Arboricultural Consultation Response

Application No:	**Location:**
25/00678/PIP	Land Adjacent The Nurseries Earith Road Colne
Case Officer: KS	**Proposals:** Construction of up to 5no. Dwellings

Observations:

A PIP has been submitted for the erection of 5 properties on the site of an existing commercial orchard. The property is not located within a Conservation Area. There appears to be Tree Preservation Orders in place on a number of Elm trees located in the South East corner of the site. However, imagery indicates that these trees are no longer present.

The site is composed of a diverse age range of fruit trees. These have historically been replaced as they have died, and they provide significant Arboricultural heritage to the locale as well as aesthetic and ecological benefits. Orchards are now protected under the NPPF due to the range of benefits they provide.





The Design Statement claims that no trees will need to be removed in the development process, however when consulting imagery, it seems that a large number of trees will need to be removed, and the development will significantly impact views from the road. This will have a large impact on BNG applicable to the site.

farming practice that have resulted in the loss of hedges and orchards, especially in settlements such as Colne.

As detailed above, the proposal will not result of the loss of any existing orchard trees, and it will continue to enable access to the current orchard to enable its management and harvesting. The proposed supplementary boundary enhancements and new mix hedge will not only enhance on site biodiversity, but will assist the Authority to comply with key objectives for the future management of the Fen Margins, including '*effectively integrating built edges of settlements with the surrounding landscape to minimise their visual impact'* and '*maintaining existing hedgerows, hedgerow trees and woodlands to retain their contribution to the landscape.*'

For the above reasons, the proposed development would have no conflict with Policy LP10 part (b).



It should be noted that Veteran trees are classified as 'Irreplaceable Habitat' under BNG laws and the NPPF/Huntingdonshire Council Policies and Guidance. Due to the age and size diversity of trees growing on site, there is a large environmental contribution by the Orchard that needs consideration as part of the application process. Each individual tree may be classified as of 'low value' or in 'poor condition' but once classified as a group there are huge benefits and a large number of Veteran Features present.

It would therefore be very difficult to replicate this habitat, or provide measurable improvement for any BNG calculations.

The report draws attention to the use of high grade farmland for development, but the comparison of historic orchards, to highly contaminated industrial monocultures nearby is not reflective of their value as historic, asethic, ecological and environmental benefits.

Comments It is hard to conceive how the development may proceed without the removal of a significant number of trees, along with the ecological and amenity benefits they provide. Proposals that do not take into account the existing trees should be refused.	
Recommendation: Recommend Refusal pending AIA, Tree Survey and Method Statements.	
Signed: NS	**Date: 12/05/2025**