimum of 2 spaces per dwelling for 3-bedroom dwellings.

- 5.25 A location is shown on the proposed Block Plan for secure cycle parking in the rear garden of the new property with direct pathed access to the road. This provision would also comply with Appendix 4 of the Local Plan.

Biodiversity

- 5.26 As the proposal is for a self-build dwelling, it is exempt from the statutory requirement to provide a 10% net gain in biodiversity. However, the proposed scheme has still been designed to minimise on-site habitat loss and maximise new planting.

6.0 **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

6.1 The proposed scheme seeks to erect a self-build dwelling as an infill proposal on Snailswell Lane to provide a 3-bedroom family home. The proposal is considered to be appropriate development in the Green Belt by virtue of forming infill development on grey belt land.

6.2 It has been demonstrated that the proposed scheme does not conflict with policy in any way which would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefit of the additional housing delivery for which there is a presumption in favour. As such, the proposal therefore constitutes sustainable residential development and should be granted without delay.