PLANNING STATEMENT

on behalf of Mr B Merrill

Permission in Principle for One Self-Build Dwelling and Creation of New Access

Land between 46 and 64 Meadow Road, Great Gransden, SG19 3BB

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For and on behalf of Brown & Co.

Brown & Co is a leading provider of agency, professional and consultancy services across the whole range of rural, commercial, residential, and agricultural markets.

Date: October 2026

Reference: 070851

1. Introduction

1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Brown&Co to support an application on behalf of Mr B Merrill for one self-build dwelling on Land between 46 and 64 Meadow Road, Great Gransden, SG19 3BB

1.2 The Permission in Principle consent route was introduced in June 2018 as an alternative way of obtaining planning permission for housing led development, which separates the consideration of matters of principle for proposed development from the technical detail of the development. The Permission in Principle consent route has two stages: the first stage (Permission in Principle stage) establishes whether a site is suitable in principle and the second ('technical details consent') stage is when the detailed development proposals are assessed. The accompanying application seeks stage 1 consent with the considerations limited to location, land use and amount of development, with all other matters to be addressed at the technical details consent stage.

1.3 The applicant was born and raised in Great Gransden and lived in the village for the first 25 years of his life. The Merrill family has maintained a continuous presence within the village since 1709, demonstrating a longstanding connection to the local community. Whilst the applicant currently resides in Bassingbourn, he is keen to return to Great Gransden with his family and facilitate the gradual transfer of managerial responsibilities at Highbury Fields Ltd, an enterprise located on the edge of the village, as his father approaches retirement. The proposal would enable the applicant and his family to remain closely connected to local employment, family and the wider community, whilst delivering a genuine self-build home tailored to the family's long-term needs. The dwelling is intended to be a high-quality and sustainably designed property, incorporating energy-efficient technologies and measures to minimise environmental impact.

1.4 Moreover, the revised National Planning Policy Framework places significant weight on boosting the supply of homes and recognises the important contribution that small sites can make to housing delivery, including outside settlement boundaries. In this regard, the proposal represents a modest and sensitive infill opportunity that would make effective use of available land within an established group of houses

1.5 The purpose of this statement is to set out the background to the applicant's proposals and the key planning issues raised by them. The statement is structured as follows:

- **Section 2:** describes the physical characteristics of the site and its surroundings.
- **Section 3:** outlines the proposed development.
- **Section 4:** summarises the relevant national and local planning policy context.
- **Section 5:** provides a planning assessment of the key considerations raised by the proposal; and
- **Section 6:** sets out the planning balance; and the overall conclusions.

1.6 This statement should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Completed application form; and
- Location Plan

2. Site and surroundings

Location

2.1 The 0.34ha site is located on the northern side of Meadow Road, occupying land between Nos. 46 and 64 Meadow Road.

2.2 Great Gransden is identified as a Small Settlement within the adopted Local Plan, reflecting the range of local services and facilities it offers and the Council's recognition of the village as a sustainable location for growth through limited expansion. These offerings include a primary school, village shop, church and village hall, with public transport services from Great Gransden providing sustainable connectivity to surrounding settlements, including Cambridge and St. Neots. The village is located 5.8 miles (9.5 km) southeast of St Neots and 11 miles (18 km) west of Cambridge.

2.3 The nearby settlements of St. Neots and Cambourne provide a further range of services and facilities including nurseries, primary schools, secondary schools, GP surgeries, a variety of shops and restaurants, community centres, leisure centres, and play parks. The A428 is located approximately 3.7 kilometres north of the site, providing connectivity and onward access to the A1 and M11.

2.4 Employment opportunities are available nearby at Highbury Fields Industrial Estate, with additional employment opportunities available in St Neots and Cambridge. There are further opportunities within Great Gransden, including the Caxton Road / Sand Road Industrial Estate.

2.5 A regular bus service operates from Fox Street, circa 600 metres east of the site, providing a public transport link to key surrounding settlements, including Cambridge, Cambourne and St Neots. This service provides access to a wider range of facilities and onward public transport connections. The village is also served by the “Tiger On-Demand” bus service. This service allows users to book journeys between designated virtual stops, offering a reliable and convenient alternative to traditional fixed-route bus services.

2.6 The site lies outside the Built-Up Area of Great Gransden as defined by the 2023 Made Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan, with the Built-Up Area located approximately 200 metres to the east. The site is situated on Meadow Road, within a cluster of more dispersed residential development characterised by larger dwellings set within generous plots, often set back from the road frontage. A mature hedgerow and tree belt extends along the Meadow Road frontage, providing a strong sense of enclosure. The site itself occupies a parcel of land between Nos. 46 and 64 Meadow Road. To the east, No. 46 comprises a substantial dwelling set well back within a large residential curtilage, whilst No. 64 to the west comprises a detached dwelling with a number of outbuildings extending to the rear. To the south, on the opposite side of Meadow Road, is Great Gransden Campsite, whilst open agricultural land lies immediately to the north. The site frontage lies within the 40mph speed limit on Meadow Road. Residential properties are situated immediately to the east and west, including Nos. 46 and 64 Meadow Road. When viewed from the public highway, the site is perceived within the context of the existing Meadow Road cluster and forms part of an established grouping of residential development.

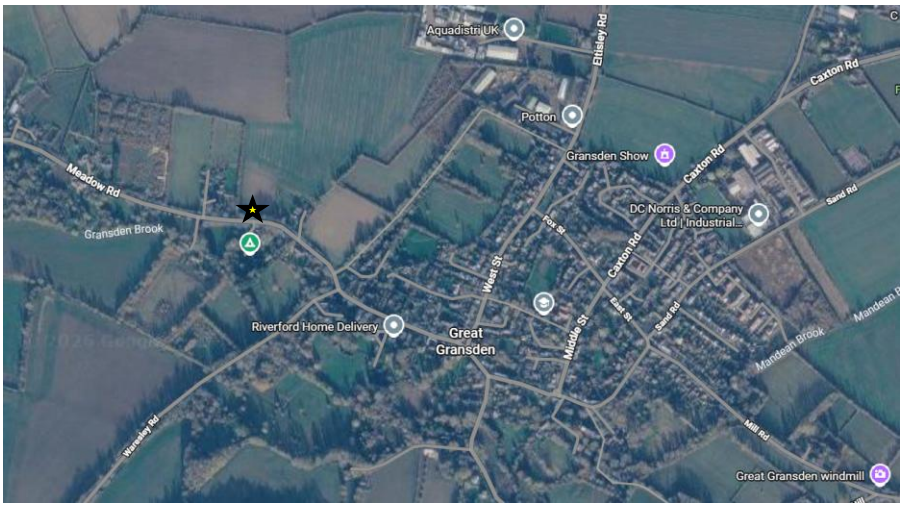


Figure 1: Aerial photograph of Great Gransden with the application site identified by a yellow star.

The Site

2.7 The site is broadly rectangular, with an overall area of 0.39 hectares, as edged in red in the map extract below.



Figure 2: Satellite image with the site edged in red.

2.8 The site is partially enclosed by existing vegetation and neighbouring development. To the east, west and south, it is bounded by a combination of mature trees, hedgerows and shrubs which serve to screen the site from adjacent residential properties and the road frontage. The northern boundary remains open to the wider agricultural field. Overall, the site benefits from a degree of visual containment, particularly when viewed from Meadow Road and the surrounding built form.

2.9 The site frontage lies within the 40mph speed limit on Meadow Road. Residential properties are situated immediately to the east and west including Nos. 46 and 64 Meadow Road. Additional dwellings are located to the southeast and whilst not immediately adjacent, these further contribute to the site's visual and physical relationship with the existing built form which forms an established roadside frontage. When viewed from the highway, the site is perceived within the context of the surrounding residential development.

Access

2.10 There is currently no existing vehicular access to the site from Meadow Road and, as such, a new access opening will be required. This will necessitate the removal of a short section of trees along the site frontage.

Flood Risk

2.11 The Environmental Agency Flood maps identify that the site is within Flood Zone 1, the lowest area of flood risk. There is some localised surface water flood risk along the western boundary. It is anticipated that this risk can be reasonably addressed through site layout and design, both of which details would be provided as part of any subsequent Technical Details application.



Figure 3: Flood Risk Map (Gov.uk)

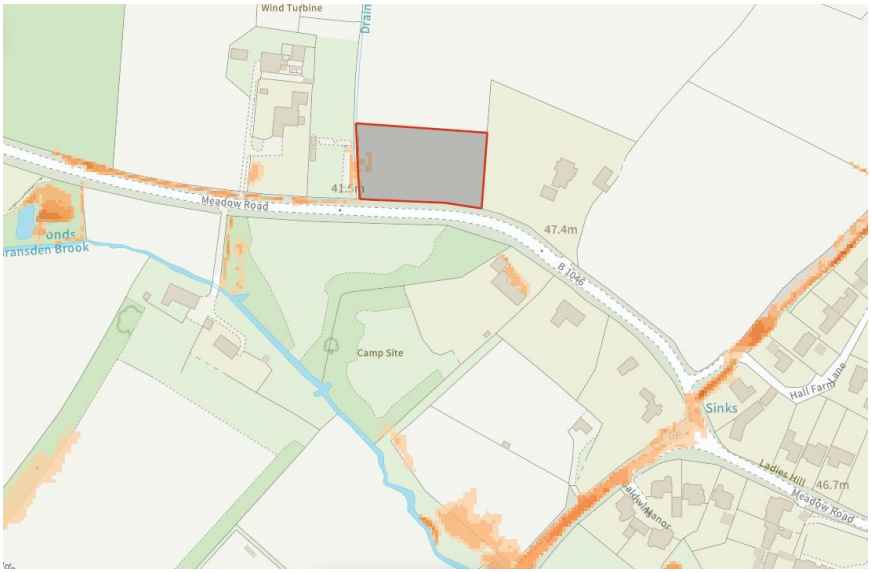


Figure 4: Surface Water Flood Risk Map (Gov.uk)

Rights of Way

2.12 There are no public rights of way running through the site; however, a public footpath (104/8) lies to the southeast of the site, running in a southwest-northeast alignment.



Figure 5: Aerial photograph showing the existing Public Right of Ways, with the site starred (Source: Tytl)

Built Heritage and Archaeology

2.13 The site is not located within a Conservation Area, and the nearest listed building is Grade-II listed "33 Meadow Road", which is located circa 140m to the southeast, as shown in the figure below.

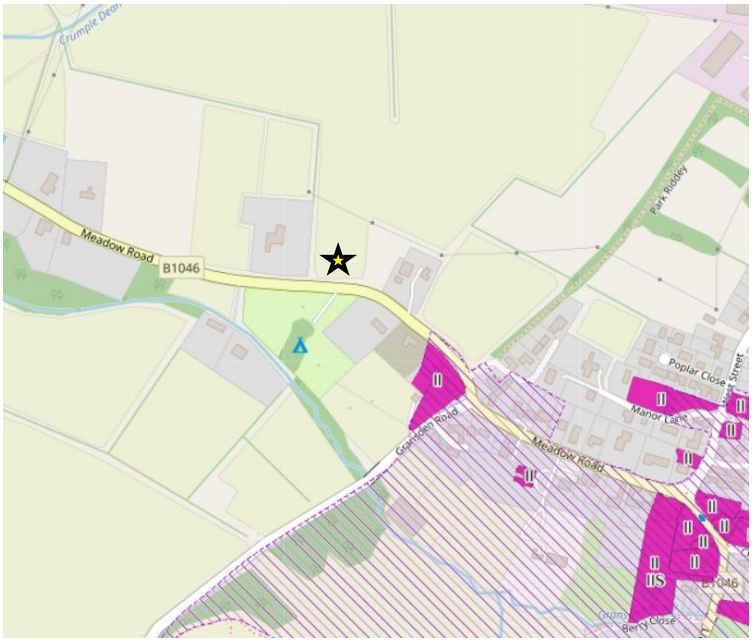


Figure 6: Map showing nearby listed buildings and the Conservation Area's extent, with site starred (Source: Huntingdonshire District Council)

2.14 The aerial archaeology mapping explorer, as shown in Figure 7 below, indicates that there are no archaeological constraints.

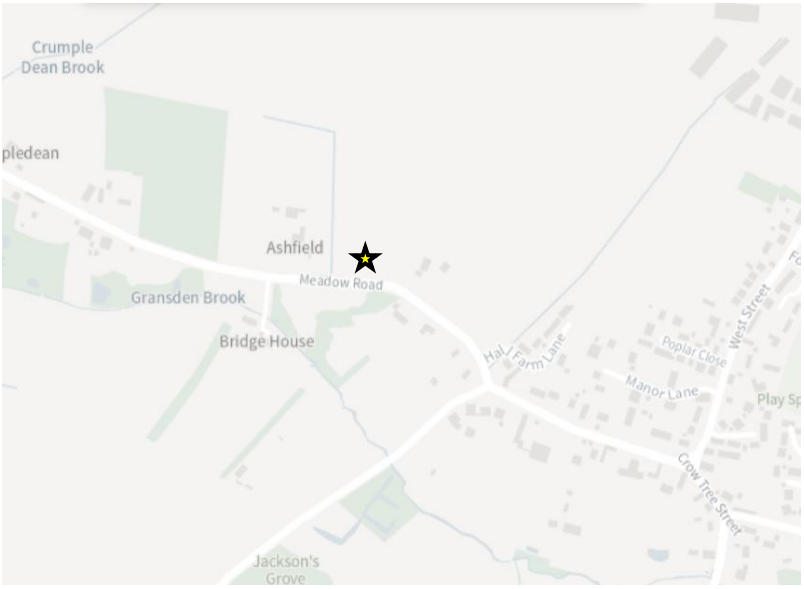


Figure 7: Aerial Archaeology Map, with site starred (Source: Historic England)

Biodiversity

2.15 The site is not located within any designated environmental area. The nearest ecological designation is Gransden Wood Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), which lies approximately 645 metres to the south of the site.

Relevant Site and Planning History

2.17 The Council's public access system identifies no planning history relevant to the site.

2.18 Nevertheless as outlined below the Applicant has submitted two recent pre-applications as outlined below:

2.19 Firstly, a pre-application enquiry relating to a new dwelling on a site located approximately 120m to the north of the application site received a response from the Council in May 2024 (LPA ref. 24/70019/PREAPP). The Council concluded that the proposal was unacceptable in principle, noting that the site "*relate[d] more to the countryside than the built up area of Great Gransden*" and "*appears physically, functionally and visually part of the open countryside*". The location plan extract below is included below for reference and a copy of the pre-application response is included in **Appendix 1**.

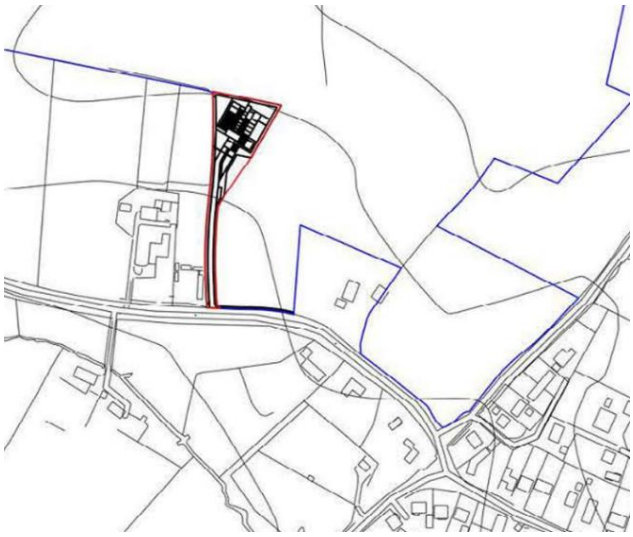


Figure 8: Location Plan submitted with previous pre-application (LPA ref: 24/70019/PREAPP)

2.20 More recently, a pre-application enquiry was submitted in July 2026 in relation to a site located approximately 200m east of the application site (LPA ref. 26/70061/PREAPP). Whilst the enquiry was submitted prior to the publication of the revised NPPF, a response was issued by the Council in September 2026 following the introduction of new NPPF Policy S5. The Council concluded that "*the site is not considered to be physically well-related to the settlement and does not fall within any of the specific forms of development supported by Local Plan Policies LP9 or LP10 or Policy S5 of the NPPF*". The location plan extract below is included below for reference and a copy of the pre-application response is included in **Appendix 2**.



Figure 9: Location Plan submitted with previous pre-application (LPA ref: 26/70061/PREAPP)

2.21 During discussions with Officers in September 2026, consideration was given to whether development extending across the full width of the frontage between the application site and No. 64 Meadow Road could be regarded as limited infilling within the context of Policy S5(1)(e). Whilst no formal view was expressed, it was acknowledged that the application site presented a prospect as an infill plot, given its location between existing dwellings and its relationship with the established frontage development along Meadow Road.

2.22 Having regard to the findings of both the 2024 and 2026 pre-application enquiries, the current proposal has been carefully formulated to address the concerns previously raised.

Unlike the 2024 proposal, the application site is located on the established road frontage and is physically, functionally and visually related to the existing built form of Great Gransden. Furthermore, unlike the site considered under the 2026 pre-application enquiry, the application site occupies a position between existing dwellings and is considered to represent limited infilling within a group of houses. The application has therefore been submitted on the basis that it accords with the objectives and requirements of Policy S5(1)(e).

3. Proposal

3.1 The National Planning Practice Guidance clarifies that the scope of Permission in Principle is limited to location, land use and amount of development, and the issues relevant to these 'in principle' matters should be considered at the Permission in Principle stage (Paragraph: 012 Reference ID: 58-012-20180615 Revision date: 15 06 2018).

3.2 The application for Permission in Principle seeks the erection of one self-build dwelling on Land between 46 and 64 Meadow Road, with new access created onto Meadow Road, allowing for infill development. A private garden would extend slightly to the rear of the site, ensuring an appropriate relationship with the surrounding countryside while maintaining the established pattern of development.

3.3 Any future development would be sensitively designed and respond positively to its surrounding context. The precise details of the proposed dwellings, including their appearance, layout, landscaping and other technical matters, are not fixed at this stage and would be appropriately considered and agreed through the subsequent Technical Details Consent process.

4. Planning policy context

4.1 Planning law requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise[1]. The development plan is, therefore, the starting point for the assessment of all planning proposals. Development plan policies of particular relevance to this application are summarised in paragraph 4.3 to 4.4 below.

4.2 The Government's planning policies, as set out in latest National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), are also a significant material consideration in deciding planning applications. National planning policies of particular relevance to this application are summarised in paragraph 4.6 below.

Huntingdonshire District Council Local Plan 2019

4.3 This sets out the overall framework for directing new development in Huntingdonshire District Council, including Great Gransden, and the following policies are relevant to the proposed development:

Policy LP 1 Amount of Development sets out in Huntingdonshire in the period 2011-2036 provision will be made for at least 20,100 new homes (both market and affordable).

[1] Section 38(6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Section 70(2) of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990.

Policy LP 2 of the Local Plan sets out the development strategy for Huntingdonshire. Notably, it states that development should be concentrated in locations which provide, or have the potential to provide, the most comprehensive range of services and facilities. It seeks to protect the character of existing settlements and recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the surrounding countryside and conserve and enhance the historic environment. In terms of the distribution of growth settlements with a single built up area of 30 dwellings or more are defined as a Small Settlement. Approximately a quarter of the objectively assessed need for housing will be permitted on sites dispersed across small settlements to support the vitality of these communities and provide flexibility and diversity in the housing supply. In addition, rural exception, small and windfall sites will be permitted on sites which are in conformity with other policies in the plan providing further flexibility in the housing supply.

Policy LP 3 sets out a proposal will be expected to support green infrastructure.

Policy LP 4 Contributing to infrastructure delivery sets out applicable developments will be liable to pay the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) as set out in the Huntingdonshire Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule (2012) or subsequent revisions

Policy LP 5 necessitates that proposals susceptible to flood risk will only be accepted where such risk has been addressed.

Policy LP9 enables residential development in the built-up area subject to the amount and location of the houses being sustainable when considering the level of service and infrastructure provision in the settlement, opportunities for users of the proposed development to access everyday services and facilities by sustainable modes of travel including walking, cycling and public transport and, effect on the character of the immediate locality and the settlement as a whole. The built-up area is considered to be a distinct group of buildings that includes 30 or more homes and clusters smaller than this are deemed to comprise isolated or sporadic development within the countryside. Development proposals on land well-related to the built-up area may be supported where it accords with specific opportunities allowed for through other policies in the plan.

Policy LP 10 sets out in the countryside development is restricted to the limited and specific opportunities provided for in other policies of the plan and also requires the agricultural land to be low in value, recognise the character and beauty of the countryside and not give rise to noise, odour, light or other impacts that would adversely affect the use and enjoyment of the countryside by others.

Policy LP 34 sets out a proposal within a conservation area should preserve, and wherever possible enhance, features that contribute positively to the area's character, appearance and setting as set out in character statements or other applicable documents.

Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan 2021-2036

The Neighbourhood Plan was Made in 2023 and forms part of the development plan. Whilst the document does not allocate any land for development, it recognises that the village will contribute to the delivery of sustainable housing within the district. The Plan indicates that the housing requirement for Great Gransden is 64 new dwellings between 2011 and 2036, equating to approximately 2.5 per year.

Policy G1 defines the village's Built-up Area and provides policy support for proposals located within this area where they would accord with the relevant criteria. The policy also states that proposals outside the Built-up Area will be resisted unless they comprise rural

exceptions housing, accord with national policy relating to isolated homes, or fall within one of the opportunities afforded by the Local Plan.

Policy G3 states that all development proposals should positively contribute to the character and qualities of Great Gransden. In terms of design principles, this includes ensuring that proposed schemes are in harmony with the character of the surrounding area. The policy also explains that ribbon or greenfield development will not be supported unless it accords with the specific opportunities afforded by local and national planning policy.

Policy G4 explains that all proposals should contribute positively to the existing landscape character, responding sensitively to it and protecting it, whilst enhancing existing features of landscape value where possible.

Policy G6 states that all new development should deliver a net gain in biodiversity.

Emerging Local Plan

Huntingdonshire District Council published their Pre-Submission Local Plan to 2046 for consultation in September 2026. The consultation responses received will be reviewed by the Council and used to inform the final version of the Plan, which is intended to be submitted for examination by 31 December 2026 under the legacy Local Plan system. The relevant draft policies are set out below, providing an indication as to the Council's direction of travel.

Draft Policy LP 5 sets out the settlement hierarchies for the district and designates Easton as a Village.

Draft Policy LP 9 explains that proposals for development on land well related to the built-up area in Villages may be supported where the development proposal is of a minor scale and accords with the specific opportunities allowed for through policies in the plan.

Draft Policy LP 10 outlines that a proposal may be supported for development in the countryside. Such proposals must demonstrate that they avoid grade 1 agricultural land and will use the least agriculturally valuable land where possible.

Draft Policy LP 30 states that a proposal which generates additional movements to and from a building or site should promote the transport user hierarchy and assessment and mitigation of travel requirements.

National Planning Policy Framework

4.6 The Government's planning policies, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), are also a significant material consideration in deciding planning applications. The NPPF was revised in August 2026 and sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The paragraphs relevant to the proposed development are as follows:

Policy S1 states that the local planning authorities must actively plan for new development and meet their area's housing and growth needs. It also indicates that, where neighbouring areas cannot meet their own needs, additional growth may be directed to suitable sites elsewhere, potentially increasing development potential for available land.

Policy S3 outlines how the presumption in favour of sustainable development will be applied in decision-making. For proposals outside settlements, policy S5 should be applied, and for those within the settlement, policy S4 should be applied. The policy also explains that all proposals according to an up-to-date development plan and the decision-making policies within this (draft) NPPF should be approved.

Policy S5 explains that only certain forms of development are acceptable outside settlements, including agricultural and rural uses, rural businesses where a countryside location is essential, redevelopment of existing or previously developed buildings, limited infilling, and development that meets identified unmet needs. The policy makes clear that proposals outside these categories should generally be refused unless exceptional circumstances demonstrate that the benefits would substantially outweigh harm, particularly to the countryside and sustainable travel patterns.

Policy HO7 sets out that substantial weight should be given to the benefits of providing new homes that contribute to meeting the evidenced needs of the local community so to address local shortfalls.

Policy DP3 details how development should be well-designed, responding positively to its context and promoting places that are liveable, climate-responsive, nature-rich, well-connected and visually coherent. It requires proposals to demonstrate high-quality design through their layout, built form, movement networks, green infrastructure and public spaces, ensuring developments support healthy communities and integrate effectively with their surroundings. Where schemes comply with design guidance, substantial weight should be applied.

Policy TR3 states that development should be located where it can support sustainable travel patterns, reducing the need to travel and providing genuine transport choices for different users. It emphasises making effective use of existing or planned transport infrastructure, enabling higher-density development in accessible locations while managing and mitigating environmental impacts associated with transport.

National Planning Practice Guidance

4.7 The Government's Planning Practice Guidance provides a web-based resource of national planning guidance covering a wide range of topics. Of relevance to this application is the National Planning Practice Guidance relating to Permission in Principle.

Housing Land Supply Update

4.8 Policy H07 of the revised NPPF states that substantial weight should be applied to the benefits of providing new homes that contribute to the evidenced unmet need for housing. In this case, given that Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 is now over 5 years old, it is necessary to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply (5YHLS) based on the housing requirement set using the standard method. Based on a 5% buffer, Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) have recently announced that a 5-year housing land requirement, including a 5% buffer of 5,907 homes. The current 5YHLS is 4,345 homes, equivalent to 3.68 years' supply.

4.9 The inability of HDC to demonstrate a five-year supply of housing means that for the purposes of considering this planning application, Policy H07 applies and this substantial weight should therefore be applied to the planning decision process.

5. Planning Assessment

5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. For the purposes of the assessment the development plan comprises the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036.

5.2 The application seeks only to consider the principle of development, and the Planning Practice Guidance clarifies that the scope of Permission in Principle is limited to location, land use and amount of development. Only these issues should be considered at the Permission in Principle stage, with all other matters to be addressed in the technical details consent stage.

Location

5.3 Great Gransden is identified as a Small Settlement under Policy LP9 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan. Whilst the village contains a range of services and facilities, including a primary school, village hall, public house, convenience store, post office, places of worship and recreational facilities, the application site lies outside the Built-Up Area as defined by the Made Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan.

5.4 The site is therefore located within the countryside for the purposes of Policy LP10 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan. It is acknowledged that the proposal does not fall within the categories of development expressly supported by Policy LP10 and consequently gives rise to a degree of conflict with the development plan. The site occupies a relatively sustainable location, as future occupiers would have access to a range of day-to-day services and facilities within Great Gransden, whilst public transport connections provide access to higher-order settlements including St Neots. The proposal therefore accords with the broad objectives of in promoting sustainable patterns of development.

5.5 The NPPF is a material consideration of significant weight. Policy S5:1 identifies circumstances where development outside settlements may be supported, including criterion (e), which relates to "*limited infilling within groups of houses in the countryside*". The application site is located between Nos. 46 and 64 Meadow Road and forms part of an established cluster of development. It is physically, functionally and visually related to the surrounding built form and is contained within a largely continuous frontage of development along Meadow Road. The proposal would therefore represent a logical infill opportunity rather than isolated or sporadic encroachment into the wider countryside.

5.6 Recent appeal decisions support this interpretation of Policy S5(1)(e). In allowing a dwelling at Land East of Spring Gardens, Washington (Appeal Ref: 6009593), the Inspector concluded that a site located between existing dwellings constituted "limited infilling" notwithstanding its location outside the defined settlement. Weight was afforded to the site's relationship with surrounding built form and its integration within an existing group of development. Similarly, in allowing two dwellings at Land East of Hawarden, Holsworthy Beacon (Appeal Ref: 6009632), the Inspector found that development on a site situated between existing and permitted dwellings constituted infill development for the purposes of Policy S5(1)(e). Significant weight was attached to compliance with national policy despite an identified conflict with the adopted development plan. Copies of the Location Plans and Appeal Decisions are included at **Appendices 3** and **4** for reference. Whilst each proposal must be considered on its own merits, the application site shares a number of similar characteristics with these appeal examples, occupying a frontage position between existing dwellings and forming part of an established group of buildings along Meadow

Road. The proposal is therefore considered to represent limited infilling within a group of houses in the countryside for the purposes of Policy S5(1)(e).

5.7 In addition to satisfying criterion (e), the proposal also broadly accords with criterion (j) of Policy S5:1. The site is physically well-related to Great Gransden, occupying a frontage position between existing dwellings and forming part of an established cluster of development along Meadow Road. Whilst outside the defined Built-Up Area, the site is physically well-related to Great Gransden and forms part of an established frontage of development along Meadow Road. This relationship reinforces the conclusion that the proposal constitutes limited infilling within a group of houses in the countryside for the purposes of Policy S5(1)(e).

5.8 The proposal would make a modest contribution towards addressing the District's evidenced housing need through the delivery of a self-build dwelling. This benefit attracts significant weight given Huntingdonshire District Council's current housing land supply position of only 3.68 years, which demonstrates an ongoing shortfall in deliverable housing land. The proposal would therefore contribute towards boosting housing supply in accordance with Policies HO5(c)(iii) and HO7 of the NPPF.

5.9 Having regard to the site's position between existing dwellings, its strong physical, functional and visual relationship with the established Meadow Road frontage, and the modest scale of development proposed, the application is considered to constitute limited infilling within a group of houses in the countryside for the purposes of Policy S5:1(e). Furthermore, the site is physically well-related to Great Gransden and would deliver a single self-build dwelling that would make a modest contribution towards the District's evidenced housing need, in accordance with the objectives of NPPF Policy HO5(c)(iii). The proposal is therefore also considered to broadly accord with Policy S5:1(j). Accordingly, whilst conflict with Policies LP9 and LP10 is acknowledged, the principle of development is considered acceptable when assessed against the provisions of the NPPF.

Character and Appearance

5.10 The application site is located within the Meadow Road cluster, an area characterised by a relatively dispersed pattern of residential development comprising detached dwellings positioned within generous plots. Development along this part of Meadow Road is less formal than within the historic core of Great Gransden, with properties typically set back from the highway and interspersed with mature landscaping and areas of open space.

5.11 The site occupies a parcel of land between Nos. 46 and 64 Meadow Road, with Great Gransden Campsite positioned on the opposite side of the road. No. 46 comprises a substantial dwelling set within an extensive residential curtilage, whilst No. 64 is a detached dwelling with associated outbuildings extending to the rear. Together with the established campsite frontage opposite, the site forms part of a recognisable cluster of development along this section of Meadow Road. It should therefore be viewed as part of an established roadside grouping rather than as an isolated parcel of land within the wider countryside.

5.12 The site benefits from a significant degree of enclosure. Mature trees, hedgerows and shrubs are present along the eastern, western and southern boundaries, including a well-established hedgerow and tree belt along the Meadow Road frontage. These landscape features provide effective screening of the site from the public realm and neighbouring properties. Whilst the formation of a new access will necessitate a limited removal of frontage vegetation, this would not be uncharacteristic of the prevailing pattern, where a number of properties are served by roadside access points. The retained vegetation would continue to provide a strong degree of enclosure and screening, such that public views of the site would remain largely limited to brief glimpses from Meadow Road.

5.13 Although the northern boundary is relatively open, there are no Public Rights of Way extending to the north of the site and therefore no opportunities for public views from this direction. Consequently, the site is visually contained and experienced principally in the context of the existing development along Meadow Road, rather than as part of the wider open countryside.

5.14 The proposal seeks Permission in Principle for a single self-build dwelling only, with all detailed matters reserved for consideration at the Technical Details Consent stage. Nevertheless, the scale of development proposed would represent a logical addition to the existing pattern of development along Meadow Road. Any future dwelling would be of a high-quality and sustainable design, with its precise appearance, scale, layout and landscaping to be determined through the Technical Details Consent process. The dwelling would be designed to reflect the spacious plot sizes, landscaped setting and established character of surrounding development, ensuring that it integrates successfully with its surroundings.

5.15 Taking these factors into account, the site is considered capable of accommodating a single dwelling without causing unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the area. The proposal would relate closely to the existing Meadow Road cluster and would not constitute isolated or sporadic encroachment into the countryside. Rather, it would represent a proportionate and well-contained form of development that respects the prevailing character and grain of this part of Great Gransden.

Land Use

5.16 The application site is currently agricultural land. The proposed land use is residential.

Amount of Development

5.17 One self-build dwelling is proposed on the application site.

Other Matters

5.18 The following matters are not within the scope of a Permission in Principle application and will be dealt with at the technical details stage. However, it is considered prudent to provide further information with this application. There is no reason that the development could not accord with design policies.

Design

5.19 In-depth design details will be provided in the technical stage. Whereas basic considerations like 49% Category 1 dwellings will be provided to comply with Building Regulations Document M.

Visual Impact

5.20 The overall site is well enclosed by existing tree and hedgerow coverage along the road frontage and third-party boundaries. Any development of the site will provide further planting to create a buffer between the site and the open countryside.

Access and Highways

5.21 Access would be taken from Meadow Road. The site is located within a 40mph speed limit, and it is considered that adequate visibility splays can be achieved in both directions. The formation of a new access would require a limited removal of frontage vegetation. Detailed access arrangements would be determined at the Technical Details Consent stage.

Flood Risk

5.22 The site lies in Flood Zone 1, the area of lowest fluvial flood risk, with surface water flood risk limited to areas along the western boundary, which is considered capable of being addressed through a sensitive site layout and the careful siting of development. It is therefore considered that, subject to a detailed proposal, any subsequent scheme will not be adversely affected by surface water flood risk.

Trees

5.23 Initial advice has been sought from an arboricultural consultant, who notes that the frontage vegetation comprises a number of small-diameter self-set trees, potentially including elm. On this basis, they consider that there is likely to be ample opportunity to form a suitable access, and it is considered unlikely that Root Protection Areas (RPAs) would present a significant constraint to the development. Whilst a detailed arboricultural assessment has not been undertaken at this stage, any tree-related considerations, including the design of the access, impacts on retained trees and any necessary protection measures, can be fully assessed at the Technical Details Consent stage should Permission in Principle be granted. These are matters of detail and do not affect the acceptability of the principle of development.

Ecology

5.24 Ecological considerations and the securing of biodiversity net gain will be addressed at the technical details consent stage.

Private Amenity

5.25 It is considered that at the technical details stage, a suitably designed scheme can be positioned to respect and enhance the residential amenity of proposed and existing residential properties in accordance with the Council's Design SPD.

6.0 Planning Balance and Conclusion

6.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The proposal conflicts with Policies LP9 and LP10 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan by virtue of its location outside the Built-Up Area of Great Gransden.

6.2 Notwithstanding this conflict, the following matters weigh in favour of the proposal:

- The proposal would constitute limited infilling within a group of houses in the countryside and accords with Policy S5:1(e) of the NPPF.

- The proposal also broadly accords with Policy S5:1(j), being physically well-related to Great Gransden and contributing towards an evidenced unmet housing need.

- The proposal would deliver a self-build dwelling, contributing towards housing choice and meeting the objectives of NPPF Policy HO5(c)(iii). The proposal would also contribute towards the Council's duties and national policy objectives for the delivery of self-build and custom housebuilding opportunities.

- The Council cannot currently demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites, with the latest published evidence indicating a supply of 3.68 years.

- The proposal would make efficient use of a well-contained parcel of land within an established group of houses.

- The development would generate economic benefits during the construction phase through expenditure on labour, materials and associated services.

- Any dwelling delivered would be required to meet contemporary building standards and would provide a high-quality and energy-efficient home, contributing towards the delivery of sustainable development.

- The scale of development proposed is modest and would represent a logical addition to the established pattern of development.

- No overriding constraints have been identified in respect of landscape character, arboriculture, highway safety, drainage, infrastructure capacity or residential amenity.

6.3 Against these benefits, the principal adverse effect relates to the proposal's conflict with Policies LP9 and LP10 arising from its location outside the defined Built-Up Area. However, given the site's strong physical, functional and visual relationship with the existing Meadow Road frontage, that conflict attracts limited weight.

6.4 Weighing the proposal in the round, it is considered that the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the limited policy conflict identified. The proposal represents an appropriate and sustainable form of development that accords with the objectives of the NPPF. Permission in Principle should therefore be granted.

Appendix 1 – Pre-application Response (24/70019/PREAPP)

Our Ref: 24/70019/PREAPP
Portal Ref: FDBFVXTM

16 May 2024

Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street
Huntingdon. PE29 3TN

Kevin Kelly
Kevin Kelly Architects
35-47 BETHNAL GREEN ROAD
1st Floor East 1.E.03, Rich Mix
LONDON
E1 6LA

Dear Sir/Madam

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Application for Pre-application Advice

Site address: Land North East Of 64 Meadow Road Great Gransden

Your client: Ben Merrill

Overall Response: Unacceptable in principle or lacks essential information to make an assessment

Proposed development

New Build single occupancy dwelling.

Site constraints

Airfield 2 Site: LITTLE GRANSDEN

Actions

No consultations undertaken.

Pre-application Planning advice

I have assessed your pre-application proposal against relevant policies, the site history and from my understanding of the site constraints and its opportunities. I summarise my response to the key issues in the table below:

Issue	Summary response	RAG
Principle of proposal	The principle of development for one dwelling is unlikely to be supported as the	Red

	site is not considered to form part of the built-up area of Great Gransden as the site relates more to the countryside than the built up of Great Gransden. As such, the proposal would be contrary to Policies LP2, LP9 and LP10 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023.	
Context, design and external spaces	The siting and site plan layout would result in an uncharacteristic development, presenting a cramped and incongruous form of development that would be out of keeping with the more spacious character of the area and does not accord with Local Plan Policies LP11, LP12 and LP14, or advice contained within the HDC Design Guide, paragraph 135 of the NPPF (2023) and the National Design Guide 2021.	Red
Impact on residential amenity	Due to the location of the proposal within the site, it is considered that there would be limited impact in terms of residential amenity on neighbouring properties. Therefore, it would broadly accord with Policy LP14 in terms of residential amenity, of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036. A full assessment will be carried out on submission of a planning application.	Green
Biodiversity	A proposal should show no net loss in biodiversity and provide a net gain where possible. Any future application will need to be accompanied with a hard and soft landscaping plan.	Amber
Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows	Boundary treatments need to be considered for the proposal. Any future application should be accompanied by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment and a Tree Protection Plan. The HDC Arboricultural Officer will be consulted regarding protection measures within the site.	Amber
Highway safety, Parking Provision and Vehicle Movement	Any future application will need to provide a tracking plan to demonstrate that cars can exit in forward gear. Cambridgeshire County Highways will be consulted on any application.	Amber

Green: *Acceptable*
Amber: *Requires amendment, further information and/or site visit*
Red: *Unacceptable in principle or lacks essential information to make an assessment.*

Detailed Response

Application site

The application site is currently Grade 2 Arable farm land, situated between No.46 and No.64 Meadow Road Great Gransden.

The proposal is for the erection of a new build single occupancy dwelling.

The site plan shows the accessway to the plot east of 64 Meadow Road Great Gransden, with the dwelling set back from the public highway and to the north-east of 64 Meadow Road.

Key Planning Guidance, Development Plan Policies and Other Planning Policies:

The following is the list of policies which are relevant to your enquiry at this time.

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

The National Planning Policy Framework (19th December 2023) (NPPF 2023) sets out the three objectives - economic, social and environmental - of the planning system to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF 2023 at paragraph 10 provides as follows: 'So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11).'

The NPPF 2023 sets out the Government's planning policies for (amongst other things):
* delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
* achieving well-designed places;
* conserving and enhancing the natural environment;
* conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Planning Practice Guidance is also relevant and a material consideration.

For full details visit the government website: https://www.gov.uk

Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (May 2019)

- Policy LP1 – Amount of Development
- Policy LP2 – Strategy for Development
- Policy LP4 – Contributing to Infrastructure Delivery
- Policy LP5 – Flood Risk
- Policy LP9 – Small Settlements
- Policy LP10 – The Countryside
- Policy LP11 – Design Context
- Policy LP12 – Design Implementation
- Policy LP14 – Amenity
- Policy LP15 – Surface Water
- Policy LP 16 – Sustainable Travel
- Policy LP17 – Parking Provision and Vehicle Movement
- Policy LP19 – Rural Economy
- Policy LP20 – Homes for Rural Workers
- Policy LP30 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Policy LP31 – Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows
- Policy LP33 – Rural Buildings
- LP35: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

- LP36: Air Quality
- LP37: Ground Contamination and Groundwater Pollution

Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan 2021-2036
Policy G1 - A Built-up Area Boundary Strategy for Great Gransden
Policy G3 - Local Character and Design
Policy G4 - Development, Landscape Character and Valued Views

Supplementary Planning Documents

- Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017)
- Developer Contributions SPD (2011)
- Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment (2022)
- Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD 2017
- Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2017)
- LDF Developer Contributions SPD (2011)
- Annual Monitoring Review regarding housing land supply (2020)
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021)

Local policies are viewable at https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Relevant planning history:

0500026FUL - Change of use from haulage to haulage and/or B1 (light industrial) and/or B2 (general industrial) and/or B8 (warehousing) – permission granted 24.03.2005
0600109FUL – Extension to dwelling – refused 06.03.2006
0603326CLED - Certificate of lawful use of property as dwelling in breach of agricultural restriction imposed on planning permission 8001337 – consent granted 20.12.2006
0700097FUL – Extension to dwelling - permission granted 16.02.2007
0700673PDE - Proposed siting of two/three mobile homes – planning permission required 17.03.2007
0900874FUL – Continuation and extension of open storage use (B8) with additional hardstanding, temporary modular building and bio disc plant – permission granted 12.08.2009
1201005FUL – Erection of garage/workshop – permission granted 19.11.2012
23/02196/FUL - Retrospective planning application to retain and use units 4 & 5 including extension to Unit 5 for business use – permission granted 15.03.2024
23/01997/FUL – Extension to existing warehouse – pending consideration

Comments on the proposal:
Having regard to the relevant planning guidance and policies, site history and other planning considerations, the main issues in relation to your enquiry are:

1)The principle of the proposed development
2)Context of site, design and external spaces
3)The impact on residential amenity
4)Biodiversity
5)Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows
6)Highway safety, car and cycle parking
7)Planning obligations

1)The principle of the proposed development

The proposal is for the erection of a new build single occupancy dwelling on arable land, to

the north-east of 64 Meadow Road Great Gransden. The plot is approximately a quarter of a mile west of Great Gransden Village.

Local Plan Policy LP2: Strategy for Development, sets out the overarching development strategy for Huntingdonshire through the plan period. The main objectives pertinent to this application are to:

- Concentrate development in locations which provide, or have the potential to provide, the most comprehensive range of services and facilities;
- Protect the character of existing settlements and recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the surrounding countryside;
- Conserve and enhance the historic environment.

Great Gransden is defined as a Small Settlement under Policy LP9 of the Local Plan. Policy LP9 (Small Settlements) states:
Development Proposals within the Built-up Area
A proposal that is located within a built-up area of a Small Settlement will be supported where the amount and location of development proposed is sustainable in relation to the:
a. level of service and infrastructure provision within the settlement;
b. opportunities for users of the proposed development to access everyday services and facilities by sustainable modes of travel including walking, cycling and public transport;
c. effect on the character of the immediate locality and the settlement as a whole.

Development Proposals on Land well-related to the Built-up Area
A proposal for development on land well-related to the built-up area may be supported where it accords with the specific opportunities allowed for through other policies of this plan.

The definition of land well-related to the built-up area is defined as a distinct group of 30 or more homes. Land which relates more to the group of buildings rather than to the surrounding countryside is also considered to form part of the built-up area.

The application site is situated within open rural farmland, away from the built-up centre of Great Gransden village. The location plan shows an accessway of approximately 150 metres from the public highway to the property. It is noted that within the local area the isolated properties are set closer to the public highway within generous plots.

Having regard to the use and character of the site, it is considered that the land relates more closely to the surrounding countryside than to the scattered properties along Meadow Road. The long accessway to the property further emphasises the closer relationship with the countryside. It appears physically, functionally and visually part of the open countryside. In addition, given the distance away from the main built-up part of the village, it is considered that the proposal falls outside of the built-up area.

Therefore the proposal does not accord with LP9 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (2019) in this regard.

As the site is within the open countryside, Officers have given consideration to LP10 (The Countryside) which is discussed below.

LP10 The Countryside states:

Development in the countryside will be restricted to the limited and specific opportunities as provided for in other policies of this plan.
All development in the countryside must:

a. seek to use land of lower agricultural value in preference to land of higher agricultural value:
i. avoiding the irreversible loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land (Grade 1 to 3a) where possible, and
ii. avoiding Grade 1 agricultural land unless there are exceptional circumstances where the benefits of the proposal significantly outweigh the loss of land;
b. recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside; and
c. not give rise to noise, odour, obtrusive light or other impacts that would adversely affect the use and enjoyment of the countryside by others.

With regard to LP10, the application site consists of Grade 2 Arable land, with no.64 to the south-west of the site. The proposed property is set within the application site, approximately 150 metres from the public highway. As such it does not follow the development pattern of the existing dwellings and is located within a rural setting, surrounded by farmland. It is considered that the resulting development could give rise to obtrusive light within the rural setting.

Part b. of Policy LP10 states that development proposal should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. No photographs have been provided of the wider site and Google Earth images show the site to be of open countryside, characterising the site as a rural green setting and natural environment. The site relates strongly to the surrounding farmland and is viewed separately from residential development to the east by virtue of the area of open countryside, providing a visually distinct site from that which is viewed as residential land.

It is considered that the development would be out of context with the rural, green character of the application site. The introduction of residential development, hardstanding and other residential paraphernalia on this site would be out of character in the area and fail to recognise the intrinsic beauty of the countryside. The siting would result in the erosion of the open countryside and due to the design would be a prominent feature isolated from other properties. The proposal would therefore conflict with Policy LP10 part b.

In terms of part c. of Policy LP10, it is considered that the proposed dwelling would sit as a single structure within the countryside, away from neighbouring properties and would unlikely lead to significant loss of views, overshadowing and overbearing impacts to any neighbour.

Whilst this proposal would result in the introduction of further development, as a single domestic dwelling, it is unlikely to give significant rise to any of the factors in part c. However, it is considered that the design and siting of the proposal does not accord with part b and therefore the proposal does not accord with LP10 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (2019) in this regard.

Policy LP10 (The Countryside) of the Local Plan to 2036 provides guidance on the countryside and states that development in the countryside will be restricted to the limited opportunities as provided for in other policies of this plan. The proposed development for residential dwellings does not accord with the opportunities for development in the countryside provided for by other policies of the Local Plan in support of LP10 as set out on paragraph 4.110 of the Local Plan (LP19 'Rural Economy', LP20 'Homes for Rural Workers', LP23 'Tourism and Recreation' and LP28 'Rural Exceptions Housing').

LP20 Homes for Rural Workers and LP33 Rural Buildings does not apply to this application as there is no indication that the dwelling is required for rural workers. Further there is no existing agricultural building on the application site and therefore LP33 does not apply. No evidence has been put forward for compliance with LP28 Rural Exceptions Housing.

Overall, it is considered that the proposal does not meet any specific criteria set out in the Huntingdonshire Local Plan Policies, LP2 Strategy for Development, LP9 Small Settlements and LP10 The Countryside.

It is therefore the view of the Local Planning Authority that the proposal is unacceptable in principle.

2)Context of site, design and external spaces

Policy LP11 of the Local Plan to 2036 states that a proposal will be supported where it is demonstrated that it responds positively to its context and has drawn inspiration from the key characteristics of its surroundings to help create distinctive, high quality and well-designed places.

Policy LP12 of the Local Plan to 2036 states that a proposal will be supported where it can be demonstrated that it contributes positively to the area's character and identity, creates attractive and appropriately scaled built frontages and enables the wider area to achieve a coherent and integrated built form.

Policy LP14: Amenity promotes a standard of amenity for future occupiers and users, to ensure that the physical environment created by new developments is protected.

The proposal is for a single dwelling house, consisting of several two storey long buildings joined by link structures. The buildings give the appearance of agricultural barns. The property is positioned at the end of an accessway measuring approximately 150 metres from the public highway. Due to the proposed location, the development will present as stark structures within the open countryside.

There are a few isolated detached properties located along Meadow Road, set within generous plots and with a closer relationship to the public highway. The proposed development for a single dwelling is set within a relatively small plot for the proposed size of the dwelling, with a long driveway access. The area of private amenity space relative to the size of the proposed property is not considered to reflect the general character of the immediate area. Therefore, it is considered that the proposed siting of the dwelling is out of character for the area and the scale of the development in relation to the size of the plot gives the perception of a cramped proposal, that would be out of keeping with the more spacious character of the area.

As the principle of development has not been supported, the Urban Design Team was not consulted as part of this application. Any future application should be supported with full details of external materials to be used for the proposed development.

The introduction of a new dwelling within this site would be uncharacteristic of the existing dwellings relationship with the public highway, introducing development further into the countryside and representing encroachment into the countryside. It is therefore considered that the development would fail to respond to or contribute positively to the area’s character and identity, contrary to Policies LP11 and LP12 of Huntingdonshire’s Local Plan to 2036 and Parts 2.1 and 2.2 of the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD (2017).

3)The impact on residential amenity

Local Plan Policy LP14: Amenity promotes a standard of amenity for future occupiers and users, to ensure that the physical environment created by new developments is protected.

Please note that a full assessment on the potential impact on amenity cannot be made until such time as a planning application is submitted and consultations with neighbours undertaken.

A site visit hasn't been undertaken at this stage so a full assessment would need to be taken at formal application stage to assess the impacts on residential amenity for neighbouring properties. However, due to the location of the property, its orientation and separation distance with the neighbouring property to the south-west, it is likely that the residential amenity of neighbouring properties would not be significantly impacted. It, therefore, would broadly accord with Policy LP14 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036.

Occupiers of neighbouring properties have not been formally consulted. Any advice provided in relation to residential amenity impact is therefore subject to change following a consideration of any consultation responses received as part of any planning application.
Where a site visit has not taken place, the comments provided may not address all relevant planning issues. As part of the consideration of any planning application, the case officer will visit the site.

It is strongly advised that you discuss the proposal with any adjacent neighbours to resolve any issues that they may have prior to an application being made. This is good practice and can avoid unnecessary delay in processing a planning application.

4)Biodiversity

Local Plan Policy LP30: Biodiversity and Geodiversity sets out the requirements of proposals to demonstrate that all potential adverse impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity have been investigated. A proposal should show no net loss in biodiversity and provide a net gain where possible.

It is noted that the proposals would result in the loss of agricultural land and therefore appropriate replacement planting will be required to ensure that there is no net loss in biodiversity.

Any future application should also be supported with a hard and soft landscaping plan.

5)Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows

Local Plan Policy LP31: Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows states that a proposal will be required to demonstrate that the potential for adverse impacts on trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows has been investigated. Where investigations show that such adverse impacts are possible a statement will be required that:

a. assesses all trees, woodland, hedges, and hedgerows that would be affected by the proposal, describing and assessing their value;
b. sets out how the details of the proposal have been decided upon in terms of their impact on the value of trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows and how adverse impacts will be avoided as far as possible, or if unavoidable how they will be minimised as far as possible.

A proposal will only be supported where it seeks to conserve and enhance any existing tree, woodland, hedge or hedgerow of value that would be affected by the proposed development. In such cases the proposal will be expected to make reference to and follow the guidance contained in the Council's 'A Tree Strategy for Huntingdonshire (2015)' or successor documents.

Aerial images of the application site show hedging along the western boundary, however

there is no clear view of whether there are any trees on the site. In addition, it is not clear from the submitted information what the proposed boundary treatments would be. Any proposed replacement should be sensitive and appropriate for the rural setting of the site.

Any future application should be supported with an Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Tree Protection Plan. The HDC Arboricultural Officer will be consulted regarding any protection measures required within the site.

6)Highway safety, car and cycle parking

Local Plan Policy LP17: Parking Provision and Vehicle Movement sets out the requirement for new developments to provide sufficient space and parking provision to meet the needs of users to minimise the impact on neighbouring uses.

Policy LP17 requires justification for the amount of parking to be provided. It is noted that two parking spaces are shown on the site plan. Any future application will need to provide a tracking plan to demonstrate that cars can exit in forward gear. Cambridgeshire County Highways will be consulted on any application.

Please note that the Local Highway Authority is not consulted as part of pre-application enquiry; they have their own pre-application service see: Highways development - Cambridgeshire County Council

7)Water Efficiency

Any future application for planning permission for a dwelling at the site would need to confirm compliance with the 'optional Building Regulation' requirement for water efficiency in Approved Document G, as set out in criteria j. of Policy LP12 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036.

8)Accessible and Adaptable Homes

Policy LP25 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 states that proposals for housing will be supported where they meet the 'optional Building Regulation' requirement M4(2) 'accessible and adaptable homes'. Unless it can be demonstrated that site specific factors make this impractical or unviable. Any future application would need to confirm compliance with this regulation.

9)Bin UU

Any application must be accompanied by a satisfactory completed unilateral undertaking for the provision of wheeled bins in accordance with the Developer Contributions SPD (2011) and Policy LP4 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036. This would be required prior to any grant of approval.

10)Planning Obligations

The development would be liable to pay the Community Infrastructure Levy. Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) became a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Authority on the 1st May 2012. The Council is obliged to collect the levy from liable parties once development that received planning permission on or after the 1st May 2012 commences. Full details are available here. A CIL calculator is available here.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there are fundamental issues with the principle of development.

If an formal application were to be submitted, officers would not support the proposal.

This pre-application advice is given for purposes relating to the Town and Country Planning Acts and for no other Council function and is given without reference to statutory or other consultees, except where stated. The Local Planning Authority will not be responsible for any errors resulting from inaccuracies in that information. The advice relates to the policy framework at the time the advice is given which may subsequently be affected by external factors (e.g. new government guidance, local appeal decisions, policy review). The Local Planning Authority seeks to provide the best advice possible on any enquiry received, however, the advice is without prejudice and does not bind the authority to any particular decision on any planning application that may subsequently be submitted which will be the subject of publicity and consultation.

Other matters:
If a planning application is received, I would expect to consult the following:

- Adjoining landowners and adjacent neighbours/ occupiers
- Great Gransden Parish Council
- HDC Arboricultural Officer
- CCC Highways Department

Application requirements:
Our website details all the documents that would be required to support such a proposal and we have a local list of validation requirements: Guidance, Checklists and Advice Notes - Huntingdonshire.gov.uk

The documents I consider would be required to accompany a full planning application for the site include the following:

- Plans and details of the proposals as per national requirements;
- Design and access statement;
- Planning statement;
- Demonstration of biodiversity net gain;
- Parking details (can be included within Planning Statement);
- Landscaping details
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan
- Bin UU

Further advice
If you require further advice, please contact me using the details above. Any significant change to the proposal will require a further pre-application submission.

Additional Information

Occupiers of neighbouring properties have not been formally consulted. Any advice provided in relation to residential amenity impact is therefore subject to change following a consideration of any consultation responses received as part of any planning application.

Where a site visit has not taken place the comments provided may not address all relevant planning issues. As part of the consideration of any planning application, the case officer will visit the site.

It is strongly advised that you discuss the proposal with any adjacent neighbours to resolve any issues that they may have prior to an application being made. This is good practice and can avoid unnecessary delay in processing a planning application.

This pre-application advice is given for purposes relating to the Town and Country Planning Acts and for no other Council function and is given without reference to statutory or other consultees, except where stated. The Local Planning Authority will not be responsible for any errors resulting from inaccuracies in that information. The advice relates to the policy framework at the time the advice is given which may subsequently be affected by external factors (e.g. new government guidance, local appeal decisions, policy review). The Local Planning Authority seeks to provide the best advice possible on any enquiry received, however, the advice is without prejudice and does not bind the authority to any particular decision on any planning application that may subsequently be submitted which will be the subject of publicity and consultation.

Feedback Request

We would value your feedback regarding the pre-app advice you have received. This will help us understand your experience and improve the service we deliver.

If you can spare 5 mins to offer your feedback, please use the link below:
https://forms.office.com/e/4S8b40VcjE

Further advice

If you require further advice please contact me using the details above. Any significant change to the proposal will require a further pre-application submission.

Yours faithfully

Olivia Manton
Development Management Officer

Email: Olivia.Manton@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Direct dial: 8346

Appendix 2 – Pre-application Response (26/70061/PREAPP)

Our Ref: 26/70061/PREAPP
Portal Ref: KCNRZMBJ

29 September 2026

Huntingdonshire DISTRICT COUNCIL

Tom Kilvert
Brown & Co
CC6A
Clifton Court
Clifton Road
Cambridge
CB1 7BN

Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street
Huntingdon. PE29 3TN

Dear Sir/Madam

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Application for Pre-application Advice

Site address: Land At Junction off Park Riddey And Meadow Road Great Gransden

Your client: Ben Merrill

Overall Response: Unacceptable in principle or lacks essential information to make an assessment

Proposed development

PRE-APPLICATION ENQUIRY FOR THE ERECTION OF ONE SELF-BUILD DETACHED DWELLING, WITH ASSOCIATED ACCESS AND LANDSCAPING

Actions

I have sought specialist advice from the following officers:
Conservation Team

Pre-application Planning advice

I have assessed your pre-application proposal against relevant policies, the site history and from my understanding of the site constraints and its opportunities. I summarise my response to the key issues in the table below:

Issue	Summary response	RAG
Principle	The proposal is considered unacceptable in principle.	RED

	The site is currently in agricultural use and is separated from the settlement of Great Gransden via its vegetative boundary, public right of way to the eastern side and the B1046. The site is also outside of the defined built-up area set out within Policy G1 of the Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan. While the site is understood to be located to the edge of an existing settlement, the site is not considered to be physically well-related to the settlement and does not fall within any of the specific forms of development supported by Local Plan Policies LP9 or LP10 or Policy S5 of the NPPF. It is appreciated that the proposal would deliver an additional self-build dwelling and contribute to housing supply when the district has an unmet need. However, officers consider that the benefits do not outweigh the harm arising from residential encroachment into an undeveloped agricultural field and the resulting conflict with the Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan, The Huntingdonshire Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework in this instance.	
Flood Risk	The site lies within Flood Zone 1 and is not affected by fluvial flood risk. A low to moderate groundwater flood risk has been identified and any future application would be required to demonstrate that flood risk can be appropriately managed.	AMBER
Design and Heritage impact	Significant concerns are raised regarding the impact on the character and appearance of the countryside and settlement edge. The proposal would urbanise part of an open agricultural field that contributes positively to the rural approach to the village and the transition between settlement and countryside. The proposal would also cause harm to the setting of the adjacent Great Gransden Conservation Area and nearby listed buildings.	RED
Residential amenity	No fundamental concerns identified at this stage. Subject to the submission of detailed plans and suitable design, it is likely that acceptable relationships could be achieved between the proposed dwelling and neighbouring occupiers. .	AMBER
Environmental impacts (biodiversity /trees)	Further ecological information is required. Existing boundary hedgerows and vegetation are likely to have ecological value and should be retained wherever	AMBER

	possible. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and any recommended surveys would be required. Existing boundary vegetation contributes positively to the landscape character and ecological value of the site. Further arboricultural information is required, although impacts may potentially be mitigated through careful design and retention of key landscape features.	
Highway safety and car and cycle parking	No fundamental highway safety objection is identified at this stage. However, the acceptability of the proposed access arrangement cannot be confirmed in the absence of detailed access plans and consultation with the Local Highway Authority.	AMBER

Green: Acceptable
Amber: Requires amendment, further information and/or site visit
Red: Unacceptable in principle or lacks essential information to make an assessment.

The broadly-rectangular preapplication site comprises approximately 0.8 hectares and comprises agricultural land located north of Meadow Road and west of Hall Farm Lane, Great Gransden. The land forms part of an open field parcel that extends northwards into the surrounding countryside. Aerial imagery of the site shows the site to feature a raised grass verge to the Meadow Road frontage with a post and wire fence to the front boundary, with mature trees and hedging to the eastern boundary and online street level imagery (dated September 2008 - August 2024) in indicates the site to be actively used for crop farming. However, please note that site visits are not undertaken as part of the application service, and it is appreciated that the submitted supporting statement which is more up to date shows the site frontage to have a new hedgerow planted to the southern frontage.

While open countryside abuts the site to the northern rear and western side, opposite Meadow Row on the other side of the B1046 lies a row of three dwellings while to the west lies an unmetalled track designated as a Public Right of Way (footpath 104/8) which runs from Meadow Road north-eastwards and separates the site from Hall Farm Lane and the residential dwellings sited there.

The site is situated to the east of Great Gransden outside the built-up area and immediately abuts the Great Gransden Conservation Area to the south frontage and partly to the east. 33 Meadow Road, a domestic property (also known as Elm Cottage) sits immediately opposite the site is a Grade II listed building.

The site is approximately 5.8 miles southeast of the market town of St. Neots and 11 miles west of the city of Cambridge.

The site is located within flood zone 1 and is not at risk of any groundwater or surface water flooding based on the Environment Agency Maps for Flooding and on the Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) maps 2024.

The site does not hold nor is within close proximity to any legally protected trees.

The site is wholly within agricultural land class Grade 2.

The site sits within the Great Gransden neighbourhood plan area, according to the Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan (2023), but is outside of the defined built up area.

The preapplication proposal seeks the local authority's advice for the erection of one self-build detached dwelling, with associated access and landscaping

The submission is accompanied by the following documents:
-Location Plan
-Site Layout Plan
-Cover Letter (updated 2nd September 2026).

Detailed Response

The below advice is provided following a meeting at the Huntingdonshire Council Offices attended by the applicant, the applicants' agents from Brown and Co and planning officers from Huntingdonshire District Council on 14th September 2026.

Any formal application would be assessed against relevant planning policies of The National Planning Policy Framework 2026 (NPPF) as well as local planning policies, namely the adopted Development Plan which includes the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and the Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan (2023). The proposal would also be required to accord with a number of supplementary planning documents and guidance. These are set out below.

The National Planning Policy Framework (17th August 2026)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (August 2026) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and is a material consideration in determining planning applications.

The Framework confirms that planning decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan and the national decision-making policies in the Framework should be approved without delay.

The NPPF 2026 also sets out the Government's planning policies (amongst other things):
-delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
-building a strong, competitive economy;
-achieving well-designed, beautiful and safe places;
-conserving and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment.

The application is located outside of the built-up area of Great Gransden and is therefore assessed principally against Policy S5 (S5: Principle of Development Outside Settlements), together with the relevant national decision-making policies relating to design, housing delivery, sustainable transport, flood risk, biodiversity, pollution and heritage.

Key national decision-making policies relevant to this proposal include:
- S3-Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development and Principle of Development Within Settlements;
- S5: Principle of Development Outside Settlements;

- HO7: Meeting the Need for Homes;
- L2-L3: Making Effective Use of Land and Achieving Appropriate Densities;
- DP3: Key Principles for Well-Designed Places;
- TR3 and TR4: Locating Development in Sustainable Locations and Street Design, Access and Parking;
- TR8: Public Rights of Way,
- P3 and P4: Living Conditions and Pollution;
- F7 and F8: Ensuring Development is Safe from Flooding and Sustainable Drainage Systems;
- N2 and N3: Improving the Natural Environment and Trees in New Development.
- HE4: Securing the Conservation of Heritage Assets.
- HE5: Assessing Effects on Heritage Assets.
- HE6: Proposals Affecting Designated Heritage Assets.
- HE9: Conservation Areas.

Planning Practice Guidance and the National Design Guide are also relevant and material.

For full details visit the government website: https://gov.uk

Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (adopted May 2019)

-Policy LP1 - Amount of Development
-Policy LP2 – Strategy for Development
-Policy LP3 – Green Infrastructure
-Policy LP4 – Contributing to Infrastructure Delivery
-Policy LP5 – Flood Risk
-Policy LP9 – Small Settlements
-Policy LP10 – The Countryside
-Policy LP11 – Design Context
-Policy LP12 – Design Implementation
-Policy LP14 – Amenity
-Policy LP15 – Surface Water
-Policy LP16 - Sustainable Travel
-Policy LP17 – Parking Provision and Vehicle Movement
-Policy LP30 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity
-Policy LP31 – Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows
-Policy LP34 – Heritage Assets and their Settings

Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan (2023)

-Policy G1 – A Built-Up Area Boundary Strategy for Great Gransden
-Policy G3 – Local Character and Design
-Policy G4 – Development, Landscape Character and Valued Views
-Policy G5 – Conserving and Enhancing Great Gransdens Conservation Area
-Policy G6 – Protecting and enhancing biodiversity in the parish including at Gransden Woods
-Policy G8 – Development and Open Space Requirements
-Policy G9 – Public Rights of Way Network
-Policy G10 – A walkable village and reducing car use

Supplementary Planning Documents / Guidance

-Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017)
-Developer Contributions SPD (2011)

-Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment (2022)
-Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2024)
-Huntingdonshire Tree Guidance Note 3

Local policies are viewable at https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Relevant Planning History

No relevant planning history associated with the site.

Consultations

Formal consultations with internal HDC consultees have not been undertaken as part of this preapplication. Informal consultation with the councils Historic and Conservation Officer have taken place and their views are provided within this response.

As is standard, consultations with external consultees have not been undertaken as part of this preapplication.

Planning Issues

The main matters for consideration for this preapplication enquiry response relate to:
-The Principle of Development
-Design, Visual Amenity & impact on the Character of the Area including Heritage Impact
-Residential Amenity
-Highway Safety, Parking Provision and Access
-Flood Risk
-Ecology
-Trees
-Accessible and adaptable homes
-Water Efficiency
-Waste
-CIL

Principle of Development

The preapplication site comprises approximately 0.08 hectares and comprises open farmland with vegetative boundaries to the east and south sited to the east of the settlement of Great Gransden.

The proposed development seeks the erection of a single self-build dwelling on land at the junction of Hall Farm Lane and Meadow Road, Great Gransden. The principal issue is whether the site represents an appropriate location for new residential development having regard to the Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan, The Huntingdonshire Local Plan (The Local Plan) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The site lies outside the Built-Up Area identified within the Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan and comprises undeveloped agricultural land forming part of a wider field parcel on the edge of the settlement.

It should also be noted that the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 does not define settlement

boundaries but provides guidance in paragraph 4.85 to help interpret whether a site falls within or outside the built-up area. In this case, the site is considered to be excluded from the built-up area as it comprises open undeveloped land which is physically and visually detached from the built-up area to the east and south by an established tree band and hedgerow and a designated public right of way to the east and the B1046 to the south. In addition, with regard to the built-up area guidance within the Local Plan, the site is also considered to be excluded from the built-up area as it immediately adjoins the Great Gransden Conservation Area to the front and partially to the eastern side and is opposite a Grade II listed building. The site therefore affords important views from a public vantage point to or from a listed building or conservation area connecting these designations to its countryside setting.

Policy LP9 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan (2019) supports development within the built-up area of Small Settlements where it is sustainable in relation to the services and infrastructure available, opportunities for sustainable travel, and the character of the settlement. Similarly, Policy LP9 supports development on land well-related to the built-up area where it accords with the specific opportunities allowed for through other policies in this plan which include LP19 (Rural Economy), LP22 (Local Services and Community Facilities), LP23 (Tourism and Recreation), LP28 (Rural Exceptions Housing), LP33 (Rural Buildings) and LP38 (Water Related Development). While Great Gransden is identified as a Small Settlement within the Local Plan, the site is considered to be an edge of settlement location but not well-related to the built-up area and does not accord with any limited and specific opportunities supported by other Local Plan policies. The proposal therefore does not benefit from policy support under LP9.

The proposal is in the countryside and therefore must be assessed against Local Plan Policy LP10 (The Countryside). This policy states:

Development in the countryside will be restricted to the limited and specific opportunities as provided for in other policies of this plan. All development in the countryside must:

a. seek to use land of lower agricultural value in preference to land of higher agricultural value:
i. avoiding the irreversible loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land (Grade 1 to 3a) where possible, and
ii. avoiding Grade 1 agricultural land unless there are exceptional circumstances where the benefits of the proposal significantly outweigh the loss of land;
b. recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside; and
c. not give rise to noise, odour, obtrusive light or other impacts that would adversely affect the use and enjoyment of the countryside by others.

The proposal does not comprise a form of development specifically supported by countryside policies such as rural worker accommodation, rural exception housing, tourism development, rural business development or the conversion of an existing rural building. As such, the proposal is not considered to represent one of the exceptions acceptable to the Local Plan.

In relation to criterion (a), the application site comprises approximately 0.08 hectares of Grade 2 agricultural land. Whilst it is acknowledged that the district contains a significant proportion of high-quality agricultural land, with only around 15% classified as Grade 1, Grade 2 land nevertheless remains a valuable agricultural resource. The development would therefore result in the irreversible loss of agricultural land and would have some conflict with Policy LP10(a).

Any future planning application would therefore need to be supported by a robust planning statement demonstrating the exceptional circumstances in which the benefits of the proposal

would significantly outweigh the loss of this land.

In terms of Local Plan Policy LP10 part (b), the application site comprises an undeveloped parcel of agricultural land situated outside the built-up area of Great Gransden. The land forms part of a wider field on the settlement edge which is visually and physically separated from the built-up area via a hedgerow to the south and a tree line to the east which separates the site from a public right of way. It is considered that the site contributes positively to the setting of the listed building to the south and the Great Gransden Conservation Area which also immediately adjoins the site to the south. The site also currently experienced as open agricultural land and makes a positive contribution to the character of the settlement edge and provides a clear and positive visual transition and juxtaposition between the established built form, public right of way, heritage asset setting and the surrounding countryside.

The submitted proposal would introduce a new dwelling, domestic curtilage, access arrangements, hardstanding, domestic boundary treatments and associated residential activity onto land that presently exhibits a strongly rural and agricultural character. Whilst the proposal relates to a single dwelling, the introduction of residential development in this location would nevertheless urbanise part of the field and extend built form into an area that currently reads as countryside. This would erode the existing distinction between the village and the wider rural landscape.

Viewed from Meadow Road and the adjacent Public Right of Way, the field presently contributes to the rural approach to the village and provides openness that is characteristic of this part of the settlement. The proposed dwelling would alter that experience through the introduction of built form and domestic features into an open field parcel, resulting in a harmful encroachment into the countryside.

The Local Plan recognises that the countryside performs an important role in maintaining the district's landscape character and rural identity. Paragraphs 4.109 to 4.113 explain that development proposals should protect the character and tranquillity of the countryside and should not adversely affect opportunities for others to use and enjoy it. The policy seeks to ensure that development respects the rural qualities that distinguish the countryside from the built environment. It is overall considered that the introduction of built for at this location would be contrary to part c of Local Plan Policy LP10.

In regard to part (c) of Policy LP10, it is acknowledged that the introduction of residential development in this location may give rise to some environmental and amenity impacts. However, given no plans or elevations have been submitted, this cannot be rigorously assessed. However, it is considered that the siting of the proposal would have a detrimental impact to how the public right of way would be experienced to a degree although it is accepted that no elevations have been submitted and an assessment of the tree line to the east would be assessed via a site visit at formal planning application stage.

Overall, officers are not persuaded that the proposal would recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. Instead, the development would introduce a suburban form of development into a currently undeveloped agricultural field and diminish the contribution that the site presently makes to the rural character of the settlement edge. Accordingly, officers consider that the proposal would conflict with Policies LP10 (b) and (c) of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan and is therefore unacceptable.

Any future planning application would therefore need to be supported by a robust planning

statement demonstrating how the proposals would overcome the conflict with Local Plan Policy LP10, especially parts b and c.

Notwithstanding the above, NPPF Annex D requires local planning authorities to identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing land. The current identified housing supply in Huntingdonshire is approximately 4,345 homes equivalent to 3.68 years' supply within a five year housing trajectory. As the Council cannot currently demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing land, Local Plan policies relating to the supply and location of housing attract reduced weight.

Policy S3 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2026 (NPPF) sets out that decisions on development proposals should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development and outside settlements Policy S5 should be applied (1b). As such, Policy S5 of the NPPF (Principle of development outside settlements) and is relevant.

Policy S5 is concerned with the principle of development outside of settlements, stating that only certain forms of development should be approved outside settlements as set out within an accompanying list of defined circumstances unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects. Relevant to this application is development set out within part j of S5 which states:

(j): Development which would address an evidenced unmet need (including, but not limited to, development proposals involving the provision of housing where the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites or scores below 75% in the most recent Housing Delivery Test[27]), and where the development would:
i. Be physically well-related to an existing settlement[28] (unless the nature of the development would make this inappropriate) and be of a scale which can be accommodated taking into account the existing or proposed availability of infrastructure; or
ii. Comprise major development for freight and logistics purposes which accords with policy E3.

Given the context and consideration of the site as set out within the assessment of Local Plan Policies LP9 and LP10 above, the Local Planning Authority do not consider the site to be physically well-related to the settlement. Officers recognise that the proposal would contribute to the district's housing supply at a time when the Council cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. The delivery of an additional dwelling, including a self-build dwelling, is therefore a material benefit that attracts moderate weight in favour of the proposal. Nevertheless, the benefits arising from the provision of a single dwelling are considered insufficient to outweigh the identified harm resulting from the introduction of residential development into an open agricultural field beyond the built-up area of Great Gransden, together with the resulting impact on the character and appearance of the countryside, nearby heritage assets and the rural edge of the settlement. Whilst the applicant's personal and familial connection to Great Gransden is noted, this is not considered to override the conflict identified with the Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan, the Local Plan and Policy S5(j) of the NPPF when taken as a whole.

The applicant's submission refers to the wider land parcel having been considered through the recent Land Availability Assessment (LAA) prepared by Huntingdonshire District Council which identified the wider parcel of land as potentially appropriate for development. Officers have had regard to this assessment. The current site forms part of a larger 1.93ha site known within the LAA as ‘Great Gransden 6: Land adjacent to Meadow Road and Hall Farm Road, Great Gransden’ and encompasses further land to the east and south. The LAA noted that the site

was detached from the main built form with a dense treeline limiting views into the site and there would be landscape impacts to consider if permitting development here. The LAA also identified that a key constraint is the absence of an existing vehicular access, noting that access could potentially be achieved from Meadow Road (B1046), but would require removal of sections of existing boundary vegetation and assessment of impacts on highway safety, biodiversity and landscape character. Another key constraint was that the site lies immediately opposite the Great Gransden Conservation Area and within the setting of nearby listed buildings. Any access works or development would likely require the removal or alteration of vegetation that currently contributes to the setting of these heritage assets. The sustainability appraisal concluded that the site was potentially appropriate for built development subject to effective master planning to ensure integration with surrounding heritage assets but was not taken forward within the Preferred Options Local Plan. While the above LAA assessment deemed the site potentially appropriate for development, it should be noted that Land Availability Assessments are evidence-gathering exercises and did not allocate land for development within the Preferred Options Local Plan, did not establish the acceptability of development in principle, nor overrides local or national planning policy. The inclusion of land within a Land Availability Assessment and its appraisal therefore attracts limited weight in this assessment and it is noted that the site is not without constraints, nor was it deemed explicitly acceptable for development.

For the reasons outlined above, the Local Planning Authority has significant concerns regarding the principle of residential development at this location. The proposal is not considered to accord with the spatial strategy of the development plan, would result in the extension of residential development into the countryside beyond the built-up area of Great Gransden, and would involve the loss of good agricultural land and would have some detrimental impact to the adjacent public right of way. As submitted, the proposal has not demonstrated the exceptional circumstances necessary to justify development in its countryside location. Officers therefore consider that the proposal would be contrary to Policies LP9, LP10, LP11 and LP12 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036, Policy G1 of the Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan, and Policy S5 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Design, Visual Amenity and impact on the Character of the Area

The site directly abuts the Great Gransden Conservation area to the south which also runs to the front western side boundary. In addition, 33 Meadow Road (also known as Elm Cottage), which sits on the opposite side of the B1046 is a grade II listed building.

Section 16(2) of the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990 (as amended) requires special regard to be had to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Section 66 of the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990 states that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Section 72 of the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990 (as amended) states that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

Policies LP11 and LP12 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 state that developments should respond positively to their context, draw inspiration from the key characteristics of its

surroundings and contribute positively to the area's character and identity.

Policy LP34 states that a proposal within, affecting the setting of, or affecting views into or out of, a conservation area should preserve, and wherever possible enhance, features that contribute positively to the area's character, appearance and setting as set out in character statements or other applicable documents.

Policy HE6, para. 1 of the NPPF set out that 'When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance'. Policy HE6, para. 3 states that 'Any harm to a designated heritage asset will be a matter of considerable importance and weight, which should be dealt with in accordance with paragraphs 4 to 6 of this policy'.

It has been established above that the site forms part of an undeveloped, open agricultural field located outside the built-up area of Great Gransden, occupying a prominent edge-of-settlement at the western entrance into the village with its rural character contributing positively to the transition between the existing built form of the village, nearby heritage assets and the surrounding countryside. To summarise the above assessment, the Local Planning Authority would seek to resist a dwelling on this site as it would encroach into the countryside and cause an unacceptable level of landscape and enjoyment of the countryside harm.

The grain of surrounding development reflects its rural location primarily comprised of detached dwellings on spacious plots set back from the highway. Buildings in the near vicinity have pitched roofs and gables and are brick or rendered with limited instances of timber cladding. The supporting statement acknowledges that there are a mix of architectural styles and form in the locale, and officers regard the local vernacular to reflect a rural character.

It is noted that no floorplans or elevations have been submitted as part of the application and therefore aspects such as design, scale and massing are unknown. A submitted Site Layout Plan shows an indicative position of the proposed dwelling, proposed driveway and access located to the south on Meadow Road and a proposed landscape buffer surrounding the site. The submitted supporting statement sets out that any dwelling on the site would likely comprise an interpretation of a traditional agricultural building using black timber cladding, simple roof forms and a restrained materials palette.

The proposal would introduce a dwelling, domestic curtilage, access, hardstanding and associated domestic activity into a currently open field, extending built form beyond the established edge of the village and resulting in the urbanisation of land that presently displays a strong rural character. The proposal would therefore fail to recognise and respond appropriately to its landscape setting and would harm the character and appearance of the locality. The supporting statement argues that landscaping would contain the site, however, given the development would encroach into the countryside, it is felt that landscaping could not remedy the loss of the countryside edge in this instance.

Policy DP3 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires development proposals to respond positively to their context and integrate with and enhance their surroundings. Policy N2 requires decision-makers to consider landscape character, the natural beauty of the countryside and the conservation of existing natural features, including hedgerows and landscape structure. Officers consider that the proposal would fail to satisfactorily integrate with

its surroundings and would diminish the contribution that the site currently makes to the rural edge of the settlement.

In heritage terms, the site lies immediately opposite the Great Gransden Conservation Area and within the setting of a Grade II listed building, namely Elm Cottage which sits opposite the site approximately 35 metres south. Whilst the site is located outside the designated conservation area boundary, it does immediately adjoin it and the sites access would intersect through it. The sites proximity to these assets and character as an open field contributes to the rural setting in which these heritage assets are experienced. The removal of sections of boundary vegetation to facilitate access, together with the introduction of built development and domestic activity, would reduce the degree of openness currently experienced on this approach to the historic core of the village and would in turn detrimentally impact the open countryside setting of both the Great Gransden Conservation area and the Grade II listed building opposite the site.

Policies LP34 of the Local Plan and HE4, HE5, HE6 and HE9 of the NPPF require decision-makers to conserve heritage assets and their settings in a manner appropriate to their significance. Officers consider that the proposal would result in harm to designated heritage assets and that the development would detract from the rural setting of the adjacent conservation area and nearby listed building and would cause a degree of cumulative harm when considered against the countryside and visual impacts of the proposal. Any future application would therefore need to be supported by a proportionate Heritage Statement assessing the contribution made by the site to the significance and setting of those heritage assets.

Overall, officers consider that the proposal would adversely affect the character and appearance of the countryside, erode the rural edge of Great Gransden, and result in some harm to the setting of nearby heritage assets. The proposal is therefore considered contrary to Policies LP10, LP11, LP12 and LP34 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan and Policies DP3, N2, HE4, HE5, HE6 and HE9 of the NPPF (2026). The proposal would also conflict with ss. 16, 66 & 72 of the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990 and policies G3 and G5 of the Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan, the latter of which requires development proposals will not be supported where there would be a significant adverse impact upon views into, out of and within the Great Gransden Conservation Area (as shown on Figure 8), where these views include features of heritage value.

As the application site rises to the rear, it is recommended that any future application is accompanied with finished floor level plans informed by topographical data.

A future application should also be accompanied with a proposed material schedule. It was discussed in the pre-application meeting that the preferred materials should comprise brick and/or pale render, as prevalent in the nearby street scene.

Residential Amenity

Policy LP14 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan requires development proposals to provide a high standard of amenity for both future occupiers and neighbouring residents by avoiding unacceptable impacts arising from overlooking, loss of privacy, overshadowing, overbearing relationships, noise and disturbance.

National policy adopts a similar approach. Policy DP3 of the NPPF requires development proposals to create well-designed places that support healthy and liveable environments, whilst

Policy P3 requires development proposals to provide healthy living conditions for occupiers and to avoid unacceptable adverse effects on the quality of life of neighbouring residents and users.

Based on the information submitted, officers do not raise any fundamental concerns regarding residential amenity. The site adjoins existing residential development to the south and east; however, the indicative layout suggests that sufficient separation distances could be achieved between the proposed dwelling and neighbouring properties. Subject to the final siting, scale, orientation and detailed design of the dwelling, it is considered likely that the development could be accommodated without resulting in material overlooking, loss of privacy, overshadowing or overbearing impacts upon neighbouring occupiers.

The proposed dwelling would also benefit from a spacious plot and access to private amenity space, and there is no evidence at this stage to suggest that future occupiers would experience unacceptable living conditions. Subject to detailed design and landscaping, the proposal appears capable of providing an appropriate standard of residential accommodation in accordance with Policies LP14, DP3 and P3. Compliance with Nationally Describes Space Standards should also be considered.

Notwithstanding the above, neighbouring properties have not been formally consulted as part of the pre-application process and officers have not undertaken a site visit. Any future planning application would therefore need to demonstrate compliance with residential amenity policies through the submission of detailed plans showing window positions, site levels, boundary treatments, access arrangements and the relationship with adjoining properties. Particular regard should be had to maintaining privacy for neighbouring occupiers and minimising any disturbance associated with vehicle movements and the proposed access.

Overall, whilst officers have significant concerns regarding the principle of development and its impact on the character and appearance of the area and heritage impacts, it is considered that the proposal could likely be made acceptable in residential amenity terms and is capable of complying with Policy LP14 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan together with Policies DP3 and P3 of the NPPF.

Flood Risk

Policy LP5 of the Local Plan requires development proposals to demonstrate that all forms of flood risk have been appropriately considered and addressed, ensuring that development is safe for its lifetime and does not increase flood risk elsewhere. Policy LP15 further requires surface water to be managed through the incorporation of sustainable drainage measures where appropriate.

National policy adopts a similar approach. Policy F7 of the NPPF requires development proposals to be safe from flooding throughout their lifetime and ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere. Policy F8 requires development proposals to incorporate sustainable drainage systems where they could affect drainage on or around a site.

The site is understood to be located within Flood Zone 1 and is not considered to be at risk from fluvial flooding. The site is therefore sequentially preferable for development in flood risk terms and there is no evidence at this stage that river flooding would represent a constraint to the development.

Notwithstanding this, available mapping indicates that the rear of the site may be subject to a

low to medium risk of groundwater flooding. This is a material consideration given the undeveloped nature of the site and the intention to introduce a new dwelling, access and associated hardstanding. In addition, the site's topography slopes towards the southern boundary adjoining Meadow Road, and therefore careful consideration would need to be given to site levels, surface water drainage and the interaction between surface and groundwater conditions.

Any future planning application should therefore demonstrate how groundwater risks have been considered and appropriately managed and mitigated. Sustainable drainage measures should be incorporated wherever feasible and designed to ensure that runoff rates do not exceed existing greenfield rates and that flood risk is not increased on-site or elsewhere. Mitigation measures should also be considered so that users of the site are not at risk of flooding.

Based on the information currently available, officers do not identify any in-principle flood risk objection to the proposal. However, further investigation would be required at application stage to confirm the extent of groundwater risk and to demonstrate that appropriate drainage measures can be delivered. Subject to the submission of suitable supporting information, the proposal is likely capable of complying with Policies LP5 and LP15 of the Local Plan and Policies F7 and F8 of the NPPF.

Highway safety, Parking Provision and Access

Policy LP16 of Huntingdonshire’s Local Plan to 2036 encourages sustainable transport modes and Policy LP17 supports proposals where they incorporate appropriate space for vehicle movements, safe access onto the highway and adequate parking for vehicles and cycles.

National policy adopts a similar approach. Policy TR3 of the NPPF requires development proposals to be located where they can support sustainable patterns of movement and ensure that any impacts on highway safety are appropriately addressed. Policy TR4 requires development to provide safe access arrangements and suitable parking provision, while Policy TR6 states that development should be refused where it would result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety

The submitted information indicates that access would be taken directly from Meadow Road (B1046) along the southern boundary of the site where the B1046 transitions from a 40mph zone to a 30mph zone. Whilst no detailed access drawings, visibility splays or swept path analysis have been submitted at this stage, Meadow Road currently serves existing residential development in the vicinity and there is no evidence before officers to indicate that a single dwelling would generate a level of traffic likely to result in severe transport impacts. However matters such as access and highway safety are assessed in conjunction with Cambridgeshire County Council Local Highway Authority (LHA) as part of a formal application and LHA are not consulted as part of preapplication proposals and offer their own preapplication service. It is therefore recommended the applicant seeks preapplication advice from the Highways Authority on these matters directly.

The local planning authority do however offer guidance regarding parking standards. HDC do not have a policy stipulating vehicle parking spaces to the number of bedrooms. However, given the size of the preapplication site and the quantum of development proposed, Officers are likely to consider the proposal for one dwelling on the plot to offer sufficient off-street parking and vehicle rotating space. The indicative layout appears capable of providing on-site vehicle parking and turning facilities sufficient to serve a single dwelling. Any future application should

clearly demonstrate compliance with Policy LP17 through the provision of appropriately sized parking spaces, vehicle turning facilities and secure cycle storage. In accordance with the Huntingdonshire Design Guide, cycle parking should be provided to serve future residents and integrated into the design of the development. It is appreciated that the site does not benefit from a footway into the village and that this part of Great Gransden offers no pedestrian footways into the village core. However, this is common in rural locations and it is accepted that future residents would be reliant on a private motor vehicle, especially given the lack of services, infrastructure and facilities in Great Gransden. Nevertheless, the proposal would need to demonstrate that opportunities to encourage sustainable travel modes have been maximised in accordance with Policies LP16 and TR3.

The creation of a new access would require the removal of sections of existing frontage vegetation and hedgerow along the southern boundary. Whilst this is primarily a landscape, heritage and biodiversity matter, sufficient visibility would need to be achieved in both directions and the impact of any vegetation removal would require careful consideration. The suitability of the proposed access, including visibility splays, access geometry and any required engineering works, would need to be demonstrated through a future planning application and would be subject to assessment by the Local Highway Authority. Further details on Cambridgeshire County Council access standards can be found at the following address: https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/roads-and-pathways/highways-development See document general principles for development (Adopted 7th March 2023).

At this stage, officers do not identify any fundamental highway safety objection to the proposal. However, in the absence of detailed access drawings and formal consultation with the Local Highway Authority, the acceptability of the proposed access arrangement cannot be confirmed. Subject to the submission of appropriate technical information and consultation responses, it is considered that the proposal could likely be made acceptable in highway safety terms and is capable of complying with Policies LP16 and LP17 of the Local Plan and Policies TR3, TR4 and TR6 of the NPPF.

Local Plan Policy LP17 requires that proposals involving residential development to provide at least one secure and clearly identified cycle storage space per bedroom. To ensure compliance, any future application should be accompanied by detailed plans showing the location, floor layout, and elevations of the proposed cycle store or confirmation the garage is adequately sized to accommodate four cycles. The facility must be appropriately sized to accommodate the total number of bedrooms proposed and should be designed to offer secure and convenient access for future occupants.

Having regard to the above, it is considered that a safe means of access could be achieved and subject to further information, the proposal is considered to generally accord with policies LP16 and LP17 of the Local Plan, subject to formal consultation.

Ecology

Policy LP30 of the Local Plan states that a proposal will be required to demonstrate that all potential adverse impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity have been investigated and that a proposal will ensure no net loss in biodiversity and provide a net gain where possible, through the planned retention, enhancement and creation of habitats and wildlife features, appropriate to the scale, type and location of development.

National policy adopts a similar approach. Policy N2 of the NPPF requires development proposals to consider existing habitats, landscape features and ecological networks, conserve existing natural features such as trees and hedgerows where possible, and minimise harm to biodiversity. The NPPF further states that development should be refused where significant harm to biodiversity cannot be adequately avoided, mitigated or compensated for.

The site comprises undeveloped agricultural land bounded in part by established hedgerows, mature vegetation and a Public Right of Way. These landscape features are likely to provide ecological value and may function as habitat corridors for a range of species. In addition, the proposed access would require works to the existing southern boundary vegetation, the extent of which has not yet been assessed. It is therefore not currently possible to fully understand the ecological implications of the proposal.

The submitted layout indicates that existing hedgerows would largely be retained and reinforced through additional planting. Officers consider that retention of the boundary vegetation would be essential both in landscape and ecological terms. Existing hedgerows are likely to contribute to habitat connectivity across the site and between the village edge and the wider countryside and should therefore be retained wherever possible and protected throughout the construction process.

The site lies within 200 metres of a waterway to the south and is approximately 450m north of the Waresley Wood SSSI, which is likely to trigger the Council's biodiversity checklist threshold, requiring a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) to accompany any formal planning application. A future submission should assess the potential presence of protected species, including Great Crested Newts. Should the appointed ecologist recommend any further surveys, these should also be submitted as part of the formal application. Natural England would be a formal consultee.

It should also be noted that mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is applicable, per Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. An application for 'small development' (1 to 9 dwellings) on a site must be accompanied by a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment unless the application is exempt as per the exemptions listed in Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).

It is however, noted that the accompanying application form states that the application would be for a self-build dwelling and subsequently a formal application would therefore be exempt from biodiversity net gain. A future application should be accompanied with a BNG exemption statement confirming the application accords with the following criteria:

- consist of no more than 9 dwellings
- be on a site that has an area no larger than 0.5 hectares
- consist exclusively of dwellings that are self-build or custom housebuilding as defined in section 1(A1) of the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015.

Whilst this proposal may qualify for a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) exemption, it is important to note that Local Plan Policy LP30 requires all development to ensure no net loss of biodiversity and, where possible, to deliver a net gain through the retention, enhancement, and creation of habitats and wildlife features.

Should a future application propose the removal of vegetation on the eastern and southern boundaries or elsewhere on the site, it must, at a minimum, demonstrate that the development would not result in a net loss of biodiversity, in accordance with the requirements of Policy LP30 and Policy G6 of the Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan.

Trees and Hedgerows

Policy LP31 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 requires proposals to demonstrate that the potential for adverse impacts on trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows has been investigated and that a proposal will only be supported where it seeks to conserve and enhance any existing tree, woodland, hedge or hedgerow of value that would be affected by the proposed development.

National policy adopts a similar approach. Policy N2 of the NPPF requires development proposals to conserve and enhance existing natural features of visual and ecological value, including trees and hedgerows, and to utilise appropriate landscaping to integrate development into its surroundings. Policy N3 further expects development proposals to provide for the long-term retention and management of both existing and newly planted trees.

The application site is bounded by established hedgerows and mature vegetation, particularly along the southern and eastern boundaries. These features make a significant contribution to the rural character of the site, provide visual containment when viewed from the surrounding road network and Public Right of Way, and are likely to offer ecological value. The existing vegetation also assists in maintaining the transition between the village and the surrounding countryside.

The submitted information indicates that a new vehicular access would be formed from Meadow Road. The creation of this access is likely to require the removal or alteration of sections of existing boundary hedgerow. At this stage, insufficient information has been submitted to determine the extent of vegetation loss or the impact upon the existing landscape structure. Given the importance of the southern boundary vegetation in screening the site and defining the rural edge of the settlement, officers consider that any loss of hedgerow should be minimised and justified through detailed design.

Should a future planning application be submitted, it should be accompanied by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Tree Protection Plan and Arboricultural Method Statement prepared by a suitably qualified arboricultural consultant. These documents should identify any trees or hedgerows affected by the proposal, assess their quality and contribution to the site, and demonstrate how they will be protected during construction. Root Protection Areas should inform the final layout of the development.

Officers consider that retention and reinforcement of the existing boundary vegetation would be essential in both landscape and ecological terms. Additional native planting and hedgerow enhancement should be incorporated to strengthen the site boundaries and assist in mitigating the visual impact of development on this sensitive edge-of-settlement location.

At this stage, in the absence of detailed arboricultural information, a full assessment cannot be undertaken. However, subject to the submission of appropriate supporting information and the retention of the site's key landscape features, it is considered that the proposal could potentially be made acceptable in arboricultural terms and capable of complying with Policy LP31 of the Local Plan and Policies N2 and N3 of the NPPF.

Impact to the Public Right of Way

Policy TR8 of the NPPF requires development proposals to protect and enhance the Public

Rights of Way network and take opportunities to improve the quality of existing routes where appropriate. Policy G9 of the Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan states that: The existing PROW should be protected or enhanced. Any new development on or adjacent to an existing Public Right of Way must: 1. consider the appearance of the proposal from the Right of Way or Permissive Path, and incorporate green landscaping to reduce any visual impacts, and 2. provide links to the network in and around the village.

The application site immediately abuts Public Footpath 104/8 along its eastern boundary. The footpath provides a pedestrian link from Hall Farm Lane into the surrounding countryside and currently benefits from a distinctly rural setting. Whilst a substantial band of mature trees and vegetation along the eastern boundary limits direct views across the application site from much of the route, the footpath nevertheless forms part of the wider rural environment at the edge of the village and contributes to the transition between the built form of Great Gransden and the surrounding countryside.

The proposed development would introduce a dwelling, domestic curtilage, access, hardstanding, lighting and associated residential activity immediately adjacent to the footpath. Whilst the route itself would remain physically unaffected, officers consider that the proposal would alter the rural character experienced by users of the route and would introduce an urbanising influence on land currently experienced as part of the countryside edge of the settlement.

The supporting statement indicates that additional landscape planting would be provided. Whilst such measures may assist in softening the appearance of development over time, officers are not persuaded that landscaping would fully offset the introduction of residential development onto an undeveloped agricultural field at this location.

Any future planning application should demonstrate how the Public Right of Way would be protected throughout construction and operation of the development and whether opportunities exist to enhance the route through additional landscaping, interpretation or improved connectivity. However, officers consider that the impact upon the rural setting and experience of users of Public Footpath 104/8 weighs against the proposal and forms part of the wider concerns regarding the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the countryside.

In any case the Definitive Maps team at Cambridgeshire County Council would be formal consultees and would be invited to comment on the proposals.

Accessible and adaptable homes
Policy LP25 of the Local Plan to 2036 states that proposals for housing will be supported where they meet the requirements relating to accessible and adaptable homes, unless it can be demonstrated that site specific factors make this impractical or unviable. Development proposals should ensure 100% of new dwellings, across all tenures provided, meet Building Regulation requirement M4(2) ‘accessible and adaptable dwellings’ (or replacement standards).

Water Efficiency
Any future application would need to confirm compliance with the optional Building Regulation requirement for water efficiency in Approved Document G, as set out in criteria j. of Policy LP12 of the Local Plan to 2036.

Waste

Policy LP4 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan and Part H of the Developer Contributions SPD (2011) requires a refuse bin payment for new residential development. Any future application would need to be accompanied by a Unilateral Undertaking (UU) for wheeled bins to ensure residential waste from the development would be collected by the Council. Furthermore, future layout plans should demonstrate locations for refuse storage.

CIL
The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) allows local planning authorities to raise funds from new development. Residential development on the site would be subject to CIL funding whereby the money raised would fund district-wide and local infrastructure projects that benefit local communities.

Details of the CIL charging schedule can be found using the following link.
https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/planning/community-infrastructure-levy-cil/

Planning Balance and Conclusion

The proposal seeks pre-application advice for the erection of a single self-build dwelling on agricultural land outside the Built-Up Area of Great Gransden.

In support of the proposal, officers acknowledge that the development would deliver an additional dwelling within the district at a time when the Council cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. The provision of a self-build dwelling would also contribute, albeit modestly, towards housing choice and the delivery of the district's housing needs. These benefits attract moderate weight in favour of the proposal.

The site is also located adjacent to an existing settlement and does not appear to present any overriding constraints in respect of flood risk, residential amenity or highway safety that would prevent development in principle. Subject to the submission of appropriate technical information and detailed design, these matters may be capable of being satisfactorily addressed.

However, officers have identified significant concerns regarding the principle of development and the impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area and impact to heritage assets.

The site lies outside the Built-Up Area of Great Gransden, forms part of an undeveloped agricultural field and contributes positively to the rural edge of the settlement and provides important views to and from the Great Gransden Conservation Area and Grade II listed building known as Elm Cottage. The proposal would introduce domestic built form, hardstanding, access infrastructure and associated residential activity into a currently open field parcel, resulting in the urbanisation of land that presently displays a strong rural character. Officers are not persuaded that the proposal would recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside as required by Policy LP10(b) of the Local Plan. The development would also fail to satisfactorily respond to its context and would erode the existing transition between the built form of the village and the wider countryside. This attracts substantial weight against the proposal.

Officers also consider that the proposal would result in the loss of approximately 0.17 hectares of Grade 2 agricultural land. Whilst the extent of land affected is relatively limited, the development would nevertheless result in the permanent loss of Best and Most Versatile agricultural land and therefore conflicts with Policy LP10(a) of the Local Plan. This attracts limited to moderate weight against the proposal.

In addition, the site lies immediately adjacent to the Great Gransden Conservation Area and within the setting of nearby listed buildings. Whilst officers do not consider that substantial harm to designated heritage assets would arise, the proposed development would diminish the openness and rural character that currently contributes to the setting of those assets. This constitutes further conflict with Policy LP34 of the Local Plan and the heritage policies of the NPPF and attracts moderate weight against the proposal.

Taking all matters into account, officers consider that the benefits associated with the delivery of a single self-build dwelling do not outweigh the identified harm arising from the proposal. In particular, the proposal would conflict with the development strategy for the district, would represent an unjustified encroachment into the countryside, would harm the character and appearance of the settlement edge and would adversely affect the setting of nearby heritage assets.

Accordingly, officers consider that the proposal is contrary to Policies LP9, LP10, LP11, LP12 and LP34 of the Local Plan, Policy G1, G3, G5 and G9 of the Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan (2023), and Policies S5, DP3, N2, HE4, HE5, HE6 and HE9 of the NPPF.

For the reasons outlined above, officers are unable to support the proposal as currently submitted and consider that the prospects of obtaining planning permission are limited.

It is strongly advised that the following points are addressed in any subsequent application following this advice:

In light of the concerns identified within this pre-application response, it is strongly advised that the following matters are addressed should the applicant choose to pursue a future planning application:

- Submission of a robust Planning Statement demonstrating how the proposal complies with Policy S5 of the NPPF, Policies LP9 and LP10 of the Local Plan, and Policy G1 of the Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan (2023). The statement should specifically address the site's countryside location, settlement edge impacts and the benefits of the proposal.
- Revision of the site layout to demonstrate how the proposal would better integrate with the existing settlement pattern and reduce the perception of encroachment into the open countryside.
- Submission of scaled site plans, floor plans and elevations, including details of the proposed dwelling's height, scale, massing, roof form and materials.
- Submission of a Heritage Statement assessing the impact of the proposal on the significance and setting of the Great Gransden Conservation Area and nearby listed buildings, including the contribution that the site currently makes to their setting.
- Submission of a Landscape Appraisal and Landscaping Scheme demonstrating how the proposal would respond to its countryside setting and how existing views, boundaries and rural character would be retained and enhanced.
- Retention and reinforcement of existing hedgerows and boundary vegetation wherever possible, particularly along the southern and eastern boundaries.
- Submission of a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and any subsequent protected species surveys recommended by the ecologist.
- Submission of a Biodiversity Net Gain Exemption Statement (if relying on the self-build exemption), together with evidence demonstrating compliance with Policy LP30 and no net loss of biodiversity.

- Submission of an Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA), Tree Protection Plan and Arboricultural Method Statement, demonstrating the impact of the proposal on existing trees and hedgerows and how they would be protected during construction.
- Submission of a detailed access plan, including visibility splays, access geometry and any required highway works, prepared in accordance with Cambridgeshire County Council standards.
- Demonstration that adequate on-site vehicle parking, turning space and secure cycle storage can be provided in accordance with Policies LP16 and LP17.
- Submission of a proportionate drainage strategy demonstrating how surface water and groundwater risks will be managed, including the incorporation of sustainable drainage measures where appropriate.
- Submission of finished floor and site level information, including details of any land regrading required across the site.
- Confirmation that the proposed dwelling would comply with Building Regulation M4(2) Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings requirements.
- Confirmation that the proposed dwelling would comply with the optional Building Regulations Approved Document G water efficiency standard.
- Provision of refuse and recycling storage details and submission of any required wheeled bin contribution documentation.

Notwithstanding the above, applicants should be aware that officers' concerns regarding the principle of development, impact on the character and appearance of the countryside and heritage impacts are fundamental matters that would need to be satisfactorily addressed before officer support could be contemplated.

Recommended Documentation (not exhaustive):
*Planning, Design and Access Statement
*Floor plan and elevational drawings of the proposed dwelling.
*Floor plan and elevation drawings of the existing buildings.
*Existing and Proposed Block Plan.
*Hard and soft landscaping details.
*Material Details
*A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and any further surveys recommended by the ecologist.
*Block (including visibility splay details) and Location Plan
*Wheeled Bin Unilateral Undertaking.
*Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA), Tree Protection Plan, and Arboricultural Method Statement.
*BNG Exemption Statement.
* Structural Survey

I would expect the following consultees to be consulted on any formal reserved matters application of the scheme:

Cambridgeshire County Council Departments:
Cambridgeshire Highways

Huntingdonshire District Council Departments:
Ecology Officer
Landscape Officer
Environmental Health Officer
Arboricultural Officer

Conservation Officer

Other
Parish Council

Please be aware that this is not a definitive list and other Consultees may be consulted.

Additional Information

Occupiers of neighbouring properties have not been formally consulted. Any advice provided in relation to residential amenity impact is therefore subject to change following a consideration of any consultation responses received as part of any planning application.

Where a site visit has not taken place the comments provided may not address all relevant planning issues. As part of the consideration of any planning application, the case officer will visit the site.

It is strongly advised that you discuss the proposal with any adjacent neighbours to resolve any issues that they may have prior to an application being made. This is good practice and can avoid unnecessary delay in processing a planning application.

This pre-application advice is given for purposes relating to the Town and Country Planning Acts and for no other Council function and is given without reference to statutory or other consultees, except where stated. The Local Planning Authority will not be responsible for any errors resulting from inaccuracies in that information. The advice relates to the policy framework at the time the advice is given which may subsequently be affected by external factors (e.g. new government guidance, local appeal decisions, policy review). The Local Planning Authority seeks to provide the best advice possible on any enquiry received, however, the advice is without prejudice and does not bind the authority to any particular decision on any planning application that may subsequently be submitted which will be the subject of publicity and consultation.

Feedback Request

We would value your feedback regarding the pre-app advice you have received. This will help us understand your experience and improve the service we deliver.

If you can spare 5 mins to offer your feedback, please use the link below:
https://forms.office.com/e/4S8b40VcjE

Further advice

If you require further advice please contact me using the details above. Any significant change to the proposal will require a further pre-application submission.

Yours faithfully

Marie Roseaman
Senior Development Management Officer

Email: Marie.Roseaman@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Appendix 3 – Appeal Decision and Location Plan (Ref 6009593)

Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 July 2026

by Jane Smith MA MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10th September 2026

Appeal Ref: 6009593
Land East of Spring Gardens, Washington, Nr Pulborough RH20 3BP

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Mr & Mrs Ripley against the decision of Horsham District Council.
- The application Ref is DC/26/0035.
- The development proposed is single detached two storey dwelling & associated landscaping together with the relocation of the existing stable building.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for single detached two storey dwelling & associated landscaping together with the relocation of the existing stable building at Land East of Spring Gardens, Washington, Nr Pulborough RH20 3BP in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref DC/26/0035, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

Preliminary Matters

2. A revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was issued on 17 August 2026 and is a material consideration in this appeal. Both main parties have commented on its implications for their cases, and I have taken those additional representations into account.

3. I also sought the parties' comments regarding whether the provision of self-build housing, as specified on the application form, and the associated exemption from biodiversity net gain (BNG) would be adequately secured. In response, the appellant initially submitted a Unilateral Undertaking (UU) dated 31 July 2026, as a mechanism to secure the provision of self-build housing. However, that has been superseded by a bilateral legal agreement under s106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, dated 2 September 2026 (the legal agreement). That includes additional planning obligations and revisions, addressing comments made by the Council on the effectiveness of the UU.

4. An emerging Local Plan is under preparation and the Examination in Public is ongoing at the time of making this decision. The Council's evidence for this appeal indicates that policies in the emerging Local Plan should be given limited weight at this point, taking account of the stage reached in the plan-making process and unresolved objections to many of the policies. I have no reason to take a different view and have considered the appeal on that basis.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is whether the proposed development would provide a suitable location for housing, having regard to the development plan, the provisions of the Framework and access to services and facilities.

Reasons

6. The appeal concerns a long, narrow parcel of land accessed from Spring Gardens, just off the A24 dual carriageway. Currently, it includes a stable building and gravel hardstanding within a fenced area near the road, with a larger grass paddock beyond that. There is existing housing to either side of the site, including several dwellings along the length of Spring Gardens. There is also a nursery with farm shop and café just beyond those houses, as well as several large commercial premises including business park units, an auctioneers' premises and a caravan/motorhome outlet. All of those uses are accessed via the existing junction with the northbound A24 at Spring Gardens.

7. The village of Ashington is further to the north and the main village of Washington is further to the south. There are other groups of houses, a garden centre and other sporadic development strung out along the A24. However, the wider surroundings are rural, and the area is outside any built-up area boundary (BUAB), within an area defined as countryside in the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) 2015.

Relevant policies

8. Policy 1 of the HDPF sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development, reflecting the wording in an earlier version of the Framework. Policy 2 articulates the Council's spatial strategy, distributing growth in accordance with a settlement hierarchy. Policy 2 also includes some encouragement for reuse of previously developed land, but with no clear indication that should in principle override other locational considerations.

9. Policy 4 allows for some expansion of settlements outside BUABs but specifies that such development should adjoin the settlement edge. That approach is maintained in the Council's Shaping Development in Horsham District Planning Advice Note. Since the appeal site would be well outside any defined BUAB, it does not benefit from the slightly increased flexibility for development on unallocated sites in the Shaping Development document. Within the countryside, Policy 26 of the HDPF restricts development to proposals which are essential to their countryside location, with a focus on protecting the rural character and undeveloped nature of the countryside.

10. In the Storrington, Sullington and Washington Neighbourhood Plan (2019) (the NP), Policy 1 is supportive of development outside the Washington BUAB in certain circumstances, subject to compliance with other policies in the development plan. That includes support for proposals resulting in reuse of previously developed land (PDL).

11. National decision-making policies S3 to S5 of the Framework collectively define a revised presumption in favour of sustainable development. Policy S5 applies to development outside settlements and part 1 lists forms of development which should be approved, unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially

outweighed by any adverse effects, when assessed against the national decision-making policies in the Framework. As has been highlighted by both parties, that list includes redevelopment of previously developed land (PDL) and development which would address an evidenced unmet need.

12. The Council has not disputed that the appeal site is PDL, by virtue of the stable building and hardstanding. To that extent, its redevelopment is supported in principle by both Policy S5 (part 1d) and NP Policy 1. However, the plans confirm that the proposed development would also extend into the separate paddock area, which does not clearly fall within the definition of PDL.

13. There is no dispute that the Council currently has a significant shortfall in housing land supply, so Policy S5 part 1j is also relevant. However, that requires that the development would be physically well-related to an existing settlement. As defined in the Framework, relevant settlements exclude hamlets and scattered groups of houses located outside predominantly built-up areas, where they are not specifically defined as a settlement in the development plan. The nearest settlements which would clearly fall within the Framework's definition are all some distance away, and the site is not physically well-related to them.

14. However, Policy S5 also provides in part 1e for limited infilling within groups of houses outside settlements. While neither party has directed me specifically to that clause, they have both acknowledged that Policy S5 as a whole is applicable. Furthermore, Part 1e is clearly of some relevance, in light of the appellant's argument that the proposed dwelling would be viewed in the context of the surrounding built form, with adjacent residential development on either side.

15. The substantial cluster of built development around the appeal site includes a cohesive group of houses along Spring Gardens and next to the A24. The part of the site which would be developed is sandwiched between existing dwellings to either side. Like its neighbours, the proposed dwelling would front Spring Gardens, occupying a gap between 1 Spring Gardens and The Orchard and it would be on a plot of broadly comparable extent. It would be embedded within the established group of houses, in a position where a single additional dwelling could reasonably be classified as limited infilling, notwithstanding any encroachment beyond the existing extent of PDL.

16. Policy S5 does not require that proposals for redevelopment of PDL and/or limited infilling within groups of houses are physically well-related to a settlement, since that requirement only appears within parts 1h and 1j, with no indication that it is to be applied to the other forms of development listed. On that basis, the proposed development is consistent with the forms of development which Policy S5 states may in principle be approved outside settlements, subject to weighing up the benefits against any adverse effects.

Access to services and facilities

17. While I have concluded that the site is not physically well-related to an existing settlement, there are some modest services and facilities nearby. Occupiers of the dwelling could easily walk to the farm shop and café further along Spring Gardens and they could also use the existing footpath to walk to the garden centre. They would, therefore, have opportunities to buy fresh produce and other items, as well as socialising very locally, providing some modest support for the services which do exist within this small rural community. Some of those very local services were

acknowledged in positive terms when the Council permitted the nearby dwelling at Chanctonview.

18. It would, nevertheless, be necessary to travel further to meet the majority of daily needs. The village of Ashington is a relatively short distance away but it could not realistically be reached on foot or by cycling, given the nature of the intervening dual carriageway. It does, however, provide a range of essential services including education, medical and convenience shopping. There is also a much wider range of services in Storrington, which is further away but still a convenient distance by road. There are bus stops very close to the appeal site, at the Business Park, with what appears to be a useful service along the A24. Therefore, while there would be some harm arising from the need to travel by car, future occupiers would be able to access services and facilities without travelling significant distances and they would also have some sustainable transport options.

19. Framework Policy TR3 guides development towards sustainable locations, to limit the need to travel by private car. In this case, however, the development would not generate a significant amount of movement, given its small scale and the relatively short travel distances to a suitable range of services and facilities. A public transport service is also available. When assessed against the national decision-making policies in the Framework, while there would be some adverse effects arising from increased travel by car, in my judgement that should be given no more than moderate weight.

20. Limited details have been provided of the Lancasters Cottage and Clockhouse Cottage appeal decisions mentioned in the officer report. It is clear that both concluded that those sites were not suitably located, but less clear how the availability of any local services, or the distance to others, compared with this case. The appeal decisions provided by the appellant also encompass a range of site-specific circumstances, including conversion of existing buildings and larger scale developments, which are not directly comparable. I have considered all the other decisions mentioned, but none of them outweighs the conclusions I have reached in the particular circumstances of this site and location.

Planning balance and conclusion on main issue

21. Policy HO7 of the Framework makes clear that substantial weight should be given to the benefits of providing homes which will contribute towards meeting the evidenced accommodation needs of the community. That includes, but is not limited to, homes needed for different groups. While only a single dwelling is proposed, it would make a modest contribution towards addressing an acknowledged and sizable shortfall in housing land supply. Since a self-build dwelling is proposed, there would be a small contribution towards the supply of land for people wishing to build their own homes. The proposal would also offer some potential for modest benefit to the vitality of local rural services.

22. For the reasons previously given, Policy S5 of the Framework is supportive of the proposal in principle, notwithstanding its location outside a settlement. The adverse effects in terms of accessibility to services and facilities carry no more than moderate weight. When considered collectively, the benefits of the development would not be substantially outweighed by the adverse effects. In those circumstances, Policy S5 states that the development should be approved.

23. Having had regard to the development plan, the provisions of the Framework and access to services and facilities, I conclude that the proposed development provides a suitable location for housing. While there would be a conflict with Policies 2, 4 and 26 of the HDPF, due to its location outside the defined BUAB, any conflict with Policy 1 of the NP is limited by the fact that the proposal would include reuse of PDL. There is, nevertheless, conflict with the development plan as a whole. However, in the circumstances of this particular case, that is outweighed by other considerations, notably the presumption in favour of sustainable development as defined in national decision-making policies S3 and S5.

Legal Agreement

24. Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is a mandatory requirement of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (TCPA). However, certain planning permissions including for self-build and custom build development are exempt. The application form specifies that the proposed dwelling would be self-build and exemption from BNG was claimed and accepted as valid by the Council. However, in order to ensure the delivery of a dwelling meeting the definition of self-build or custom housebuilding in section 1(A1) of the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (SBCHA), a suitable legal mechanism is required.

25. The UU dated 31 July 2026 purported to secure the provision of self-build housing qualifying for the BNG exemption. However, it did not include a mechanism to secure BNG in the event that the dwelling is occupied in a manner which falls outside the definition of self-build housing. That could arise if there was evidence the initial occupier of the dwelling had not had primary input into its final design and layout, as required in Planning Practice Guidance.

26. The legal agreement completed on 2 September 2026 does include a mechanism for BNG to be delivered in those circumstances, along with provisions for monitoring and dispute resolution. It would therefore be effective in ensuring that the development is acceptable in planning terms, having regard to the statutory BNG requirements. I have therefore taken the 2 September legal agreement into account for purposes of this appeal and have not given the earlier UU any weight.

27. The planning obligations in the legal agreement are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms. They are directly related to the proposed development of a single self-build dwelling and fairly and reasonably related to it in scale and kind, since they simply ensure its delivery as proposed in the application and in accordance with relevant statutory requirements. I therefore conclude that the legal agreement would be consistent with the requirements of Regulation 122(2) of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 and that it would be effective in ensuring that statutory BNG requirements are addressed.

Other Matters

28. Access would be via the existing junction with the A24, which already serves several dwellings and some large commercial premises. Whether or not the site access has been relocated, its position is clearly detailed on the plans, and the Highways Authority raised no concern about its proposed use for this development. There would be off-street parking to the Council's standards, reducing the risk of any spillover parking near the junction. Since buses and other large vehicles already use the junction, there is no clear reason to assume that the movement of construction traffic would present any specific highway risks and

there would be space within the site for them to enter and park. As such, there is no substantive evidence that one additional dwelling in this location would have any unacceptable impact on highway safety.

29. Based on the ecological evidence provided with the application, the site is of limited ecological value at present, with no requirement for any further surveys or ecological mitigation measures. A soft landscaping scheme is proposed, which can be secured by condition, along with tree protection measures to ensure that the existing boundary vegetation is retained. There is no evidence before me to suggest that any earlier removal of trees or hedges was contrary to any relevant protection orders or otherwise unauthorised.

30. The proposed design adopts building materials and features which are generally typical of existing housing in the environs, including the sporadic housing within the rural areas. While the appeal site currently has an open and rural character, for the reasons previously given it also relates closely to the surrounding built development, and the Council did not allege that there would be any harm to the character and appearance of the area. Taking into account the proposed design approach and additional soft landscaping, the proposal could be accommodated without harm to the wider countryside or the character and appearance of its more immediate surroundings.

31. The dwelling would be sufficiently separated from its neighbours to avoid any unacceptable impact on sunlight or daylight. Window openings would be predominantly to the front and rear, with no first-floor windows on the side elevation facing Spring Gardens. While the dwelling would no doubt be visible from neighbouring properties, it would not unacceptably affect living condition for the occupiers.

32. Any unauthorised use or unsociable activities on the site would be less likely to persist after the site has been developed and occupied. If they did, that would remain subject to control by the relevant planning or statutory nuisance regimes. Disruption during construction would be temporary in nature and is not a reason to prevent development taking place.

33. Some specific concerns have been raised by interested parties about drainage of surface water, following implementation of the stable development. Other specific concerns have been raised by Southern Water regarding protection of the foul sewer from the effect of new tree planting. In light of those concerns, the arrangements for foul and surface water drainage should be subject to further review, but that would be addressed by the planning conditions set out below.

34. Given the modest size of the development, there is no clear evidence that there would be unacceptable pressure on existing infrastructure. The current Neighbourhood Plan does not define this particular site or its surroundings as undevelopable, in light of the partial support provided by Policy 1.

35. Based on the details in the Officer Report, and Natural England standing advice referred to therein, there is no evidence before me to suggest that the development would have a likely significant effect on relevant Arun Valley Habitats Sites, either alone or in combination with other development.

Conditions

36. The Council suggested a number of conditions which I have considered against advice in the Framework and Planning Practice Guidance. I have made some amendments for precision and clarity and have imposed one additional condition, having first invited comments from the parties. The appellant's agreement to the imposition of pre-commencement conditions has been obtained, where relevant.

37. I have imposed a condition to secure compliance with the approved plans, in the interests of certainty.

38. A condition is required to secure further details of the arrangements for surface and foul water drainage, to avoid increased risk of surface water flooding and ensure protection of the public sewers from any adverse effects of new tree planting. Conditions are also necessary to secure a programme of archaeological monitoring and tree protection measures. In all three cases, the required details and measures need to be properly secured prior to any ground disturbance, so pre-commencement conditions are necessary.

39. Mitigation measures are necessary to protect future occupiers from road noise and vibration. Recommendations are made in the Anderson Acoustics Noise Impact Assessment, and I have imposed a condition to secure consideration and approval of a detailed scheme in line with those recommendations, together with its implementation, retention and maintenance.

40. Notwithstanding the exemption from BNG, a requirement for measures to improve biodiversity on the site would accord with Policy N2 of the Framework, which includes that development proposals should contribute positively to the natural environment, taking opportunities to conserve and enhance existing habitats and natural features of nature conservation value. I have therefore imposed a condition to that effect. There is no clear need for a condition to secure ecological mitigation measures during construction, since none are identified as being necessary in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. Nevertheless, construction activities would remain subject to relevant legislation to safeguard protected species, should any unexpected impacts arise.

41. Notwithstanding the details on the plans, I have imposed a condition to secure the soft landscaping details, in the interests of the appearance of the area and so that the position of new tree planting can be confirmed in line with the requirements outlined in Southern Water's advice on the application.

42. A condition to ensure that access, parking and turning facilities are available prior to occupation is also necessary in the interests of highway safety. Conditions to secure broadband infrastructure and water efficiency measures are also reasonable and necessary given the specific requirements in Policy 37 of the HDPF. However, there is no clear need to secure further details of the refuse and recycling arrangements, which are already shown on the plans. Nor is it necessary to secure EV charging by condition, as that is now incorporated in the Building Regulations.

43. The external materials are specified on the plans, and I have imposed a condition to secure those details, in the interests of the character and appearance of the area. I have also imposed the Council's recommended condition limiting hours of work, in light of the close relationship between the appeal site and neighbouring

dwellings. However, the proposed dwelling would be on a generous plot, and the Council did not raise any specific concerns about its scale or design, so there is no clear justification for a condition restricting permitted development rights.

Conclusion

44. The proposed development would conflict with the development plan, but material considerations indicate that a decision should be made other than in accordance with it. Therefore, the appeal should be allowed.

Jane Smith

INSPECTOR

Schedule of Conditions

1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.

2) With the exception of any alternative details approved pursuant to the conditions which follow, the development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:
   - 684-01 Rev A: Location Plan
   - 684-02 Rev A: Site Plan
   - 684-03 Rev A: Plan as Existing
   - 684-04 Rev B: G.F. Plan as Proposed
   - 684-05 Rev C: F.F. / Roof Plan as Proposed
   - 6784-06 Rev A (sic): Proposed Dwelling Relocation of Existing Stable
   - 684-07 Rev A: Entrance to Site Visibility Splays
   - 684-08 Rev C: Landscape Plan as Proposed
   - 684-09 Rev A: Arboriculture/Root Protection Plan
   - 684-10 Rev B: Proposed Dwelling
   - 684-11: Plans as Proposed Entrance to Site
   - 684-12: Acoustic Plan

3) No development shall commence until a drainage strategy detailing the proposed means of foul and surface water disposal, incorporating any measures required by Southern Water for protection of the public sewers, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme.

4) No development shall commence until a programme of archaeological monitoring during construction has been secured in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall thereafter proceed in full accordance with the approved Written Scheme of Investigation.

5) All the trees and hedges shown on drawing no. 684-09 A as to be retained shall be protected by strong fencing, in accordance with the tree protection fencing alignment and specification detailed on that drawing. The fencing shall be erected

in accordance with the approved details before any equipment, machinery or materials are brought onto the site for the purposes of the development, and shall be maintained until all equipment, machinery and surplus materials have been removed from the site. Nothing shall be stored or placed within any fenced area, and the ground levels within those areas shall not be altered, nor shall any excavation be made.

6) No development shall take place above ground level until a scheme of noise and vibration attenuation and ventilation sufficient to prevent overheating and maintain thermal comfort has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall include acoustic performance details of the building facades and glazing and shall incorporate the recommendations detailed in the Anderson Acoustics Noise Impact Assessment dated 17 March 2026.

All works to implement the scheme, once approved, shall be carried out by suitably qualified persons. Prior to occupation of the dwelling, evidence shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority to demonstrate that the development has been carried out in accordance with the approved noise, vibration attenuation and ventilation measures. The approved measures shall thereafter be retained and maintained for the duration of the use in accordance with the approved details.

7) Prior to any works above slab level, a Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy prepared by a suitably qualified ecologist, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The content of the Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy shall include the following:

(a) purpose and conservation objectives for the proposed enhancement measures;

(b) detailed designs or product descriptions to achieve stated objectives;

(c) locations of proposed enhancement measures by appropriate maps and plans (where relevant);

(d) persons responsible for implementing the enhancement measures; and

(e) details of initial aftercare and long-term maintenance (where relevant).

The Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy shall be implemented prior to occupation of the dwelling, in accordance with the approved details, and shall be retained in that manner thereafter.

8) Notwithstanding the landscaping details included on the application drawings, the development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until a scheme of landscaping has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall include details of all proposed tree and hedge planting, incorporating any measures required by Southern Water for protection of the public sewers from the effects of such planting. The landscaping scheme shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved details before any part of the development is first occupied.

9) No part of the development hereby permitted shall be occupied until the parking, turning and access facilities necessary to serve the dwelling have been implemented in accordance with the approved details as shown on drawing 684-08, REV C and shall be thereafter retained as such.

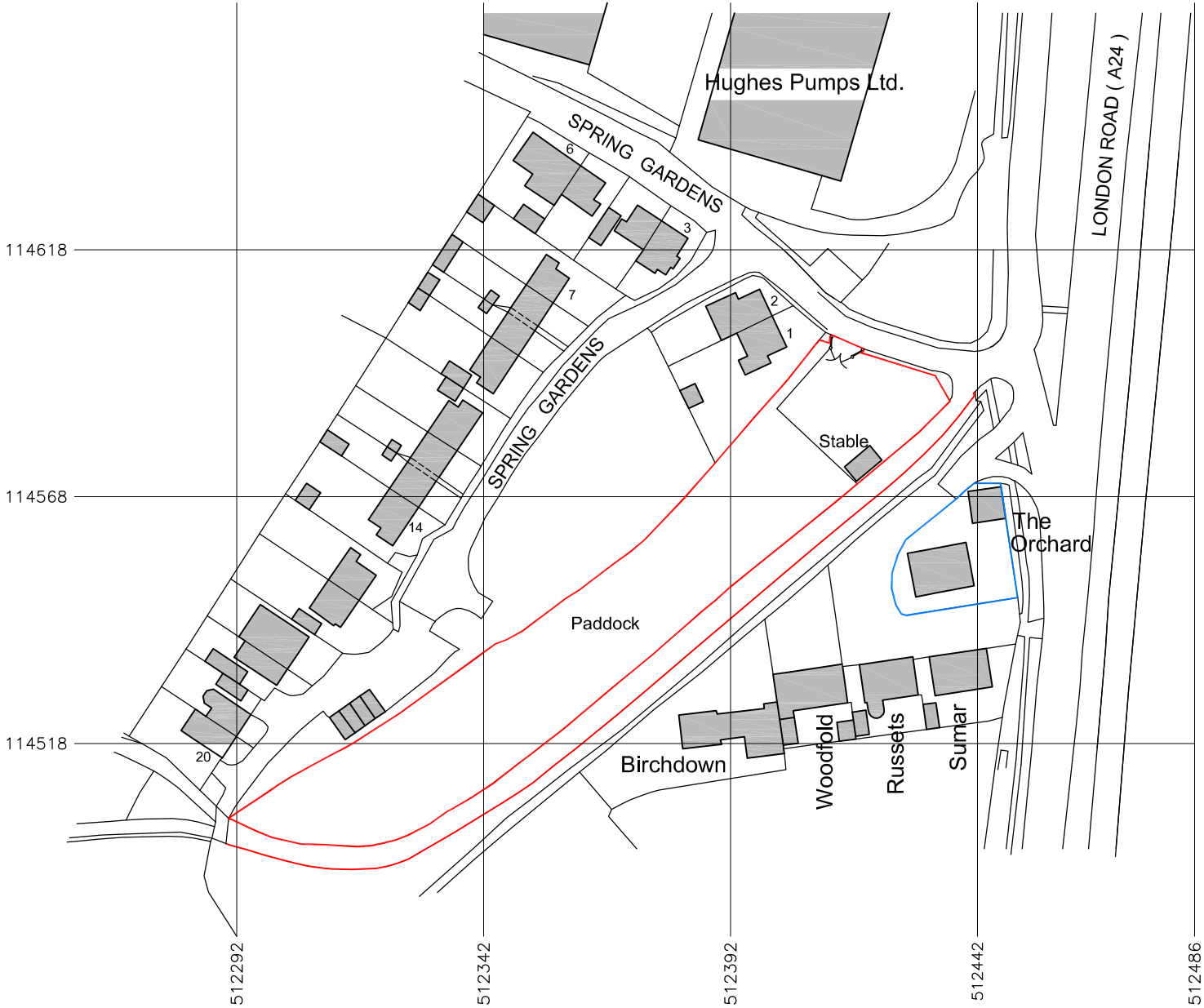
10) Prior to the first occupation of the dwelling hereby permitted, the necessary in-building physical infrastructure and external site-wide infrastructure to enable superfast broadband speeds of 30 megabits per second through full fibre broadband connection shall be provided to the premises.

11) The dwelling hereby permitted shall meet the optional requirement of Building Regulation G2 to limit the water usage of the dwelling to no more than 110 litres per person per day. The subsequently installed water limiting measures shall thereafter be retained.

12) The materials to be used in the development hereby permitted shall strictly accord with those indicated on the application form and approved plans.

13) No works for the implementation of the development hereby approved shall take place outside of 08:00 hours to 18:00 hours Mondays to Fridays and 08:00 hours to 13:00 hours on Saturdays nor at any time on Sundays, Bank or public Holidays.

END of conditions





Scale Bar 1:1250



This Drawing is to be read in conjunction with dwg. No. 684–01 to 10 Inclusive At all times

Rev.	Description	Date
A	Drawing completed for Planning Submission	09/01/26

The Client is advised to ascertain and comply with his duties under the C.D.M. Regs 2015 and his obligations under the Party Wall etc. Act 1996 and Equality Act 2010 where applicable.
Contractors must verify all dimensions on site before commencing any work.
The copyright of this drawing is reserved.
The drawing must not be disclosed without authority
The drawings and drawing notes do not purport to cover each and every item required to complete the project, the notes are not a specification of works, the contractor is advised to verify the full extent of the works with the client.
This drawing to be read in conjunction with Designers Risk Assessment

Project

Land East of Spring Gardens
Washington,
W. Sx.
RH20 3BP

LOCATION PLAN
Proposed Dwelling

Client

Mr & Mrs Ripley

Drawing no.	684–01 (A4)	A
Scale 1 : 1250	Date Nov. 2025	

KG DESIGNS

ARCHITECTURAL CONSULTANT

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Appendix 4 – Appeal Decision and Location Plan (Ref: 6009632)

Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 July 2026

by O Marigold BSc DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16 September 2026

Appeal Ref: 6009632
Land East of Hawarden, Holsworthy Beacon, Holsworthy, Devon EX22 7NE

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by David Watkins of W J Watkins & Sons Ltd against the decision of Torridge District Council.
- The application Ref is 1/0736/2025/FUL.
- The development proposed is proposed 2 no. detached dwellings.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for proposed 2 no. detached dwellings at Land East of Hawarden, Holsworthy Beacon, Holsworthy, Devon EX22 7NE in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 1/0736/2025/FUL, subject to the conditions in the Schedule to this decision below.

Preliminary Matters

2. As part of the appeal, the appellant has provided amended plans and information in respect of surface and foul water drainage. The Council has commented on these matters. Given this and the relatively small nature of the change, I consider that no party would be prejudiced if I take these amended plans and information into account. I shall therefore determine the appeal on this basis.

3. Since the appeal was made, a revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) has been published, on 17 August 2026. The Council and the appellant have had the opportunity to comment on this. I have determined the appeal using the current planning policy position.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are:

   - whether the proposal would accord with the spatial strategy of the Development Plan, having regard to access to services and facilities, and
   - whether adequate provision for foul drainage could be provided.

Reasons

Spatial Strategy, Services and Facilities

5. Policy ST07 of the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan (the Local Plan), adopted October 2018, provides the Council's spatial strategy for the area. It supports development within settlements identified in the policy. However, the appeal site is

on the edge of Holsworthy Beacon. This does not have the facilities necessary for it to constitute a Rural Settlement as defined in the Local Plan. As such, the policy limits new development to types which do not apply to the proposal, which is for market accommodation. Consequently, it would conflict with Local Plan policy ST07.

6. The aims of the Council's spatial strategy, including Local Plan policy ST10, seek amongst other things to reduce the need to travel by car and to enable alternative sustainable travel options. It therefore guards against development in unsustainable locations. In this case, the nearest main settlement is Holsworthy, along rural roads with no lighting or pavement. Accordingly, walking and cycling to the town is unlikely to provide a realistic alternative to the private car for many people.

7. That said, the length of car journeys to Holsworthy would be relatively short, limiting the adverse effects of private vehicle use, such as increased carbon emissions. Furthermore, bus stops are available within reasonable walking distance of the site. On the evidence before me, buses provide some weekday services to Holsworthy as well as to Barnstaple and other locations.

8. Access to the bus stops would require walking (or cycling) on a lane with no pavement or street lighting, but only for a fairly short distance. Although traffic speeds may in practice be higher, the site is within the 30mph speed limit area. In addition, a 'ring and ride' scheme is available to qualifying people. On this basis, public transport may well provide an alternative option for some journeys, including for people of limited mobility.

9. Nevertheless, for the reasons given above, the proposal would not accord with the spatial strategy of the Development Plan, having regard to access to services and facilities. It would therefore conflict with Local Plan policy ST07.

Drainage

10. Local Plan policy DM02 supports development where it would not result in unacceptable impacts on surface or ground water from pollution. The site is located within the Holsworthy critical drainage area. At application stage, little evidence was provided to assess whether the ground has suitable permeability. The Council's concerns related particularly to arrangements for the treatment of foul effluent.

11. At appeal stage, details have been provided of percolation tests that have been undertaken. Surface water soakaways and drainage field designs have been submitted, reflecting the results of these tests. As identified by the Council's Environmental Health Officer, the results suggest that the testing was carried out in accordance with BRE365, but BS6297 is the appropriate methodology for foul drainage design. Although BS6297 is referred to later in the report, the Council seeks confirmation of the standard used.

12. An appeal[1] found that the requirement for percolation test results should not be left until after the position of buildings and other built form is fixed. However, as suggested by the Council, a pre-commencement condition could prevent any development from starting until suitable drainage details have been provided. As a

[1] PINS reference APP/W1145/W/19/3220228

result, adequate provision could be made for foul drainage and so the proposal would comply with Local Plan policy DM02. This matter is therefore neutral in the planning balance.

Other Considerations

13. Relevant to the appeal, the Framework applies a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Policy S4 applies within settlements, and policy S5 applies outside of them. Settlements do not include hamlets and scattered groups of houses located outside predominantly built-up areas. The pattern of development around the appeal site is somewhat sporadic and secluded, with fields opposite and behind the site.

14. Even so, outside of settlements, Framework policy S5(1)(e) permits limited infilling within groups of houses. Hawarden and another dwelling lie close to the site, and planning permission has been granted for two additional dwellings between the site and Highfield, which are under construction. Other properties within Holsworthy Beacon are not far from the site, and not all have a linear position, instead forming a group. In its original Statement of Case, the Council acknowledged that the appeal proposal would not be physically isolated from neighbouring built forms, and would represent an infill development. As a matter of planning judgement, I find that the development would meet the S5(1)(e) definition.

15. In these circumstances, policy S5 requires that development should be approved unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects, assessed against the Framework national decision-making policies. Such effects would include a failure to comply with Framework policies which state that development should be refused in specific circumstances.

16. DP3(3) is one such policy. It makes clear that proposals should be refused if, without clear justification, they conflict with specified design principles which include liveability and movement. The draft Design and Placemaking planning practice guidance provides further advice. Liveability relates to social interaction and equitable access to a variety of services and cultural facilities, particularly in town centres. Movement includes where transport infrastructure provides choices, good connections to nearby settlements, and the prioritising of walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport.

17. That said, policy DP3(3) makes clear that the application of the design principles must be appropriate to the nature of the development, its location and context. Framework policy TR3 recognises that connectivity opportunities may differ in rural areas. Given this, and my findings above, the proposal would have an acceptable degree of connectivity and would not conflict with Framework policy DP3. It follows that policy S5, and the Framework as a whole, is supportive of the proposal.

18. A recent appeal at Hollocombe[2] found that development in a location closer to Holsworthy would not be an appropriate location for housing. However, I have few details of the availability of public transport in that case, which was also found to be unacceptable on highway safety grounds. Furthermore, the planning policy position is now different. This case does not therefore change my overall findings.

[2] PINS reference 6005680

Other Matters

19. The proposal would result in an overall Biodiversity Net Gain within the site, but a deficit of habitat units would remain. This would require additional units to be purchased off-site. The appellant has provided evidence of the availability of a registered habitat bank to provide the units. Schedule 7 of the 1990 Act requires that development may not be begun unless a biodiversity gain plan has been approved by the Council. The Council is satisfied that this provides a sufficiently robust and enforceable mechanism to ensure that the credits would be purchased. I see little reason to disagree. This matter is therefore neutral in the planning balance.

20. The proposal would be accessed from the highway using a single access divided into two driveways. The layout shows parking and turning space within the site. The application site includes sufficient space for visibility splays, and no objection has been raised by the Highway Authority. Accordingly, the proposal would be acceptable in respect of highway safety.

Conditions

21. The Council has provided a list of conditions, which I have assessed and where necessary amended, having regard to the advice in the Planning Practice Guidance. A condition requiring adherence to the approved plans is necessary for certainty. In the interests of the character and appearance of the area, a condition requiring adherence to the approved external materials is required.

22. To ensure adequate living conditions for nearby properties and the protection of the environment, a condition is required to secure details of the management of foul water. This must be a pre-commencement condition, because it may affect fixed items and the undertaking of works at an early stage. To ensure highway safety, it is necessary that details of the visibility splays are provided, and that the splays remain unobstructed. For the same reason, provision of the vehicular turning facilities is necessary.

23. In the interests of the living conditions of nearby properties, hours of construction work are restricted to suitable times. To prevent harm to human health, arrangements for the reporting of unexpected contamination are necessary. Development must take place in accordance with the submitted Ecological Appraisal, in the interests of biodiversity.

Planning Balance

24. I have found conflict with Local Plan policy ST07. However, the policy is materially inconsistent with Framework policy S5, by not supporting general housing which constitutes infilling within groups of houses in locations that are not in Rural Settlements. In accordance with Framework Annex A, I give the conflict with policy ST07 very limited weight. Against that, I give substantial weight to the support to the proposal provided by the Framework, a material consideration of critical importance. The planning balance is therefore in favour of the development.

Conclusion

25. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that applications for planning permission, and thus appeals, must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate

otherwise. Despite the conflict with the Development Plan read as a whole, material considerations in the form of the Framework indicate that planning permission should be granted. Consequently, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

O Marigold

INSPECTOR

Schedule of Conditions

1) The development hereby permitted shall begin no later than three years from the date of this decision.

2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Location Plan, 1345-02, 1345-03. It shall also be carried out in accordance with plan 1345-04-D or as amended by details approved in respect of foul drainage.

3) The development hereby approved shall take place only in accordance with the external materials specified on the approved plans and within the application form.

4) No development shall commence until details of foul drainage have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The submitted details shall include the results of percolation tests, carried out in accordance with the methodology set out in British Standard BS 6297:2007 (or any subsequent revision), and sufficient information to demonstrate that the proposed means of foul drainage is feasible and will not result in pollution or harm to the environment. The development shall thereafter be carried out in full accordance with the approved details prior to its occupation, and retained as such thereafter.

5) The development hereby approved shall not be occupied until plans showing the highway visibility splays have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and the approved splays have been created. Once created, the approved visibility splays shall be retained as such, and shall be kept free of any obstruction exceeding 1.05 metres in height at all times.

6) The development hereby approved shall not be occupied until the vehicle manoeuvring space has been provided within the site in accordance with the approved plans, to enable vehicles to enter and leave in a forward gear. This area shall be retained and made available for these purposes at all times.

7) Construction works (including deliveries of construction materials) shall not take place other than between 0730hrs and 1900hrs on Mondays to Fridays, on Saturdays between 0800hrs and 1300hrs, and at no time on Sundays and Bank or Public Holidays.

8) Any contamination that is found during the course of construction of the development hereby permitted that was not previously identified shall be reported immediately to the Local Planning Authority. Development on the part of the site affected shall be suspended until a risk assessment has been carried out and submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning

Authority. Where unacceptable risks are found, the development shall not resume or continue until remediation and verification schemes have been carried out in accordance with details that shall first have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

9) The proposed development shall be undertaken in accordance with the recommendations set out in Section 8 (Mitigation) on page 14 of the Ecological Appraisal produced by Penpont Ecology Services Ltd and submitted on 19 September 2025.

End of Conditions

Location Plan

Site Address: **Easting: 235667 Northing: 108363**

PlanningPortal

Date Produced: **19-Sep-2025**

Scale: **1:1250 @A3**



Planning Portal Reference: **PP-14209765v1**

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