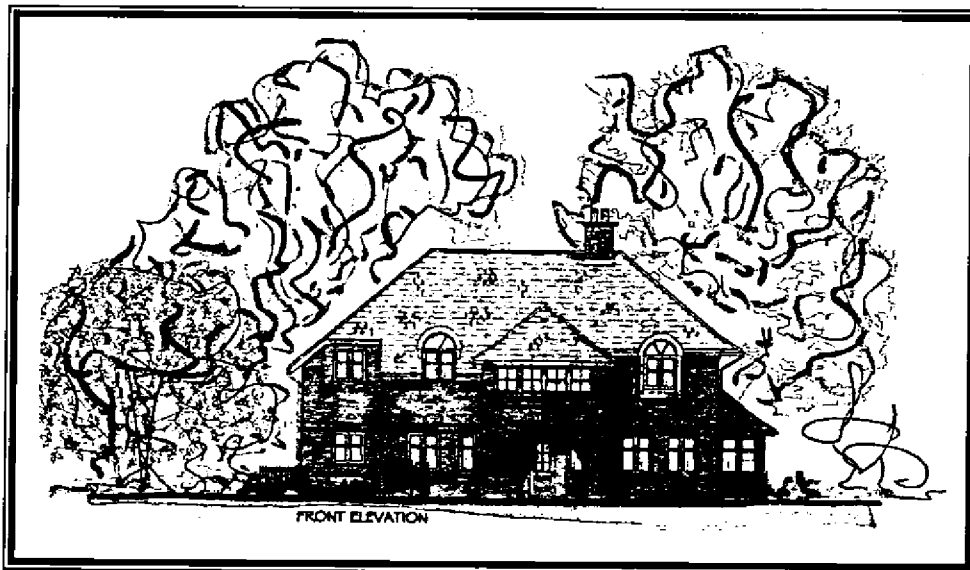




WELWYN HATFIELD  
 PLANNING  
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 - 9 SEP 2009  
  
 No: 2009/1877

**PLANNING,**  
**DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT**

**Demolition of Farm Cottages and Barn,  
 erection of Detached Dwelling with Double Garage  
 on alternative site within the curtilage of  
 Hatfield London Country Club,  
 Cucumber Lane,  
 Essendon,  
 Hatfield, Herts AL9 6HN**



for

**TOKYO LEISURE DEVELOPMENT CO LTD**

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Floorspace % Figures

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**1.0 THE PROPOSAL**

**1.1** The application seeks the demolition of 'Farm Cottages', a pair of semi-detached Victorian cottages located approximately 35 metres to the north of the existing Golf Club House and complex and the construction of a single detached dwelling and garage.

**1.2** The new dwelling is to be located away from the existing site of Farm Cottages on an alternative part of the wider area of the Golf Club site in the applicant's ownership. The proposed siting is to the south and west of Bedwell Park on an area of land currently containing a substantial Atcost Barn, which will also be demolished as part of these proposals. The site lies adjacent to two existing dwellings: Pulham House to the north and Little Bedwell to the south, and close to the Bedwell Park Development by Millgate Homes.

**1.3** The floorspace of the existing dwellings, the Barn and the proposed replacement dwelling is as follows:

**TABLE 1**

	Floorspace Existing m <sup>2</sup>	To be demolished m <sup>2</sup>	Proposed m <sup>2</sup>	+/-% gefa
Farm Cottages	229.5	229.5	-	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>229.5</b>	<b>229.5</b>	-	
Replacement Dwelling	-	-	277.3	+20.8%
Garage	-	-	42.0	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	-	-	<b>319.3</b>	<b>+39.0%</b>
Barn	127.0	127.0	-	-
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	-	<b>356.5</b>	<b>319.3</b>	<b>-10.4%</b>

This table attempts to illustrate the physical change that will occur in the Green Belt as a consequence of the built development the subject of the

proposal. The existing Barn is included for reference purposes but has not been used as part of the gross existing level of floorspace. Additionally, the proposed dwelling also contains a basement with a floorspace of 120m<sup>2</sup> which has also not been included in these calculations as it is entirely below ground and will, therefore, have no impact. It is also intended that this space be used wholly for ancillary purposes rather than living accommodation.

**1.4** The application is accompanied by the following Plans:

2008/42/PL001	~	Location Plan
2008/42/PL002	~	Existing & Proposed Site Plan
2008/42/PL003A	~	Proposed Floor Plans
2008/42/PL004	~	Proposed Elevations
2008/42/PL005	~	Proposed Site Section
2008/42/PL006	~	Existing Floor Plans, elevations & Site Plan of the Farm Cottages
2008/42/PL007	~	Coloured Elevations

**1.5** Also included with the application are:

- A Tree Survey prepared by ACD Arboricultural. This survey considers all the trees on the site and the consequences of the development in accordance with the British Standard. The trees to be removed are indicated on the Site and Location Plan.
- A Draft Unilateral Undertaking. This document is concerned with ensuring the demolition of Farm Cottages.
- A Condition Survey of Farm Cottages and the existing Barn.
- Sustainability Checklist.

**1.6** The application has been the subject of formal pre-application discussions with Officers of the Council who have advised on the proposal.

## **2.0**            **THE SITE**

**2.1**            Hatfield London Country Club is located within the rural area to the south and east of the village of Essendon. The site is extensive, approximately 190 hectares and contains two 18-hole courses and a 9-hole Pitch & Putt course, together with a Club House and a range of ancillary buildings. The full extent of the property is shown on the Site Plan accompanying the application.

**2.2**            The Golf Club was established in 1990-1991 and opened in 1992. At that time, the Golf Club House was located in Bedwell Park, a Grade II listed Mansion House. Subsequently, a new Club House was constructed and the listed building converted to residential use. Planning permission and Listed Building Consent were granted for this in 2003 (Refs: S6/2003/941/FP and S6/2003/942/LB). This development included a substantial amount of "enabling" development including 10 new dwellings. As a consequence of this, the area immediately about the Mansion House now comprises a residential complex of some 25 dwellings. This land no longer falls within the ownership of the applicant, but the golf course runs along three sides of the complex.

**2.3**            The current Club House, ancillary buildings and car parking, together with Farm Cottages and a further residential property 'Sandpit Cottage', are located some distance to the north and east of Bedwell Park on the site of the former Bedwell Park Farm and are all within the ownership of the applicants.

**2.4**            Access to both the residential enclave of Bedwell Park and the Golf Club complex is via private internal roadways running off the junction of Cucumber Lane and High Road (B158). The Golf Club complex is located just under a mile to the north of Bedwell Park. A number of public footpaths cross the site from Essendon; these are located to the north of the Club House. No public rights of ways appear to exist in the vicinity of the Bedwell Park residential enclave on the southern part of the golf course.

**2.5**            **Farm Cottages** are located a short distance to the north of the Club House; they comprise a pair of two-storey semi-detached cottages with matching single storey extensions. They are constructed of brickwork which has been rendered under slated roofs. These properties are now in need of extensive

repair and modernisation and the site is overgrown and unkempt. Access to the Cottages can only be achieved through the car park serving the Golf Club which is a private access controlled by a barrier. Outline Planning Permission was granted in 2001 by the Council for the demolition of the two Cottages and their replacement with a single dwellinghouse.



*Farm Cottages*



**New Site**

**2.6** The proposed site for the replacement dwelling is located on the more southerly part of the overall Golf Club site. It is located adjacent to, and just south of Bedwell Park and the new residential development. Specifically, it lies between a substantial new dwelling, 'Pulham House', to the north and an older property, 'Little Bedwell', to the south. Both of these properties are sufficiently far from the proposed application site that they can only be distantly glimpsed.



*Pulham House*



*Little Bedwell*

**2.7** The area of land to be allocated to the proposed new dwelling within the wider ownership of the applicant is illustrated on the attached plans. This extends to some 2,034m<sup>2</sup>. It is roughly rectangular in shape and contains a number of mature trees. The boundaries are all demarcated by existing hedgerows and shrubs. To the west the boundary of the site abuts the golf course but is extensively screened from it and, indeed, wider views, by the established landscaping.

**2.8** There is a substantial Atcost Barn currently located in the north-eastern corner of the site constructed of a steel frame clad in corrugated metal with a corrugated asbestos roof. The Barn is open-fronted and has a height of 5.9 metres to the ridge and a floorspace of 127m<sup>2</sup>.



*Existing barn on proposed site*

**2.9** Access to the proposed site is via an existing internal estate road which runs in front of Bedwell Park and Pulham House and enters the site at its northern edge.

**3.0 PLANNING POLICY**

**3.1** Planning Policy of most relevance to the determination of this application is contained in the saved policies of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, adopted in April 2005.

**3.2** The Proposals Map indicates that the wider golf course, including the proposed site of the replacement dwelling, falls within the Green Belt (Policy GBSP1). In particular, Policy RA4: Replacement Dwellings in the Green Belt, is of relevance and the application will be discussed in the context of this policy and Green Belt Policy generally in **Section 4**.

**3.3** In addition, parts of the overall site are designated as Areas of Archaeological Significance (AAS). One of the areas lies immediately adjacent and to the south of Farm Cottages designated as AAS65. A further such area AAS68 includes a small part of the northern section of the proposed site for the new dwelling. As a consequence, Policy RA29 ~ Archaeology, is a relevant policy that will be taken into account. In this regard, the applicant is happy that a condition should be attached requiring archaeological monitoring during the course of construction of the new dwelling. An extract from the Proposals Map is attached at **Appendix 3**.

**3.4** There is a raft of other policies set out in the District Plan which have informed this application. These include:

Policy SD1	~	Sustainable Development
Policy R3	~	Energy Efficiency
Policy R11	~	Biodiversity and Development
Policy R17	~	Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
Policy R28	~	Historic Parks and Gardens
Policy D1	~	Quality of Design
Policy D2	~	Character and Context
Policy D8	~	Landscaping
Policy H3	~	Loss of Residential Accommodation

**3.5** These policies will be addressed in **Section 5.0** of this Statement.



**3.6** In addition to the policies outlined above, due cognisance has been taken of policies in the East of England Plan. These policies are, however, largely concerned with a strategic level of planning and are not directly relevant to an assessment of a single dwelling.

**3.7** Due regard has also been taken of Central Government Policy as contained in current Planning Policy Statements; in particular

PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development and

PPG2: Green Belts.

#### **4.0 PLANNING STATEMENT**

##### **Planning Policy**

- 4.1** This application is for development within the Green Belt. In this context the intentions of Green Belt policy, as set out in paragraph 1.4 of PPG2, are fundamental to an assessment of the proposal. Paragraph 1.4 states:

*"The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open: the most important attribute of Green Belts is their openness...."*

- 4.2** Section 3 of PPG2 makes clear a presumption against inappropriate development which, as set out in paragraph 3.2, is:

*"....by definition harmful to the Green Belt."*

It goes on to state that:

*"Very special circumstances to justify inappropriate development will not exist unless the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations."*

- 4.3** Paragraphs 3.4 - 3.6 identify the type of new buildings and uses that may not be considered to be inappropriate in the Green Belt and these include, *inter alia*

*"The replacement of existing dwellings need not be inappropriate, providing the new dwelling is not materially larger than the dwelling it replaces."*

- 4.4** In this latter regard, Policy RA4 of the Local Plan is predicated upon this guidance. The policy sets out a list of criteria against which 'replacement' dwellings should be considered.

- 4.5** With this background in mind, the application proposes a development which is something of a hybrid. It is for a new dwelling in the Green Belt on a new

site, but it does, however, seek to compensate for this by the demolition of Farm Cottages. The Cottages and the proposed site both fall within the same land ownership, and within the same broader area of land comprising the Golf Course. Within the wider area, Farm Cottages command a significantly higher visual prominence to the proposed relocation site. In this way, the development will ensure that the important "openness" of the Green Belt is maintained by not materially increasing the amount of built development on the wider golf course site.

### **Replacement Dwelling**

- 4.6** In effect, the new dwelling seeks to replace the Cottages. In a recent planning appeal decision relating to a nearby site at 'Glenside', Vineyard Road, Northaw (Ref: APP/C1950/A/08/2089859) dated the 26<sup>th</sup> May 2009, the Inspector notes:

*"Neither RA4 nor PPG2 define 'replacement' or qualify how this term is to be interpreted."*  
(para 5)

However, he goes on to say that Policy RA4 advises that a replacement dwelling should reflect

*"the character and distinctiveness of its rural setting"*  
(criterion (iii) Policy RA4)

- 4.7** On this issue the Inspector concludes that

*"In adopting such an approach the policy avoids excessive prescription and gives an applicant the freedom to develop a scheme elsewhere in a site, subject to its affect on the openness of the Green Belt and the character and appearance of the area."*  
(Para 5, Inspector's Report)

- 4.8** The Inspector also makes reference to two other appeal decisions which he considered illustrate that this is the correct approach. The first of these is Mount Lodge, a site in Berkshire (Ref: APP/T0355/A/08/2063594 - April

2008). This appeal was refused, not as a consequence of the proposed re-siting in principle, but rather that the proposed siting would be more prominent and that the intrusion of the dwelling on the proposed site would be "harmful to the openness of the Green Belt".

- 4.9** The second appeal is more analogous to the proposal the subject of this application. This proposed the demolition of Orchard Cottage and its replacement elsewhere within the curtilage of Hambledon Park in Godalming, Surrey (Ref: APP/R3650/A/07/2042791 – April 2008). The Inspector in this case noted at paragraph 5:

*"... although the proposed dwelling would be some distance from Orchard Cottage, due to their shared parkland setting, I nevertheless consider the proposal to be a replacement dwelling for the purposes of Planning Policy Guidance 2: Green Belts (PPG2)."*

- 4.10** With his colleague's decision in mind, the Inspector dealing with the Vineyard Road appeal concluded as follows:

*"I see no reason why, in principle, a replacement dwelling must occupy the same location as the original house or one very close to it. Accordingly for the purposes of PPG2 and Policy RA4, the appeal proposal is a replacement dwelling."*

(Paragraph 6)

- 4.11** Copies of all three appeal decisions are attached to this Statement for information at **Appendix 1**.

- 4.12** With the conclusions of all three Inspectors in mind, the applicant considers that the current proposal for a dwelling can reasonably be considered as a Replacement Dwelling, subject to ensuring that Farm Cottages are demolished. In particular, the most important attribute of Green Belts, their openness, will be maintained through the demolition of the more obtrusively located Farm Cottages and by ensuring that there is no net increase in dwellings on the overall site. Indeed, with the demolition of the existing Barn on the new site as well as the Cottages, there will actually be of the order of a 10% reduction in built form in the Green Belt even once the new dwelling is

constructed. In this way the "openness" will not only be maintained but will be improved.

**4.13** This notwithstanding, there are other reasons for wishing to pursue the replacement of the cottages and the re-siting of a house elsewhere within the Golf Course grounds. Firstly, as is clear from the accompanying Condition Survey Report, the Cottages are in a very poor state of repair and, whilst the fabric could be refurbished, it would not be a viable proposition.

**4.14** The viability of refurbishment is also compounded by the location of the dwellings (or single dwelling). The houses are close to the Golf Club complex and surrounded by the golf course. Whilst on the face of it this may be an attractive environment, this is not necessarily the case. The Golf Club has a significant number of members, of the order of 300+, and is a very busy Club. Play starts at 7.00am on weekdays and 6.00am on weekends and, depending on the time of year, will go on into the evening until the light fails.

**4.15** The Club operates an 8 minute interval between teeing off which enables a large number of golfers to be on the courses at any one time. In addition, a significant amount of the Club's business is based on visits by Golfing Societies for whom they provide catering, including breakfasts in the morning and dinner in the evening. There are also social occasions that can go on until late in the evening.

**4.16** As a consequence, this level of what is essentially an intensive activity, both from the Club House and the use of the golf courses, which occurs in close proximity to the Cottages, is considerable and potentially intrusive and likely to cause conflict between the residents and the users of the Golf Club. It detracts from the residential amenity of the Cottages and to the privacy of potential occupiers.

**4.17** It is also the case that the only access to the Cottages is through the Golf Club car park which has controlled access via a barrier. The operators of the Club are concerned that the potential for unrestricted access through the area outside of Club hours could prove a security risk in this isolated area as well as the restriction causing inconvenience to any future occupiers.

- 4.18** In addition, the relatively isolated location away from any other residential properties is a factor that needs to be taken into account. The nearest dwellings are almost 1 mile distant.
- 4.19** A replacement dwelling on this site albeit not unacceptable in planning terms will also be quite a prominent feature within the landscape of the Golf Club. For a number of years the site has been overgrown and only glimpses of the existing dwellings can be seen. If the site were to be cleared and either one or two replacement dwellings erected, or the existing units brought back into use, they, together with their concomitant residential paraphernalia, would stand out in the otherwise open landscape that is characteristic of this part of the site. In this regard, an aerial photograph is attached at **Appendix 2** that illustrates the location of Farm Cottages and, indeed, their relative prominence. This northern part of the overall site is crossed by a number of public footpaths and any new dwelling would be likely to be viewed from these footpaths.
- 4.20** For all these reasons it is considered that rather than replace the Farm Cottages with a new dwelling in situ, it would be considerably more beneficial in terms of the openness of the Green Belt, the character and appearance of the rural landscape and the interests of the amenity of the future occupiers to relocate the proposed new dwelling on the discreet site identified in this application. It is considered that cumulatively these reasons constitute the very "special circumstances" set out in PPG2 to justify what may, in other circumstances, be considered inappropriate development and that the principle has been established that the relocation site would be appropriate in the context of PPG2 and the Local Plan.
- 4.21** To further reinforce this point, the new site proposed for the house has been specifically chosen primarily to overcome all the shortfalls of the current location of Farm Cottages.
- 4.22** It is a discreet location, adjacent to what is now the extensive residential enclave of Bedwell Park. Its use is, therefore, compatible with the other dwellings in the area, whilst not impacting itself either on the landscape or to the amenity of adjoining residential occupiers, either in physical or practical terms. It will not be an isolated dwelling in the countryside but part of a

larger residential grouping. It is also considerably closer to the highway network and the village of Essendon and other facilities than the current site of Farm Cottages.

**4.23** The site is very well screened by existing mature landscaping and established trees, which will be largely retained if the site is developed. The visual impact of the new development will be minimal and the new house will be barely perceptible, if at all, from wider views. It will certainly not be as prominent in the wider countryside as Farm Cottages.

**4.24** The site currently contains a large Atcost Barn which, together with a part of the wider site, is used intermittently for the storage of waste etc by the Golf Club. It is not, therefore, a 'greenfield site' per se. The removal of the Barn building will, itself, improve the visual appearance of the site. Its removal, together with Farm Cottages, as expressed in Table 1 of this document, will, after the proposed house and garage are built, result in a net decrease in built floorspace in the Green Belt. This will contribute to the general openness of the Green Belt in the wider Area.

**4.25** In terms of Planning Policy, therefore, there are two ways in which this proposal can be seen to represent appropriate development in the Green Belt. Firstly, that as clearly expressed by the Inspector in the recent Vineyard Road Appeal,

*"neither RA4 nor PPG2 define replacement or qualify how the term is to be interpreted..."*

and that he could

*"...see no reason why, in principle, a replacement dwelling must occupy the same location as the original house, or one very close to it."*

**4.26** Secondly, that the re-siting of a new dwelling on a more appropriate site, for the reasons set out at length above, represents very special circumstances.

**4.27** Considered in the round, however, and with the fundamental aim of Green Belt firmly in mind, namely:



*"to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open: the most important attribute of Green Belts is their openness."*

This proposal fully accords with these aims and will effect a positive improvement to the openness, character and appearance of the Green Belt in the area. An Ordnance Survey showing the full extent of the Golf Course and the site of Farm Cottages and the proposed relocation site is attached at **Appendix 4**

#### **4.28 Other Policy Matters**

##### **Policy RA4 ~ Replacement Dwellings in the Green Belt**

The detail of this policy insofar as it has informed the size, scale and design of the proposed new dwelling is considered in **Section 5.0**.

##### **Policy SD1 ~ Sustainable Development**

Accompanying the application is a Sustainability Statement as required by this policy.

##### **Policy R3 ~ Energy Efficiency**

The new dwelling will be constructed to the highest current standards of thermal efficiency. The south facing rear roof slope will enable the incorporation of photo voltaic/solar panels as appropriate.

##### **Policy R11 ~ Biodiversity and Development**

The site is a part of a larger area of open landscape which, in part, acts as a natural wildlife corridor. Initial inspection of the site has not identified any specific habitats of protected species. However, the existing landscaping features will be retained as far as is practicable and reinforced by appropriately native planting as part of a final landscaping scheme. A condition to this affect is acceptable.

##### **Policy R17 ~ Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows**



The applicant fully appreciates the value of the existing landscaping features on the site and the application is accompanied by a detailed Tree Survey. The siting of the proposed dwelling has been specifically chosen to have no impact on the existing trees. However, three large oak trees are to be removed; two of which are dead and the third is recommended for immediate removal. These oak trees will be replaced on the site as a part of a detailed landscaping scheme to be agreed with the Council.

**Policy R28 ~ Historic Parks and Gardens**

The site abuts the historic garden area associated with Bedwell Park. The area of the garden nearest to the proposed new dwelling is now the site of a very substantial new dwelling, Pulham House. The application site has never formed a part of the formal gardens associated with Bedwell Park and the development will have no affect upon them.

**Policy D1 ~ Quality of Design** and

**Policy D2 ~ Character and Context**

Both these policies, together with the detail contained in the Council's Supplementary Design Guidance will be considered in **Section 5.0** of this Statement.

**Policy D8 ~ Landscaping**

See above.

**Policy H3 ~ Loss of Residential Accommodation**

Farm Cottages are currently two independent dwellings. It is proposed to replace them with a single dwelling. Although the policy presumes against the loss of dwellings, in this particular case, the dwellings have, as recently as 2001, been granted planning permission for their replacement with a single dwelling. Indeed, as a matter of law, the two dwellings could be combined into one without the need for planning permission.



**4.29**

To conclude, the application of Planning Policy to this proposal has been very carefully considered throughout the design process. As a consequence, it is considered that the application is justified in Green Belt terms and is also compliant with other policies of the District Plan.

## **5.0**            **DESIGN**

**5.1**            As has been stated previously, this development has been the subject of pre-application discussions with the local planning authority and the new dwelling has been designed to take into account the advice given. It has also been informed by the Design Policies of the District Plan and the adopted Supplementary Guidance.

**5.2**            The Guidance used in PPG2 and reiterated in Policy RA4 has determined the size of the dwelling, insofar as its size should not be materially greater than the existing dwelling. Table 1 of this Statement sets out the detail of the size of the new dwelling. The proposed dwelling, excluding the basement area and garage, has a 20.8% increase in gross external floor area over Farm Cottages. This is not considered to represent a material increase in size. A basement area is included in the proposal. However, this space is to be used purely for ancillary residential purposes and storage facilities. It does not represent habitable floorspace. It is entirely below ground and will have no physical or visual impact on the site. There are three small lightwells associated with the basement. These will be landscaped as a part of the overall landscaping of the site. They, too, have no wider impact on the appearance of the site.

**5.3**            A double garage is proposed to serve the new dwelling. This increases the new floorspace proposed to 39%. However, it is considered that a garage would be required to serve the new house and, as a consequence, it is more appropriate that it be considered at this stage of the process rather than be added incrementally at a later stage.

**5.4**            As is also made clear in Table 1, the combined floorspace of Farm Cottages and the existing Barn on the new site is greater than the proposed new house and garage and will, as a consequence, result in a net decrease in built form within the Green Belt. As a consequence, it is considered that the proposal is compliant with the wording of both PPG2 and Criterion (i) of RA4.

**5.5**            Criterion (ii) of RA4 requires that the proposal dwelling should have no greater visual impact in terms of prominence, bulk and design on the character and appearance and pattern of development of the surrounding

countryside. The issue of visual impact in terms of prominence and impact on the character and appearance of the countryside has been set out in detail in the previous section. The proposed 'new' site is considerably less prominent in the wider landscape than the existing Farm Cottages site and is more appropriately located adjacent to the large recently developed residential enclave around Bedwell Park. The site is well screened by existing landscaping and will not be capable of being viewed within the wider area.

**5.6** The bulk of the dwelling has been carefully considered as a part of the design. The proposed house is only two storeys in height with a ridge height of 9.02m compared with the ridge height on Farm Cottages of 8.8m. This represents an increase of only 0.22m. By way of comparison the recently constructed adjacent dwelling, Pulham House, has a ridge height of 10.92m; significantly higher than is proposed by this scheme. The modest scale and height of the proposed new dwelling is graphically illustrated on Plan PL005, which shows a section through the site between Pulham House to the north and Little Bedwell to the south. It is also the case that the footprint of the Cottages extends to 125.5m<sup>2</sup> whereas the proposed new dwelling has a footprint of 144m<sup>2</sup>. This results in an overall increase in footprint of only 14.8%.

**5.7** Criterion (iii) is concerned with the design of the new dwelling. The architect has had specific regard to the general Design policies contained in the District Plan, specifically D1 and D2. The house is of an individual design in keeping with the quality of buildings in the immediate area. A deliberate decision was taken not to try and reflect any of the design features on the listed Bedwell Park, as this is a massive, visually dominant building of a scale not readily translatable into domestic dwellings. Equally, the new build residential houses designed as terraces and courtyard properties have no features appropriate to a single detached house. Pulham House is a modern individually designed property and the closest dwelling to the application site. Again, it was considered inappropriate to try to emulate that design which is significantly larger and of a greater massing than is appropriate for the application site.

**5.9** The design as proposed is for an attractive two storey dwelling to be constructed of high quality soft red brickwork under a plain, clay tiled, hipped



roof. It is redolent of 1930's domestic architecture in its style with a steeply pitched roof that flares at eaves level. The front elevation is given presence by a projecting front gable under a hipped roof, located eccentrically on the main façade. The line of small windows tucked under the eaves and the large exterior porch accessed under a semi-circular brick archway are particularly reminiscent of early twentieth century design. Two curved leaded windows are inserted into the first floor elevation; one an oriel window and the other a dormer window. This lightness of touch alleviates what is otherwise a very solid, grounded building.

- 5.10** Both side elevations are simple in design but the western flank has a large bay window which is an attractive but simple feature.
- 5.11** The rear elevation mirrors a number of the design features and in particular, the fenestration of the front elevation but incorporates glazed doors to each of the principle ground floor rooms. A small protruding single storey element on the rear elevation of the kitchen incorporates a glazed roof.
- 5.12** The proposed garage is a modest single storey double garage of matching materials.
- 5.13** The siting of the new dwelling and garage has been largely determined by the existing landscaping and particularly the trees on the site. Only a very limited number of trees are proposed for removal including 3 Oak trees; two of which are dead and the third, located at the northern part of the site, is in a poor state and is to be removed for safety reasons.
- 5.14** The house has been sited to ensure that there is sufficient space around the building clear of trees, so as to provide useable amenity space for the dwelling thereby not putting the remaining trees under pressure for removal on amenity grounds.
- 5.15** As stated previously, further landscaping will take place on the site which will include the replacement of the oak trees in suitable locations.
- 5.16** The garage, which is of a modest size, is located just to the north of the proposed dwelling adjacent to the site boundary. It will provide for two car

parking spaces as well as internal bicycle storage. Additional parking is provided in front of the garage and on the forecourt area. Parking in accordance with the Council's Standards is, therefore, available on the site.

- 5.17** Bin storage areas to meet the Council's requirements will be accommodated adjacent to the eastern flank wall of the house. It is anticipated that future residents will place their bins outside the site on the access roadway for collection.
- 5.18** The driveway and patio areas to the house will be constructed of permeable materials.
- 5.19** It is considered that the house as designed is both attractive and appropriate to its location. Individually designed houses are a feature of this rural location and this dwelling will contribute to that distinctiveness as required by Criterion (iii) of Policy RA4.
- 5.20** It is noted that Policy RA4 also states that Permitted Development (PD) rights may be removed from replacement dwellings where the original dwelling has been previously extended. In this regard neither of the Farm Cottages has benefited from the implementation of either PD rights or extensions in the past. The proposed building is, however, larger than the Cottages and it is understood that PD rights may be removed where they would enable the extension of the dwelling.
- 5.21** However, we see no justification for the removal of PD rights that restrict the construction of structures in the garden for ancillary residential purposes. It is a large plot, well screened from public view and such modest structures would have no detrimental impact upon the character or appearance of the area. It is likely for instance, that timber sheds will be required to house garden equipment etc to service the dwelling. It would not be reasonable to expect the occupiers to make planning applications for such structures.



**6.0**            **ACCESS**

**6.1**            The site is located within a rural area which is poorly served by public transport. It is the case, therefore, that the occupiers of the house would be reliant on the private car for their everyday needs. By the same token, however, the residents of Farm Cottages (to be demolished) would be in a worse situation, being more remote.

**6.2**            The house is located on a relatively level site. Access is possible both into the house and around the garden by the disabled, including those using wheelchairs. The staircase is wide enough to accommodate a stairlift should one be required or a personal lift could be constructed with minor modifications to the internal structure. There is a separate ground floor study proposed which, together with the adjacent utility room, could be modified to provide a pleasant self-contained bedroom/bathroom for a disabled person, enabling them total access throughout the ground floor.

## **7.0**            **CONCLUSIONS**

**7.1**            The application seeks the demolition of Farm Cottages and the erection of a new house and garage in a different location on land forming a part of the Hatfield London Country Club.

**7.2**            Both the sites are located on the golf course and are in the same ownership. Both are included within the general area of the Green Belt wherein there is a presumption against inappropriate development.

**7.3**            The proposal is essentially for a replacement dwelling. Recent appeal decisions, including one nearby in Vineyards Road, Northaw, have established that PPG2: Green Belts does not define 'replacement' or qualify how the term is to be interpreted. The same is true of the Council's Policy RA4. This notwithstanding, however, there is a number of reasons why the existing Cottages should be relocated from their current location. These include levels of activity on the golf course and in the Club House, the isolation of the property from other houses and the relative prominence of the houses within the wider landscape.

**7.4**            By way of contrast, the new site overcomes all the deficiencies of the existing site; it is a discreet, well landscaped site and in close proximity to the large residential enclave of Bedwell Park. A dwelling in this location would have a significantly lesser impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing site. It is, therefore, considered that the proposal is both appropriately considered as a Replacement Dwelling and represents very special circumstances such as to warrant an exception to Green Belt policy.

**7.5**            The criteria for a replacement dwelling contained in PPG2 and Policy RA4 have guided the proposal. The new dwelling is not 'materially' larger than those to be demolished. It is of a height, bulk and massing that is not dissimilar to the existing two dwellings and it has been designed to be individual with attractive elevations and using high quality materials. Importantly, because of the new site, it will have a lesser impact upon the wider landscape and the character of the area than the demolished properties. In fact, the floorspace of the Cottages, combined with the Barn to be demolished on the new site, will result in approximately a 10%





reduction in overall floorspace in the Green Belt. This will ensure that the all important attribute of openness in such areas is not only maintained but also improved.

**7.6** All the other relevant policies of the Local Plan have been considered and taken into account in the design process. The application is considered to be wholly compliant with the policies of the District Plan.