

# **Northaw Riding School Planning Statement**

**May 2015**



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## Contents Page

1. Introduction	3
2. The Site	5
3. Planning History	8
4. Pre-Application	10
5. Proposal	12
6. Planning Policy and Assessment	13
7. Design and Access	34
8. Conclusion	48

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## 1. Introduction

This Planning, Design and Access Statement is submitted by the Heronslea Group to accompany the planning application for Northaw Riding School, Northaw. The site is currently utilised as an Equestrian Centre/Riding School.

This statement provides a detailed review of the development proposed, the planning history of the site, a review of relevant national, and local planning policy guidance, and also an assessment of the relevant planning issues.

This Design and Access chapter assess the design of the proposal. The statement is required as a consequence of Section 42 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and has been prepared in accordance with former advice set out in DCLG Circular 01/2006.

The description of the planning application is:

**“Residential development including the conversion of listed barn to residential unit, parking and amenity space.”**

The statement is submitted along with:

- HL001 Location Plan
- HL002 Topographical Survey
- HL003 Existing Elevation 1
- HL004 Existing Elevation 2
- HL005 Existing Elevation 3
- HL006 Existing Elevation 4
- HL007 Existing Elevation 5
- HL008 Site Plan
- HL009 House Type 1a
- HL010 House Type 1b
- HL011 House Type 2
- HL012 House Type 2 elevations
- HL013 House Type 3
- HL014 House Type 4

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- HL015 House Type 5a
  - HL016 House Type 5b
  - HL017 House Type 6
  - HL018 House Type 7
  - Northaw Riding School Transport Statement - EAS
  - Ecology Appraisal - ACD
  - Northaw Riding School Flood Risk Assessment - EAS
  - Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment (Heritage Statement)- ASE
  - Arboricultural Report - DCCLA
  - TPP/NFNH/010 Tree Protection Plan - DCCLA
  - TPP/NFNH/020 Landscape Plan -DCCLA
  - Statement of Community Engagement - Heronslea
  - Heritage Statement - The Heritage Advisory

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## 2. The Site

The site is a rectangular area of land located on the road frontage with Northaw Road West, about 175 metres east of the junction with Park Road. The site is currently a mixture of hard surfacing, buildings and landscaping and is used as a Riding/Equestrian Centre. The site is laid out with a number of ménages, storage bays and storage containers for offices and ancillary facilities on its southern boundary. There is a substantial hedge on the Northaw Road West frontage. The area is well developed and located within the metropolitan Green Belt.

The site includes the following:

- Residential House
- a number of stables
- Barns
- Listed barn
- Car storage area
- Three access points
- Ménages
- Covered storage
- Garage
- Substantial hardstanding and roads
- Ancillary Structures



**Figure 1: Site Aerial Photo**

## Local Context



**Figure 2 Local Facilities**

Within Northaw there are a number of existing facilities, which make the village highly sustainable. Figure 2 demonstrates that they are within 800 metres of the site, which is accepted as sustainable 10 minutes walk.



Bus Stops Adjacent to the site are bus stops with regular services between Potters Bar and Waltham Cross (242).



There is a children's nursery in Northaw - Squiggles Nursery.



The village primary school (Northaw Church of England Primary School) is located on Vineyards Road.



Within Northaw, there is a Village Hall which is available for hire and community use.



There are two public houses in Northaw, the Sun and the Two Brewers.



Within Northaw there is also a large church, the St Thomas a Becket Church located on Vineyards Road.



In addition to a number of amenity areas, and the countryside walks in Northaw there is also a Children's Play Area. An Amenity Area is also proposed on the application site.

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### 3. Planning History

The site has an extensive planning history. Planning permission for the use of the site as livery stables and riding school with ménage was granted in 1995 under ref. S6/1995/0545/FP. The full planning history of the site is set out below:

S6/2014/1314/S73A - Variation of condition 2 (agricultural occupancy) of planning permission S6/1987/0013/FP. No Decision

S6/2014/0904/FP - Construction of 2.5m wide track No Decision

S6/2014/0082/LUE - Certificate of lawfulness for continued use of building as single dwelling house. Refused

S6/2013/2275/MA - Erection of two stable blocks and office together with retention of existing hardsurfacing - Refused

S6/2013/1910/MA - Erection of two stable blocks and office together with retention of existing hardsurfacing - Refused

S6/2013/0670/EA - Operational Development - Formation of hardstanding/development taking place to the rear of the barn - Withdrawn

S6/2012/2461/FP - Erection of two stable blocks. Refused

S6/2009/0566/FP - Erection of replacement dwelling following demolition of existing dwelling. Refused.

S6/2006/1 1 23/AG - Erection of open fronted barn for storage of hay. Approved.

S6/1995/0545/FP Permanent use as livery stables and. riding school with ménage (variation to condition 1 of Planning Permission S6/0319/93/FP which restricted permission to temporary period). Approved.

S6/1995/0089/FP ~ Erection of flood lighting to existing ménage. Approved.

S6/1993/031 9/FP - Use of existing stables (with permission for stabling bloodstock horses) for livery and riding school and formation of ménage (exercise area). Approved.

S6/1 992/0238/FP Change of use of a) an agricultural workshop and b) an agricultural barn, for the stabling of-bloodstock horses. Approved.

S6/1991/0957/FP - Single stored rear extension. Approved.

S6/1991/0362/FP - Erection of car port and entrance porch. Refused. Appeal - Porch allowed, car port dismissed ( would appear the carport may have been later built under permitted development)



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S6/1991/0371/FP - Single stored side extension. Refused. Appeal dismissed.

S6/1988/0301/FP - Erection of detached garage. Approved.

S6/1987/001 3/FP Detached agricultural workers dwelling with parking space  
Approved.

S6/1985/0390 Site for dwelling for agricultural worker. Refused.

S6/1980/0044 - Change of use of farm building to dwellings of agricultural  
workmen. Approved

S6/1980/0043 - Cattleyard and storage building for beef unit. Approved

S6/1979/0720/LB Demolition of existing dwelling. Approved

S6/1979/0151/LB Demolition of existing buildings and erection of dwellinghouse.  
Refused

S6/1 974/0646 Change of use of farm buildings to dwellings for agricultural  
workmen. Approved.

We understand that two buildings do not have planning permission and not been  
included in any calculations within the planning application.

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## 4. Pre Application

The Heronslea Group submitted a pre-application for 24 units in early April 2015. The pre application scheme is shown in Figure 3.



**Figure 3: Pre Application Scheme**



**Figure 4: Revised Scheme 1**



**Figure 5: Revised Scheme 2**

Positive discussions were had the Council regarding the principle of the proposals. The application had a reduction of footprint and hardstanding; however it increased the volume on site - as a result concerns were raised regarding the scale of the development. The council also felt the amount of hardstanding could be reduced. The Council also felt that the form of the development needed to be sympathetic to the character of the listed building and village. The Council also encouraged more green/landscaped areas on the development and the inclusion of turning heads for large vehicles.

Following the pre-application meeting Heronslea Revised the scheme, introducing a low heights buildings in a quadrant adjacent to the listed building.

The change was welcomed by the Council, however, concerns were still raised by the scale of the development and the setting of the listed building. As a result the number of units was reduced on the scheme and an amenity area was proposed.

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## 5. The Proposal

The application seeks full planning consent for 14 residential dwellings. 13 new build units and the conversion of the Grade II listed building into a residential unit. The houses will be a mix of three and four bedroom properties.

The quarter adjacent to the listed building will be 1.5 storeys and the southern part of the development 2 storey.

All the house are supported by a garage, driveway, and garden. The development also includes a public amenity area which can be used by new and existing residents..

The existing buildings and structure would be demolished - apart from the listed building.

The access points to the site would be reduce from three (two vehicle and one pedestrian) to two (one vehicle and one pedestrian).

A large amenity area is proposed in the west half of the development this would be available for use by new and existing residents.



**Figure 6: Application Layout Plan**

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## 6. Planning Policy and assessment

Section 38(6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that all applications be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

In this instance, the adopted development plan is the adopted Welwyn Hatfield District Plan (2005), which designates the site within the Green Belt.



**Figure 7: Extract of Welwyn Hatfield Proposal Map**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in March 2012 and sets out the Government’s planning policies for England, and how these policies are expected to be applied. The policies in the document, taken as a whole, constitute the Government’s view of what sustainable development means in practice for the planning system. Paragraph 14 states:-

‘At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking.’

It also advises that where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date permission should be granted unless adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh benefits or specific policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted.

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Paragraph 187 of the Framework is also of direct relevance which states:-

“Local planning authorities should look for solutions rather than problems, and decision-takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible. Local planning authorities should work proactively with applicants to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.”

Given that the adopted Local Plan is dated 2004 and is clearly out of date, the NPPF is the key consideration in the assessment of these proposals and as such references will therefore be made to it throughout this statement.

Paragraph 17 of this document outlines the ‘core planning principles’ amongst which are:

- Always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings
- Encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value
- Promote mixed use developments, and encourage multiple benefits from the use of land in urban areas
  
- Actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made suitable

Paragraph 47 deals with housing land supply and seeks to ensure that Local Authorities maintain a minimum of 5 years’ worth of deliverable sites with an additional buffer of either 5% or 20% (dependent upon the record of delivery in that authority).

Paragraph 49 deals with applications for housing and states that they should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Paragraph 58 deals with design and states that planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure developments:

- Will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development

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- Establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live work and visit
  - Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public space as part of the development) and support local facilities and transport networks
  - Respond to local character and history and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation
  - Create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion
  - Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.

The site is located within the designated Green Belt. Paragraph 87 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in ‘very special circumstances’.

Paragraph 88 of the NPPF requires local planning authorities to give substantial weight to any harm to the Green Belt. It also states that ‘very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

The framework adds that one of the specific and limited types of new development that may be appropriate within the Green Belt in principle, is the complete redevelopment of previously developed sites whether they are redundant or in continuing use, which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land within it than the existing development (Paragraph 89).

Paragraph 111 states that the effective use of land should be encouraged by re-using land that has previously been developed (brownfield land)

Paragraph 159 deals with housing needs and states that Local Planning Authorities prepare a Strategic Housing Market Assessment to assess their full housing needs and should identify the scale and mix of housing and the range of tenures that the local population is likely to need over the plan period.

## **Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005**



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The adopted Local Plan remains in the development plan for the site. A number of policies were saved in 2008 and are relevant to the determination of this application.

They are summarised as follows:

**Policy H1** deals with new housing development and identifies previously developed sites allocated for development.

**Policy H2** deals with the location of windfall residential development and states that applications will be assessed against a number of criteria including the availability of developed sites; location, accessibility and public transport; existing and potential infrastructure and any constraints on development.

**Policy H6** deals with density and states that all residential developments of 5 or more dwellings are to be built at densities of 30 to 50 dwellings per hectare and in central areas and areas with good accessibility by modes of public transport, residential development will be expected to be close to or exceed 50 dwellings per hectare.

**Policy H7** deals with affordable housing and states that the Council will expect all proposals for residential development with 25 units or more, to include the provision of a minimum of 30% affordable housing.

**Policy H10** deals with accessible housing and states that for all residential developments of 5 or more dwellings, the Council will seek to secure a proportion of dwellings to be built to lifetime homes standard.

**Policy OS3** deals with the provision of open space in new development and states that substantial new residential development (of 0.4 hectares or above) will be expected to make a contribution to the provision of children's play space and informal open space, where the increased demands generated by the new households cannot be met by current levels of provision.

**Policy SD1** deals with sustainable development and states that proposals will be permitted where the principles of sustainable development can be demonstrated and accord with the objectives and policies of the plan.

**Policy R1** deals with previously developed land and states that the Council will require development to take place on land which has been previously used or developed to make the best use of land in the district.

**Policy R3** deals with energy efficiency and states that the Council will expect all development to include measures to maximise energy conservation through the



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design of buildings, site layout and provision of landscaping and incorporate the best practical environmental option (BPEO) for energy supply.

**Policy R11** deals with biodiversity and states that all new development will be required to demonstrate how it would contribute positively to the biodiversity of the site against a number of criteria.

**Policy M2** deals with Transport Assessments and states that developers of major, new, traffic generating developments will be required to submit a Transport Assessment with the planning application.

**Policy M4** deals with developer contributions and states that where appropriate a contribution made to the Council to mitigate the impact of the development; ensured through planning conditions, Section 106 Agreement or other legal agreement

**Policy M14** deals with parking and states that the Council will require parking provision for new development to be made in accordance with the standards set out in the Council's supplementary planning guidance on parking.

**Policy D1** deals with design and states that new development should incorporate the design principles and policies in the Plan and the guidance contained in the Supplementary Design Guidance.

**Policy D2** states that new development should respect and relate to the context of the area in which it is proposed. Proposals should maintain and where possible enhance the character of the area.

**Policy D3** deals with design and states that all new development should incorporate the principles of continuity and enclosure to distinguish between public and private spaces.

**Policy D5** deals with design and states that all new development should take account of its impact on existing and proposed movement patterns make provision for pedestrian, cyclist and passenger transport facilities.

**Policy D6** states that new development should enhance and contribute to the legibility of the development itself and of the area in which it is located.

**Policy D7** deals with design and states that the design of new development is required to contribute to safer communities, to help with the reduction of the fear of crime.

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**Policy D8** deals with design and states that all development should include landscaping as an integral part of the overall design and should reflect the urban landscape design in the district.

**Policy D11** deals with design and states that a design statement must be submitted with all applications to justify how the development meets the design principles, policies and guidance set out in the Plan and the Supplementary Design Guidance

Northaw is a designated settlement within the Green Belt as defined in **Policy RA2** of the local plan, wherein development will only be permitted for a purpose listed within that policy. Settlements within the Green Belt are subject to general presumption against inappropriate development. Paragraph 4.13 defines two categories of Green Belt settlements. The first of these categories of settlement are Essendon, Northaw, Newgate Street and Lemsford which have a number of facilities with a degree of self sufficiency. The Council considers these settlements have local needs that may justify exceptional development.

Local Plan **Policy RA17** is concerned with the re-use of rural buildings and indicates that the change of use or adaptation of rural buildings will be permitted provided that a number of criteria are satisfied. These include:

- The proposed use and any proposed extensions or alterations are in accordance with Green Belt policies;
- The intensity of use of the site does not substantially increase;
- Any proposed alterations would be in accordance with the design policies in the plan and the supplementary Design Guidance;
- The new activity is in sympathy with its surroundings and there is no adverse effect on the amenity of nearby residential properties and other uses;

The existing structure is of a permanent nature and is not in such poor repair that it could only be brought back into use by complete or substantial reconstruction.

The site includes a listed barn. We would look to retain this and convert it to a residential unit. We would also look to remove a number of the unsympathetic elements which have been added to the building.

We will seek to meet, Policy R26 - Alternative Uses for Listed Buildings and meet the Councils Criteria :

- (i) The proposal would not harm the character or setting of the building;

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(ii) The change of use could be successfully implemented without the essential need for other development which would harm the building's character or setting, and;

(iii) The change of use results in the continued preservation of the building's fabric or its restoration.

Policy R26 - Alternative Uses for Listed Buildings, states Applications for the change of use of Listed Buildings will only be permitted when all of the following criteria are met:

i. The proposal would not harm the character or setting of the building;

ii. The change of use could be successfully implemented without the essential need for other development which would harm the building's character or setting, and;

iii. The change of use results in the continued preservation of the building's fabric or its restoration.

Policy R27 - Demolition of Listed Buildings, states Listed Building Consent for the complete or partial demolition of any building of special architectural or historic interest will not be granted other than in the following exceptional circumstances:

i. Clear and convincing evidence has been provided that it is not practicable to continue to use the building for its present or previous use and that no viable alternative uses can be found, and that preservation in some form of charitable or community ownership is not possible;

ii. The physical condition of the building has deteriorated, to a point that it can be demonstrated that demolition is essential in the interests of public safety. A comprehensive structural report will be required to support this criterion;

iii. Demolition or major alteration will not be considered without acceptable detailed plans for the site's development. Conditions will be imposed in order to ensure a contractual obligation has been entered into for the construction of the replacement building(s) and / or the landscaping of the site prior to the commencement of demolition; and

iv. Where, exceptionally, consent is granted for the demolition or major alteration to a listed building, before any demolition or major alteration takes place, applicants will be required to record details of the building by measured drawings, text and photographs, and this should be submitted to and agreed by the Council.

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The site is also located in an area of archaeological significance. Policy R29 -of the Local Plan states that where a proposal for development may affect remains of archaeological significance, or may be sited in an area of archaeological potential, developers will be required to undertake an archaeological assessment, if necessary with a field evaluation, and to submit a report on the findings to the Local Planning Authority, before an application is determined. Such information would support our application.

### **Assessment**

Paragraph 215 of the NPPF states that due weight should be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to their degree of consistency with the Framework. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) encourages the provision of more housing within towns and other specified settlements and encourages the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed.

Local Plan Policy R1 which requires development to take place on previously used or developed land is consistent with the NPPF.

Policy SD1 aims to promote sustainable development and the ‘golden thread’ running through the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development (para. 14). The Framework states that there are three aspects to sustainable development; social, economic and environmental. These roles should not be undertaken in isolation, because they are mutually dependant (paras. 7-8).

The site lies within the identified Green Belt, where the Green Belt Strategy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Section 9: Protecting Green Belt Land). Therefore aside from the presumption in favour of sustainable development and core planning principles set out in paragraphs 6-17 of the NPPF the most relevant paragraph is 89. This states that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in Green Belt, unless it falls within one of the exceptions set out.

One exception (bullet point 6) states that previously developed land can be partially or completely redeveloped subject to development preserving the openness of the Green Belt and not contravening the purposes of including land within it.

With regards to the above, the current lawful use of the buildings and land is as a Riding School. As such, with regards to Annex 2 of the NPPF, it is confirmed that the application site, in this current chapter of the planning history of the site, is comprised of previously developed land. On this basis, it is considered

that the construction of residential units and the associated change of use of land to residential, subject to preserving the openness of the Green Belt and not conflicting with the purposes of including land within it, meets the above mentioned exception for appropriate development within paragraph 89 of the NPPF.

Subject to preserving the openness of the Green Belt and not conflicting with the purposes of including land within it, the proposed stables would be an appropriate element of the proposal with regard to paragraph 89 of the NPPF.

The key test is location of the development, the volume, footprint and hardstanding of the development, this is assessed in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Comparison of existing and proposed schemes

	<b>Existing</b>	<b>Proposed</b>	<b>Difference</b>	<b>% Change</b>
<b>Volume</b>	10,867 m <sup>3</sup>	4,209 m <sup>3</sup>	-6,688 m <sup>3</sup>	<b>-62%</b>
<b>Hardstanding</b>	6,210 m <sup>2</sup>	2,579 m <sup>2</sup>	-3,631 m <sup>2</sup>	<b>-58%</b>
<b>Footprint</b>	4,360 m <sup>2</sup>	1,951 m <sup>2</sup>	-2,409 m <sup>2</sup>	<b>-55%</b>

The application would result in a reduction in the volume, hardstanding and footprint.

The spread of buildings on the site has varied between the existing and the proposed. The buildings are now spread out on the site slightly, however, this has resulted in an increase 'sky gaps' between the buildings, which allows greater views through the site than the current arrangement. The

The location of the development has been dictated by the Council to ensure that the setting and character of the listed building is enhanced.

As such, the development is in accordance with the relevant policies of the adopted Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005, the adopted Supplementary Design Guide and with the NPPF. The application site is comprised of previously developed land. As such, and as the proposal would not result in harm to the openness of the Green Belt and would not conflict with the purposes of including land within it, the proposed development is appropriate with regards to paragraph 89 of the NPPF.

The application meets the test of the Green Belt, and does not preclude any sites within the urban area coming forward.

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## **Emerging Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan**

The Council is progressing work on a new Local Plan which will cover the period 2011-2031. The most up-to-date timetable for the preparation of the Plan is as follows:

January 2015 – Draft Local Plan Consultation;  
End of 2015 – Final Local Plan Consultation;  
Early 2016 – Examination in Public;  
2016 – Formal Adoption.

The Plan is at an early stage in the process and therefore will have limited weight in the determination of this planning application. However, the evidence base that supports the plan is considered relevant to the determination of this application subject to the date of its preparation and compliance with the NPPF.

## **Emerging Neighbourhood Plan**

It is understood that a Neighbourhood plan is being produced for Northaw and Cuffley. However, a draft version of the plan has yet to have been published and as a result no material consideration can be given to this emerging plan.

## **Housing Trajectory and 5 Year Supply**

The council's evidence base comprises a number of studies that have been carried out to inform the preparation of the Local Plan.

The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment: Phase 1 (December 2013) and the Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council Annual Monitoring Report (December 2013) are the most recent documents detailing the housing land supply in the district.

The AMR details the housing land supply against two separate targets. Target A is set against the rolled forward Welwyn Hatfield District Plan target that covered the period 1991 to 2011 however has been rolled forward for 2011 to 2021.

Based on an assessment of this figure, the Council state that they would have 76 years' worth of supply with no requirement to identify any future development sites. This is clearly based on an evidence base and plan target which is wholly out of date.

The Council then refer to a more realistic target. Target B is set against the Emerging Core Strategy (2012) which has a target of 6,800 dwellings between 2011 and 2029; the Emerging Core Strategy

is no longer being progressed but at the time of the AMR was based on the most up-to-date information. Based on this target the AMR states that there is 5.38 years worth of housing supply.

Matters have moved on since then with the Council having further updated its assessment of housing need to support the new Local Plan. In September 2014 the Council accepted the findings of the 2013 Strategic Housing Market Assessment, which identified a need to provide 625 dwellings over the plan period. It is on this basis that an assessment of housing land supply is calculated and set out below.

A	Total Dwelling Requirement 2011-2031	12,500
B	Annual Requirement	625
C	Completions 2011-2014	653
D	Remaining Requirement (a-c)	11847
E	Annual Build Rate Requirement (d/17 years remaining in plan period)	696
F	5 year requirement (ex5)	3480
G	Projected 5 year supply (2014/15 to 2018/19)	2203
H	Projected Over Supply (g-f)	-1277
I	Projected % of supply (Requirement = 120%)	63%
J	Number of Years Supply (g/e) (requirement 6 years)	3.16 years

The above calculation has been based on the application of a 20% buffer, which the NPPF advocates where there has been persistent under delivery of housing. It is reasonable to state that there has been persistent under delivery with only 653 completions (including 2014 projections) over the last 3 years, which just exceeds the requirement for a single year.

The table above shows that the Council can currently only demonstrate 3.16 years' worth of supply, just over half of the requirement. Even with a conservative estimate and the application of a 5% buffer, the Council will still be deficient by over 2 years' worth of housing land supply.

### **Affordable Housing**

It was advised during the pre-application process that affordable housing would not be required from the site as the number of units is below the 25 unit threshold.

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## **Wider site area**

Concern was raised during the public consultation regarding other land under the control of the land owner. This land is outside of this application, and the Heronslea Group application is only regarding the redline area.

The wider area is under a rental agreement for grazing/equestrian uses. The sites are accessed from other points, and does not require access from the Riding School. The existing residential dwelling on Northaw Riding school is used by staff of the riding school who are on site for the care of the horses. The wider area is managed and used by staff who live elsewhere within the area, and staff are not required on site. The other land is regularly used for Point to Point racing for example.



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## Planning Precedence

### Fir Stable (Welwyn Hatfield)

Outline approval was allowed by the Council for erection of 5 dwellings and a stables block on a former livery. The site consists of a number of buildings including an old mechanics workshop, five stable blocks and a number of single storey units within the northern section of the site. The old mechanics workshop is a large open structure internally with three office rooms to the northern end of the building. This application sought outline planning permission for the erection of five dwellings and a stable block with approval sought for access, layout and scale (appearance and landscaping would for reserved matters). Four dwellings would be located towards the south of the site, with the remaining dwelling sited in the northern corner of the application site. The block of stables would be located towards the centre of the site, between the two separate locations for the dwellings, and would not be for commercial use. The Council and the Committee concluded The impacts of the proposal have been considered on the visual amenity of the area, including the Green Belt, on the amenity of neighbouring dwellings and on other relevant material considerations. It has been concluded that the proposal is acceptable in terms of the above. As such, the development is in accordance with the relevant policies of the adopted Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005, the adopted Supplementary Design Guide and with the NPPF.



**Figure 8: Existing Site Plan**



**Figure 9: Planning Approval Planning**

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## Nicoll Farm Stable, Elstree (Hertsmere)

Nicoll Farm Stables was a private working livery centre located off Allum Lane in Elstree. It is located within the Green Belt it included a number of Grade II Listed Buildings. The site was made up of a open raised ménage, horse walker, associated barns, residential premises, stable blocks and indoor riding school. These buildings are clustered to the front of the site with the ménage and car parking to the rear of the site. A number of fields to the north and west are also used as part of the equestrian business currently operating from the site.

Planning permission was granted for the erection of 5 No. detached 4 bedroom dwellings with basement accommodation and associated car parking & landscaping, and later a further 2 houses at a later date. The Council concluded that the NPPF has made exceptions in brownfield developed sites within the Green Belt if the proposed development has no greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development. The scheme was compared with the existing buildings with respect to volume, hardstand and volume. The Council included all buildings and structures on the site as part of the volume - this included the ménages. The Committee Report states that the development has no greater impact on the Green Belt and is in accordance with Green Belt policy. In addition, there are clear benefits and improvements to the openness of the Green Belt particularly given the significant reductions in volume and hardstanding. Therefore the proposal is acceptable in regards to the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.



**Figure 10: CGI of Nicoll Farm**

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## Land South of Merry Hill Road and St Margaret’s School, Merry Hill Road, Bushey, (Hertsmere)

Planning permission was granted for development works to create 26 residential units through the conversion of existing locally listed buildings, grade II listed barn & erection of new build houses & flats. Demolition of locally listed former stables building, outbuildings & the preparatory classroom building, removal of the staff car parking area & the tennis court. The Council concluded that the construction of new buildings provided it falls within the purposes, as outlined under paragraph 89 of the NPPF 2012, which includes ‘the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites whether redundant or in continuing use which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development.’ The Council assessed the impact of the development in comparison of the footprint and volume. The development increase the volume but very special circumstances were demonstrated to allow this increase.



**Figure 11: Existing Plan**



**Figure 12: Existing Plan**



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### **Yard At Rear Of The Paddocks, Croft Lane, Chipperfield, Kings Langley (Dacorum)**

Planning permission granted for replacement of existing stables, manege and outbuildings with a new single storey dwelling with vehicular access. The case officer concluded that the acceptability in principle of this proposal is based on paragraph 89 of the NPPF which lists exceptions to the construction of new buildings that are otherwise deemed to be inappropriate. One of these exceptions is the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings) which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it. The new building is significantly smaller than those which are being replaced and as such the impact on openness would be improved and the amended access details showing a grass access track would not have a harmful impact on the Green Belt. The proposal would not conflict with the purposes of including land within a Green Belt (to prevent sprawl, the merging of settlements and safeguarding the countryside). In general terms, therefore, the proposal appears to meet the requirements of one of the exceptions listed in the NPPF.

### **Rowood Farm, Burtons Lane, Chalfont St Giles (Chiltern)**

Planning permission was allowed at appeal for demolition of part of existing barn and conversion of remaining barn and adjacent grooms' accommodation to one three-bedroom residential unit; erection of a detached garage and stable block, and change of use of existing outbuildings to ancillary residential use as a bin store and recycling storage. The Inspector concluded that para 89 of the NPPF allows for replacement buildings in the Green Belt, where there is no harm to the Green Belt.

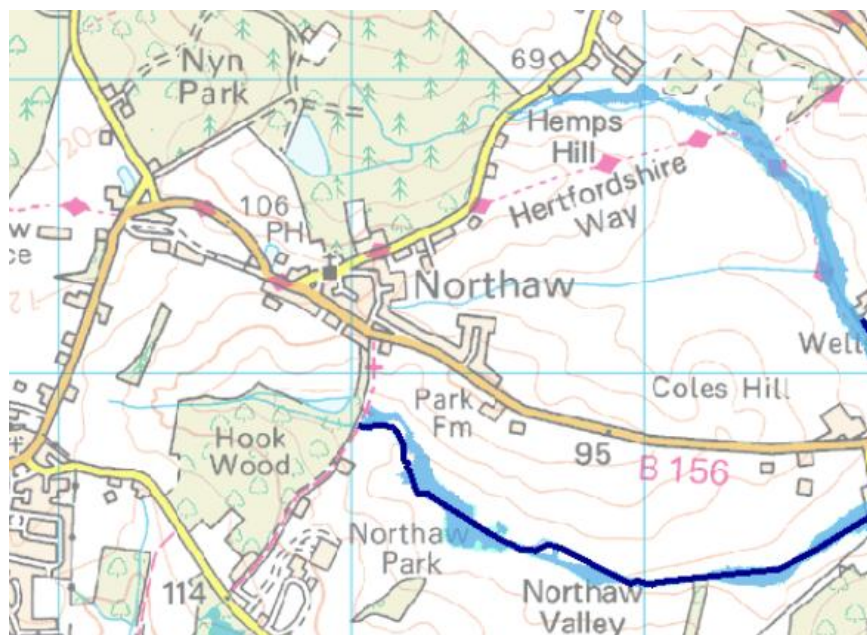
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## Highways

The application is supported by a Transport Statement, which demonstrates that the application results in a reduction of traffic movements when compared to the approved use of the site as a riding school, which results in higher transport movements. This report also demonstrates that all the dwellings meet the Council's Car Parking Standards. Each house has a driveway and garage, and the development includes visitor spaces. The Transport Statement concludes The proposed development is policy compliant and will have a positive effect on the local highway network. The number of existing access points to the network will be reduced and the proposed access exceeds the visibility as required in DMRB, therefore we cannot see any reason why the development should not be approved.

## Flood Risk

The site is not located in an area susceptible to flooding as set out on the Environment Agencies national flood map (Figure 13).



**Figure 13:** Flood Map

The application is with a flood risk assessment which demonstrates that the development will reduce the amount of runoff from the site when compared to this existing.

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## **Landscaping**

The application is supported with a landscape plan, which illustrates the landscaping proposed, which will enhance the development and help to integrate it into its surroundings.

## **Heritage**

The application is supported by an Archaeological Survey and Heritage Statement. These demonstrate that the development makes significant benefits to the listed building. The listed building is in a declining state and the development will secure the future of the listed building for the long term. The development will also improve the setting of the listed building, as it will allow views to and from the building at the rear of the site.

## **Ecology**

A full phase 1 survey has been produced of the site, this states by implementing the recommendations will ensure that there are no significant impacts upon protected species and that the proposals will be in conformity with relevant legislation and policy.





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## 7. Design and Access

### Location, Background and Process

The building lies on the edge of Northaw village. Northaw is a village in the Welwyn Hatfield district of Hertfordshire, England. It is part of the civil parish of Northaw and Cuffley.

The village centre of Northaw lies to the west of the site and Cuffley/Goffs Oak to the east. The site is situated on the summit of a hill at c. 100m OD with the land dropping away into the valley of the Northaw Brook to the south west. A shallow valley is also present between the site and the village of Northaw itself, similarly situated on a summit. In general the landscape around the site is undulating and rural in character with a number of landscape parks and areas of woodland.

The existing site located off Northaw West Road.

The existing built form is of varying style and heights. A number of the buildings are concentrated on the eastern side of the site.



### Existing Buildings

The site includes a number of building and structures, which includes:

- Residential House
- a number of stables
- Barns
- Listed barn
- Car storage area
- Three access points

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- Ménages
  - Covered storage
  - Garage
  - Substantial hardstanding and roads
  - Ancillary Structures

There are a number of buildings on the site of varying dates including a (Listed) timber framed barn (2) which may be of 17th century date, modern barns, a cattle yard and more recent (2012) timber stables. Areas of hardstanding are common and various tracks and access routes around the site show evidence of the raising of ground levels.

The listed building will be retained as part of the proposals.

The following photos illustrate a number of the structures/buildings on the site.





















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## Geology

The superficial geology of the site comprises Sand and Gravel (of uncertain age and origin). The underlying solid geology comprises London Clay

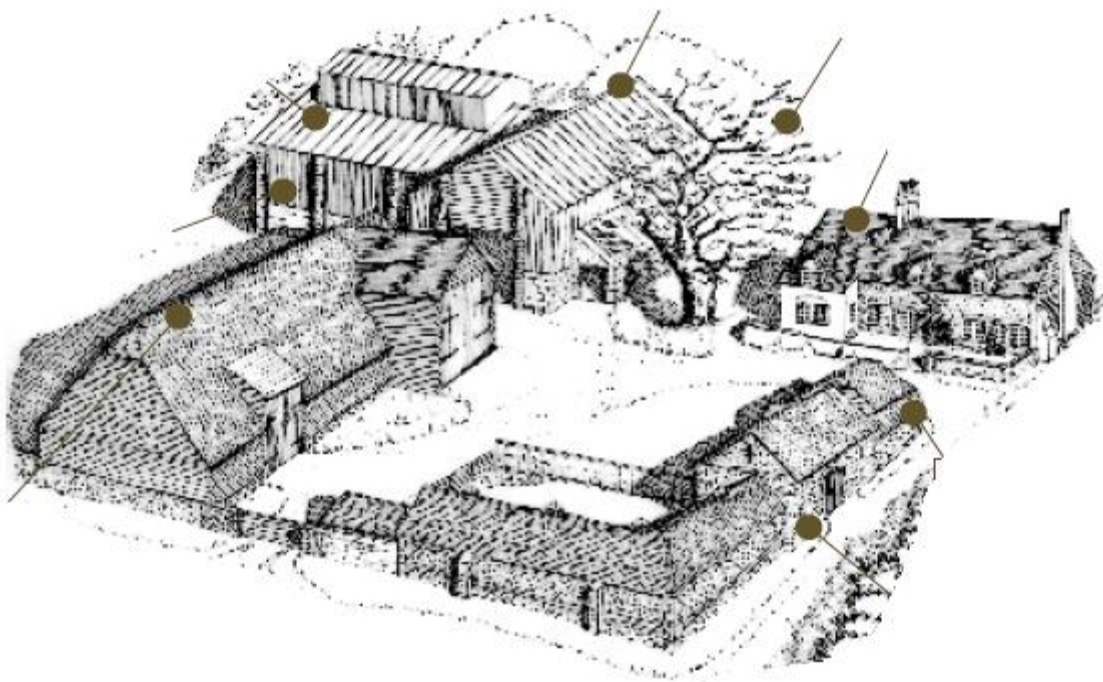
**Proposed Buildings** 14 dwellings, 13 new build, and the conversion of the listed barn. Of the 16 new buildings, 4 are 1.5 storey weatherboarded barns, and 8 are brick style houses.

## Density

The density of the scheme is 12 dwellings per hectare, which is below that encouraged in the Council's Local Plan, however, this is more appropriate in the village setting in this context.

## Design

The elevational treatment of the new barn style buildings reflects the listed barns and are sensitive to the listed building with their lower heights, and stepped roof, to provide depth to the buildings. The approach is based on best practice advice in the Chiltern Design Guide, which is often heralded as guidance for this style of development. The approach was encouraged by the Council in the Pre-Application Discussions.





The bricked houses will be two storey family houses, the design of the houses is influence by nearby houses, but also influenced by house more typical in a village location. The following images provide examples of similar houses that Heronslea are building nearby in Bentley Heath on a former commercial centre in the Green Belt.





## **Separation**

The separation between buildings exceeds the Council's design guide.

## **Topography**

The local topography of the site is relatively flat, dropping at the rear of the site. The scheme has been designed to be consistent with the adjacent properties and the existing dwelling houses. The height of buildings adjacent the listed buildings is lower at 1.5 storey to respect the setting, and to use the listed building as the feature of the quadrant.

The western part of the scheme has been designed to ensure a positive relationship to the street, whilst reflecting the style of other properties in the street.

It is intended that this scheme will make a positive contribution to the make up of the village ensuring the quality which has created in area is maintained. This will be further enhanced by the inclusion of high quality and detailing of architectural elements. This will be sensitive to the conservation area and neighbouring buildings.

## **Site access and car parking**

The western site access will be retained, middle entrance will be removed and eastern entrance converted from a vehicle entrance to a pedestrian access.

As demonstrated in the transport statement, the site would result in a reduction of trip generation from the site, which would be a highway benefit.

## **Room Layout**

The rooms meet and exceed the Council's internal space standards. Where possible the rooms maximise the solar gain for natural light and heating. The building has been designed to meet disability standards where possible. All flats can be access from the street by lift. At implementation stage the scheme has been designed to adhere to the relevant sections of Part M and Part O of the

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Building Regulations and to meet as many as possible of the 16 criteria that create a Lifetime Home.

### **Landscape and Gardens**

The site has little high quality vegetation, due to the amount of hardstanding. There are no TPOs on the site, and the adjoining vegetation has informed the layout of the development. A landscape plan is provided as part of the application submission.

All the houses have gardens and these all exceed the minimum size standards.

### **Heritage**

As previously discussed the site includes a Grade II Listed building. The barn is from the 17th century. The listing states that is its weather boarded, with a Slate roof. 5 bays, mostly intact.

Complete floor plate resting on red brick base. Cart entrance on S, with replacement hipped roof. C18 and C19 red and yellow stock brick 1-storey addition on SE with 3 arched openings. The building has had a number additions added to it which are not sympathetic. The proposal seeks the repair and conversion of the building to residential. As demonstrated in the Heritage Statement this will secure the long term future of the building. The proposed layout was influence by comments from the conservation officer, the setting behind the listed building will be significantly improved by the proposal relocating some built form to the western side of the site, creating better views to and from the listed building, enhancing its setting.



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## Materials

The following materials would be used in the construction of the building:

### Houses:

Bricks: Michelmersh Freshfield Lane or Michelmersh Danehill Yellows

Roof: Michelmersh Handmade Vintage Clay Tiles or slates

Gutters: Black Ogee PVCu rainwater pipes and gutters;

Windows: White Woodgrain PVCu;

Front Door: Painted hardwood door and frame

Garage Door: Painted hardwood door & frame.

Bi-Fold Doors: Aluminium

### Barns

Walls: Black weatherboards

Plinth: Michelmersh Danehill Yellows

Tile Lagan Flat Black Tile

Gutters: Black Ogee PVCu rainwater pipes and gutters;

Windows: Black Woodgrain PVCu;

Front Door: Painted hardwood door and frame

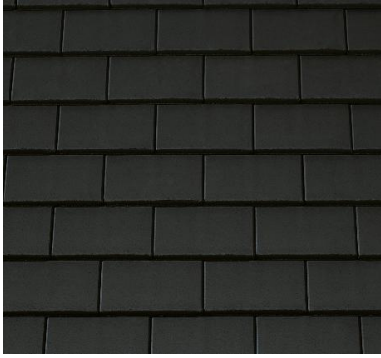
Garage Door: Painted hardwood door & frame.

Bi-Fold Doors: Aluminium



Example of Michelmersh Danehill Yellows





Example of flat black tile



Example of slate tile



Example of black weatherboard



**Example of Michelmersh Handmade Vintage Clay Tiles**



Example of Michelmersh Freshfield Lane

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## 8. Conclusion

The current lawful use of the buildings and land is a riding school. As such, it is considered that, with regard to the current chapter in the planning history of the site, the application site is comprised of previously developed land. As such, and as the proposal would not result in harm to the openness of the Green Belt and would not conflict with the purposes of including land within it, the proposed development is appropriate with regards to paragraph 89 of the NPPF.

The proposal would provide significant benefits to the Green Belt. In general terms, the proposal would be contained within the site, respecting the area and within the screened boundaries. The layout would provide a new strong defensible Green Belt boundary avoiding a visual sprawl to Green Belt views and to deter further outward view development. The consequence is that the development will have a settled and quieter relationship to the Green Belt when comparing to the existing situation of chaotic sprawling development. Therefore, the proposed relationship benefits the openness of the Green Belt.

The level of activity of the proposed would be much reduced when compared to the existing. As demonstrated in the transport statement the number of traffic movements would also be reduced.

The key starting point is to establish, in quantitative terms, whether the proposed development would have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt. There will be a significant reduction in volume, footprint and hard standing overall on the site, which is well on such applications. It is clearly recognised that the level of hardsurfacing has been reduced by 3,631 sqm (58%), the footprint of the development would also reduce by 2,409 sqm (55%). The volume of the development would also reduce by 6,688m<sup>3</sup> or 62%. The buildings would be distributed across the site and allow 'sky gaps' through the buildings, allowing greater view across the area. The development is much greener than the current site, which is epitomised with the creation of a public amenity area.

It is considered in this case that the overall development will improve the openness of the Green Belt for the following reasons:

- The proposed buildings are contained across the site being more evenly distributed creating important significant sky gaps between buildings whereby views through the site can be afforded from the Green Belt.
- The siting of the proposed buildings has created a stronger defensible boundary to the Green Belt that has a more settled visual appearance.



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- The mass and bulk of the proposed buildings will have a built form that has traditional rural proportions with far greater articulation than the existing buildings.
  - Overall there is a significant reduction in the level of hardsurfacing by 58 % with the intent of significant soft landscape works to take place around the proposed buildings to help assimilate the public space and development with the wider rural Green Belt.
  - The proposal would reduce in the amount of activity in the Green Belt, and reduce the number of traffic movements into the site.
  - Our proposals would also result in the long term protection of a listed heritage asset on the site. The listed barn is in a declining external condition, and has had a number of unsympathetic additions. We would meet the NPPF aspiration to protect and enhance this listed building.

Therefore, it can be safely concluded that the development has no greater impact on the Green Belt and is in accordance with Green Belt policy. In addition, there are clear benefits / positives and improvements to the openness of the Green Belt particularly given the significant reductions in footprint and hardstanding. Therefore the proposal is acceptable in regards to the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.

The existing structures make no positive contribution to the surrounding landscape. The existing structures are generally unattractive, degrading and out of character from the neighbouring properties and wider street scene. The proposed development will open up views from the surrounding area. Overall, the proposed scheme is considered to improve the wider landscape and will be an improvement on the openness of the Green Belt. The existing site has a number of varying structures which are in places an eye sore, our proposal would provide a comprehensive development improving the aesthetics of this rambling site which detracts from the Green Belt.

The site has poor record due to some illegal structures which would be removed as part of the application. The site was also a feature in some national press due to its connection to murder of a former occupier.

The application was subject to pre-application discussions with the Council, and a pre-submission consultation event was held in the village. Of those who completed a questionnaire 12 supported the scheme and 6 didn't.

The Green Belt serves five purposes including checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas, preventing neighbouring towns from merging and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment and it is considered that the proposed development would not have a greater visual impact on the openness of the Green Belt and would not have a greater impact on the purposes of the

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Green Belt than the existing development and, therefore, constitutes appropriate development.

The development results in a number of positive benefits:

- Removal of a ad hoc, and poorly maintained site from the green belt
- Reuse and Redevelopment of a previously developed site
- Enabling development to support the repair, conservation and enhancement of a listed building
- Reduction of volume, hardstanding and footprint in the Green Belt
- Provision of family houses in an area of need as demonstrated by the SHMA
- Windfall Site which helps to meet housing of the borough - whose housing land supply is questionable when compared to recent SHMA document
- Provision of an amenity area for the community
- Reduction in vehicle activity
- removal of the roundabout which will improve highway safety

The architects have adopted a traditional rural approach in the architectural design and the materials proposed will create a positive place identity. Special attention has been made to ensure that the materials used in the development reflect the local architectural vernacular. The proposal has sought to promote and enhance the rural nature and characteristic of the area. The development includes a range of styles and materials to respect the setting and the listed building.

The proposal meets and exceeds the Councils policies with regard to separation distances, parking, and garden space.

The proposal is acceptable in terms of National and Local Policies. It is considered that the proposed scheme would improve the impact on the character and appearance of the Listed Buildings which is considered to be a material consideration that has planning merits.

The proposal is therefore in accordance with planning policy. The application site is comprised of previously developed land. As such, and as the proposal would not result in harm to the openness of the Green Belt and would not conflict with the purposes of including land within it, the proposed development is appropriate with regards to paragraph 89 of the NPPF. The site will be a key windfall site which will make an important contribution to the housing land supply in Welwyn Hatfield.

In view of the above information contained in this report we would seek approval of the application.