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North Hertfordshire District Council
Planning Policy & Projects
Council Offices Gernon Road
Letchworth Garden City
Hertfordshire
SG6 3JF

Our ref: NE/2024/137682/02
Your ref: 24/02606/FP

Date: 11 February 2025

Dear Anne,

Land West of Tuthill House, Kelshall Tops, Therfield, Hertfordshire.

Erection of three detached dwellings (1 x 3-bed, 1 x 4-bed and 1 x 5-bed) and with associated infrastructure and landscaping.

Thank you for consulting us on the above application on 22 January 2025.

Environment Agency Position

Ordinarily we would wish to review the submitted application details. However, we have significant resource pressures and do not currently have the capacity to technically review the submissions. We would encourage your Authority in discussion with your Environmental Health Team to ensure the developer has addressed risks to controlled waters from contamination at the site through relevant planning conditions having fully considered the guidance below. The Environmental Health Officer notes that the application is supported by a land contamination report which highlights no issues, and recommends that an unexpected contamination condition be attached to any decision notice.

Advice to Local Planning Authority

Connection to mains foul drainage (no foul drainage assessment submitted)

Government guidance contained within the national Planning Practice Guidance (Water supply, wastewater and water quality – considerations for planning applications, paragraph 020) sets out a hierarchy of drainage options that must be considered and discounted in the following order:

1. Connection to the public sewer
2. Package sewage treatment plant (adopted in due course by the sewerage company or owned and operated under a new appointment or variation)
3. Septic Tank

Foul drainage should be connected to the main sewer. Where this is not possible, under the Environmental Permitting Regulations 2016 any discharge of sewage or trade effluent made to either surface water or groundwater will need to be registered as an exempt discharge activity or hold a permit issued by the Environment Agency, additional to planning permission. This applies to any discharge to inland freshwaters, coastal waters or relevant territorial waters.

Please note that the granting of planning permission does not guarantee the granting of an Environmental Permit. Upon receipt of a correctly filled in application form we will carry out an assessment. It can take up to 4 months before we are in a position to decide whether to grant a permit or not.

Domestic effluent discharged from a treatment plant/septic tank at 2 cubic metres or less to ground or 5 cubic metres or less to surface water in any 24 hour period must comply with General Binding Rules provided that no public foul sewer is available to serve the development and that the site is not within an inner Groundwater Source Protection Zone.

A soakaway used to serve a non-mains drainage system must be sited no less than 10 metres from the nearest watercourse, not less than 10 metres from any other foul soakaway and not less than 50 metres from the nearest potable water supply.

Where the proposed development involves the connection of foul drainage to an existing non-mains drainage system, the applicant should ensure that it is in a good state of repair, regularly de-sludged and of sufficient capacity to deal with any potential increase in flow and loading which may occur as a result of the development.

Where the existing non-mains drainage system is covered by a permit to discharge then an application to vary the permit will need to be made to reflect the increase in volume being discharged. It can take up to 13 weeks before we decide whether to vary a permit.

Further advice is available at: [Septic tanks and treatment plants: permits and general binding rules](#).

Advice to applicant

Land Contamination Assessments

We expect land contamination assessments to follow the tiered approach laid out in our [Land Contamination Risk Management \(LCRM\)](#) guidance. The preliminary risk assessment (PRA) should include historical plans of the site, an appraisal of the environmental setting (including geology, hydrogeology, groundwater and surface water receptors, potential contaminants of concern and source areas), an initial conceptual site model (CSM) describing possible pollutant linkages for controlled waters, and identification of potentially unacceptable risks. Land contamination investigations should be undertaken by suitably qualified and experienced professionals and in accordance with BS 5930: [Code of practice for ground investigations](#) and BS 10175: [Investigation of potentially contaminated sites – code of practice](#). Soil and water analysis should be fully MCERTS accredited.

Investigation, demolition, remediation, or construction works must not create new pathways or linkages to controlled waters. Clean drilling techniques may be required for boreholes that penetrate contaminated ground.

Sustainable Drainage System (SUDs)

Soakaways and other infiltration SUDS must comply with statements G1 and G9 to G13 of our [Groundwater Protection Position Statements](#) and should be constructed in line with good practice and guidance documents including the [CIRIA C753](#) SuDS Manual and the [Susdrain website](#). They must not be constructed in contaminated ground where infiltration could re-mobilise contaminants to pollute groundwater. All infiltration SuDS should be designed to maintain a minimum 1.2m clearance above peak seasonal groundwater levels. We do not consider deep infiltration systems (>2.0m below ground level) to be routinely acceptable. Only clean roof water can be directly discharged to infiltration SuDS or watercourses; systems for the discharge of surface water from hard-standing, roads and impermeable vehicle parking areas must incorporate appropriate pollution prevention measures and a suitable number of SUDs treatment components in line with the environmental sensitivity of the receiving waters. An oil separator/interceptor (or equivalent device) may be required to remove oil from water draining off hard surfaces with a risk of oil contamination.

Waste Management during Development

Developers should ensure that all contaminated materials are adequately characterised both chemically and physical in line with BS EN 14899:2005, and that the permitting status of any proposed on site operations are clear. Excavated materials recovered via a treatment operation can be re-used on-site under the CL:AIRE Definition of Waste: Development Industry Code of Practice, subject to certain conditions being met. However, contaminated materials that are, or must be disposed of, classify as waste and are subject to waste management legislation which includes: Duty of Care Regulations 1991, Hazardous Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2005, Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010, The Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011.

We recommend that developers:

- Refer to our [Groundwater Protection](#) webpages, which include our [Groundwater Protection Position Statements](#)
- Refer to our [Land Contamination Technical Guidance](#), including our [Land Contamination Risk Management \(LCRM\)](#) guidance, when dealing with land affected by contamination and for the type of information required in order to assess the risks to controlled waters. The Local Authority can advise on management of risks to human health.
- Consider using the [National Quality Mark Scheme for Land Contamination Management](#) which involves the use of competent persons to ensure that land contamination risks are appropriately managed.
- Refer to British Standards BS 5930 [Code of practice for ground investigations](#) and BS 10175 [Investigation of potentially contaminated sites – code of practice](#)
- Refer to our [Piling and Penetrative Ground Improvement Methods on Land Affected by Contamination](#) National Groundwater & Contaminated Land Centre Project NC/99/73. The selected method, including

environmental mitigation measures, should be presented in a Foundation Works Risk Assessment Report, guidance on the production of which can be found in Table 3 of [Piling Into Contaminated Sites](#)

- Refer to [Position Statement on the Definition of Waste: Development Industry Code of Practice](#)
- Refer to our [Good Practice for Decommissioning Boreholes and Wells](#)
- Refer to our [Dewatering building sites and other excavations: environmental permits](#) guidance when temporary dewatering is proposed.

Water Resources

Increased water efficiency in new developments potentially enables more growth to be realised without an increased availability of water resources. Developers can highlight responsible water use as a positive corporate social responsibility message that will boost the commercial appeal of the development. For the homeowner/tenant, lower water usage also reduces water and energy bills.

We endorse the use of water efficiency measures in all developments, particularly in those that are new. Use of technology that ensures efficient use of natural resources could support the environmental benefits of future proposals and could help attract investment to the area. Therefore, water efficient technology, fixtures and fittings should be all considered as an integral part of new developments and/or refurbishments. The technology used to achieve improved water efficiency (e.g. efficient fittings, greywater recycling, etc) is also an attractive feature for many prospective building owners and tenants.

The supply of water in the area is under serious water stress (as identified in our report: [Water stressed areas – 2021 classification](#)). All residential developments must therefore achieve the higher water consumption efficiency standard of 110 litres per person per day, as set out within [the Building Regulations &c. \(Amendment\) Regulations 2015](#). This standard **or higher** may already be a requirement of the local planning authority.

We also recommend you contact your Local Planning Authority for more information.

Pre-Application Advice

Regarding future applications, if you would like us to review a revised technical report prior to a formal submission, outside of a statutory consultation, and/or meet to discuss our position, this will be chargeable in line with our planning advice service. If you wish to request a document review or meeting, please contact our team email address at HNLsustainableplaces@environment-agency.gov.uk.

Further information on our charged planning advice service is available at; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-advice-environment-agency-standard-terms-and-conditions>.

Final comments

Thank you for contacting us regarding the above application. Our comments are based on our available records and the information submitted to us. Please quote

our reference number in any future correspondence. Please provide us with a copy of the decision notice for our records. This would be greatly appreciated.

Should you have any queries regarding this response, please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Ms Frankie Mansi
Planning Advisor

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