

Planning Control Committee Meeting of 22 January 2026

UPDATE dated 19 January 2026

Agenda Item 6. Application No. 25/02115/FP - Conversion of 3 existing agricultural buildings to provide 8 residential units, including gardens and formation of vehicular access at Kirby Manor Farm, Ashwell, Baldock SG7 5JQ

The published committee report was written just before the expiration of the consultation period, which the report should have made clear, but did not.

Responses have been received which are addressed below in this supplementary report. These responses are available to view via Public Access but are also attached to this update report.

Responses Received

1. Statutory Consultee response

A response has been received from Ashwell Parish Council objecting to the scheme. The key points of objection are summarised as follows:

- Unsustainable location (no active or public transport)
- Highway safety concerns as the site is accessed via narrow dark lanes with no pedestrian, cycle or public transport connections
- Loss of privacy and light pollution
- Harm to neighbours from noise pollutions during construction.

The full representation is available to view on the Public Access system.

2. Neighbour Representation

Two neighbour representations have also been received objecting to the scheme.

- Highway safety, Limited passing points, frequently used by agricultural vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists, often muddy and poorly maintained.
- Increase in traffic
- Noise, disturbance and vibration risks from both construction and occupation.
- Harm to wildlife and ecology.
- Loss of rural character
- Overlooking and loss of privacy
- Inadequate boundary treatment
- Overdevelopment of the site
- Loss of historic character
- Boundary dispute
- Impact to water supply
- Oil tank relocation

As indicated above, the full representations are available to view on the Public Access system and are also attached to this update report.

3. NHC Ecology

No objections.

The development is easily able to meet the mandatory 10% BNG on site. The recommended CEMP condition (Recommended Condition 5) will ensure that the works proceed in accordance with any licencing requirements for bats and a barn owl nesting in Building 1.

4. Officer Commentary and Assessment

4.1 Highway Safety / Traffic

Paragraph 4.3.18 of the published committee report addresses highway issues and the objections of the Highway Authority, which relates to the unsustainable location with no realistic provision for active travel or public transport. In terms of highway safety issues raised, Northfield Road is a narrow country lane to the north of Ashwell, with grass verges to both sides. However, the Highway Authority have not objected on those grounds. Moreover, officers consider that this proposal would not have a materially greater impact upon highway safety compared to the fallback position, which is outlined at 4.3.6 of the published report.

4.2 Overlooking and loss of Privacy

This matter is addressed at paragraphs 4.3.12 to 4.3.14 of the published report. A boundary wall and evergreen ornamental planting and orchard trees to provide screening are proposed along the boundary with the house at Kirby Manor Farm. However, it is acknowledged that the proposed development would have an adverse impact upon the living conditions of occupiers of Kirby Manor Farmhouse due to loss of privacy. The impact has been carefully assessed and considered against the fallback position offered by the prior approval scheme for 8 dwellings at the application site and it is concluded that the harm that would arise due to additional garden land proposed would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposed development. An additional condition is recommended (condition 12) relating to the height of boundary treatment. This matter is addressed further at 4.7 below.

4.3 Wildlife and Ecology

The recommendation to committee is for a resolution to grant subject to satisfactory comments being received from NHC's Ecologist. These comments are addressed at 3 above. The ecological benefits of the scheme are covered under paras 4.3.20 – 4.3.22 and the impacts addressed by the recommended conditions.

4.4 Loss of rural and historic character

Given the fallback position established by the PNQ scheme, the conversion of these units would not materially harm the rural context of the area. This is covered under paras 4.3.2 – 4.3.6 and 4.3.11 of the published committee report.

4.5 Noise and Disturbance

The extant approved scheme for 8 dwellings would have a similar impact in terms of noise and disturbance compared to the proposal. However, further impacts would arise from the removal of a concrete area to provide for garden. Therefore, a condition requiring a Construction Management Plan is recommended to mitigate the impacts during construction to the neighbouring dwellings.

4.6 Light Pollution

Light from vehicle headlights would not have a materially greater effect upon neighbours compared to the fallback position.

However, to control the potential impacts from lighting within the proposed development a condition is recommended below (recommended condition 11).

4.7 Boundary Wall

Concerns have been raised relating to the effect of the proposal on a boundary wall and the height of boundary treatment along the boundary with Kirby Manor Farmhouse. The submitted landscape plan (No. 164 LD 01) details boundary treatment and indicates that the proposed boundary wall along the boundary with the house at Kirby Manor Farm would be constructed using Arlesey White bricks but does not identify the proposed height of boundary treatment. Therefore, an additional condition is recommended relating to the height of boundary treatment (Condition 12).

4.8 Oil storage tank

The oil storage tank that serves the farmhouse that is located within the application site is a civil matter.

4.9 Water supply

Concern has been raised relating to the existing water supply which is supplied by a private water supply that runs through a neighbouring property.

However, the requirement for an adequate water supply is a matter that is controlled by building regulations as well as the Water Industry Act 1991, which mandates water companies to connect new homes to a wholesome and efficient water supply.

Revised recommendation

That planning permission be resolved to be granted subject to the conditions and informatives set out in the published report and the additional conditions set out below.

10. *No development shall take place, including any works of demolition, until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The statement shall provide for:*
- a) the parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors;*
 - b) loading and unloading of plant and materials;*
 - c) storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development*
 - d) the hours of construction works*
 - e) wheel washing facilities*
 - f) measures to control the emission of dust and dirt during construction*

The approved construction Method Statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period for the development.

In the interests of the amenities of the area and in accordance with Policy D3 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 to 2031

11. *Prior to the installation of external lighting, full details including height, design, location and intensity and shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The lighting installation shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved details.*

Reason: In the interests of the appearance of the locality within the countryside and protection of neighbour amenity in accordance with Policies NE4 and D3 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 to 2031.

12. Notwithstanding details of proposed boundary treatment in the submitted landscaping scheme (Drawing No. 164 LD 01) prior to occupation of the development hereby permitted details of the height of proposed boundary treatment shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The boundary treatment shall be completed in accordance with the approved details before the buildings are occupied.

To safeguard and enhance the appearance of the development and the amenity of the locality and to comply with policies D1 and D3 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 to 2031.