

Planning Statement

Planning Application

Erection of a replacement dwelling, Quinbury Farm Cottage, Hay Street,

Braughing, Ware SG11 2RE



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1.0 Background

1.1.1 This report relates to a planning application for the demolition of the existing dwelling and the erection of a replacement dwelling at Quinbury Farm Cottage, Hay Street.

1.2.0 Scope

1.2.1 This document comprises an overarching Planning Report. Sections 2 to 4 consider the physical, economic, social and historical context of the site, identifying the relevant local, regional and national planning policy framework; and Section 5 sets out the details of the proposal. All these sections inform the evaluation of the proposal in Section 6 against the identified planning policy framework. The overall conclusions are set out in Section 7 and which are summarised below at paragraph 1.3.0.

1.3.0 Summary

1.3.1 The proposal would ensure a high quality, energy efficient development that makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area. The proposal would provide excellent living conditions and no harm would be caused to any neighbouring occupiers. There would be no implications for highway safety.

2.0 **SITE & CONTEXT ANALYSIS**

2.1.0 **Location**

2.1.1 The site is located on the eastern side of Hay Street (B1368) and at the southern end of the village of Hay Street.

2.2.0 **Application Site**

2.2.1 The site comprises Quinbury Farm Cottage, a two-storey detached dwelling. The building has a pitched roof, painted brick elevations and single-storey, lean-to side extension. The site was previously part of the Quinbury Farm complex but has been occupied independently for a number of years. It shares an access with the farm complex by way of a single lane track to the B1368.

2.3.0 **Context**

2.3.1 The farm complex comprises a 19th Century farmhouse and a range of agricultural buildings. Some of the agricultural buildings have planning permission for conversion to residential. The complex is surrounded by open fields. To the east is the west bank of the River Quin.

2.3.2 Hay Street is a small, essentially linear settlement either side of the B1368. To the south is the larger village of Braughing, which includes a school and public houses.

2.4.0 **Policies Map Notation**

2.4.1 The Policies Map of the East Herts District Plan (2018) shows the site to be within the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt.

3.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

3.1.0 Application Site

3.1.1 The relevant history of the application site is summarised in Figure 3.1.0 below.

LPA Ref	Proposal	Outcome
3/20/1029/CLPO	Construction of two storey rear extension, two separate single storey side extensions, new front porch and new first floor side window opening	Granted 29.07.20
3/21/0779/CLPO	Two storey rear and two single storey side extensions	Refused 25.06.21
3/21/1751/CLPO	Two storey rear extension and two single storey side extensions	Granted 01.09.21

4.0 POLICY CONTEXT

4.1.0 National Policy / Guidance

4.1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021, sets out the Government's planning policies for England. The following sections are considered directly relevant:

- 2 Achieving sustainable development
- 12 Achieving well-designed places
- 15 Conserving the natural environment

4.2.0 East Herts District Plan (2018)

4.2.1

Policy No.	Title
CC1	Climate Change Adaptation
CC2	Climate Change Mitigation
DES3	Landscaping
DES4	Design of Development
GBR2	Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt
NE3	Species and Habitats
TRA1	Sustainable Transport
TRA2	Safe and Sustainable Highways Access Arrangements
TRA3	Vehicle Parking Provision

5.0 DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

5.1.0 Use

5.1.1 The proposal would retain the existing Class C3 residential use.

5.2.0 Layout

5.2.1 The proposed dwelling would essentially be located on the footprint of the existing property to be demolished.

5.3.0 Appearance & Scale

5.3.1 The proposed dwelling would be two-storey with a hipped roof. There would be a single-storey side element, a single-storey flat roof section to the rear and a stone porch to the front. The building would have a traditional appearance, incorporating red multi brickwork, slate tiles and timber sash windows.

5.4.0 Landscaping

5.4.1 The application is accompanied by an arboricultural report and a landscape scheme. It is proposed to remove three trees to facilitate the development, one of these has been assessed as a Category U tree and the other two Category C trees. The arboricultural report and a Tree Protection Plan explain how existing trees would be protected during the development process. The landscape scheme indicates new tree and native hedge planting.

5.5.0 Access

5.5.1 The existing single-track lane would continue to provide access to the site. Three off-street car parking spaces would be provided, including one electric charging point. Two secure cycle spaces would also be provided.

5.6.0 Drainage and Flood Risk

5.6.1 The application is accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment and SuDS Report. This demonstrates that the site is located within Flood Zone 1 and so is at low risk of flooding. A rainwater harvesting tank is proposed to collect run-off from the roof.

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

Based on the analysis set out in Sections 2 to 5, I consider that the application proposal raises the following issues, which I will consider in turn below:

1. Principle
2. Layout & Design
3. Highway Safety & Access
4. Sustainability

6.1.0 Issue No 1: Principle

6.1.1.0 Policy Backdrop

Local Plan Policy GBR2 advises that in the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt certain types of development will be permitted provided that they are compatible with the character and appearance of the rural area. These include:

“(d) the replacement, extension or alteration of a building, provided the size, scale, mass, form, siting, design, and materials of construction are appropriate to the character, appearance and setting of the site and/or surrounding areas.”

6.1.2.0 Assessment

The proposed dwelling would have a floor area of 300m², compared to 135m² for the existing property. Policy GBR2(d) does not require a comparison with the existing or original building but it is recognised that increasing the size of the building by over 100% could be viewed to have an impact on the character and appearance of the site and rural surroundings. However, the applicants have obtained a Certificate of Lawful Development (3/21/1751/CLPO) for substantial side and rear extensions to the existing property.

6.1.2.1 The comparison between the existing property and its unexpended permitted development (PD) rights is set out in the table below. This shows that the proposed dwelling would have a very similar floorspace to that which could be achieved using PD rights and would result in a reduction in volume of nearly 100m³. The new dwelling would have marginally higher ridge and eaves heights than the existing building and includes a greater amount of first floor accommodation. However, the hipped roof form would limit the amount of first floor bulk and the dwelling, with its shallow roof pitch, would be genuinely two-storey in appearance.

	Floor Area (m ²)	Volume (m ³)
Existing dwelling and PD	302	1031
Proposed dwelling	300	932
Reduction	2	99

6.1.2.2 Implementing the permitted development allowances constitutes the applicants' fallback position. It is well established that a fallback position is a material planning consideration to take into account when determining planning applications. In *Zurich Assurance Limited V North Lincolnshire District Council [2012]* Justice Hickinbottom clarified the correct approach in paragraph 75 of his decision:

“The prospect of the fallback position does not have to be probable or even have a high chance of occurring; it has to be only more than a theoretical prospect. Where the possibility of the fallback position happening is “very slight indeed”, or merely “an outside chance”, that is sufficient to make the position a material consideration.”

4.1.2.3 The extensions consented by 3/21/1751/CLPO would provide valuable additional floorspace. There is, therefore, a more than theoretical chance that the applicants would build these extensions if it were their only option to increase the size of the dwelling. As I will discuss in more detail under Issue No 2 below, the current application would result in a more attractive dwelling with a reduced spread of development. The proposal would therefore at least maintain the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area.

6.1.3.0 **Conclusion**

To conclude this issue, the applicants’ permitted development rights represent a realistic fallback position. In comparison to this, the proposed scheme would represent a visual improvement that better preserves the character and appearance of the site and its rural surrounding in compliance with Local Plan Policy GBR2.

6.2.0 Issue No 2: Layout and Design

6.2.1.0 Policy Backdrop

Paragraph 126 of the NPPF advises that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Paragraph 130 lists a range of criteria which development should seek to achieve. This includes the need to function well and add to the quality of the area, to be visually attractive, to be sympathetic to local character and history and to create places that are safe, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

6.2.1.1 Local Plan Policy DES4 similarly seeks development which is of a high standard of design and layout to reflect local distinctiveness. It advises that proposals should seek to make the best possible use of land by respecting or improving upon the character of the area. DES3 seeks development that protects and enhances existing land scape features or provides compensatory planting.

6.2.2.0 Assessment

6.2.2.1 Charatcer and Appearance

The existing dwelling on the site has a low-key, but unremarkable appearance. It has a simple design with no features of any particular architectural interest. The permitted development allowances would provide valuable additional accommodation but would result in a sprawling layout with single-storey extensions that would somewhat overwhelm the original building.

6.2.2.2 The proposal would provide a similar increase in accommodation but would deliver this in a more rational, compact form. The new dwelling would be marginally higher than existing with a wider two-storey element, but the reduced footprint would result in less overall impact on the landscape.

6.2.2.3 The new building would incorporate a significantly higher design quality. The Design and Access Statement explains that reference has been made to the nearby Quinbury Farmhouse and which has influenced some of the detailing and design features. The dwelling would include high quality materials with red brick elevations and a slate roof. The appearance would be enhanced with attractive design features, including a stone porch, stone cills, brick bands and dentilled brick eaves. This would result in an elegant, well-proportioned building that contributes positively to the character and appearance of the site and the surrounding area.

6.2.2.4 **Amenity**

The new dwelling would be located some distance from Quinbury farmhouse and so would raise no issues in respect of the impact on the occupiers of that dwelling. The proposal would also not prejudice the opportunity to convert any of the other buildings on the site. The dwelling would maintain a similar siting and height to that existing and so would not present any new concerns with regard to overlooking or loss of light.

6.2.2.5 Future occupiers would be afforded excellent living conditions. The proposal would provide spacious habitable rooms with a good level of natural light. Residents would also have access to good quality outdoor space in an attractive landscape setting.

6.2.2.6 **Landscaping**

As noted, three trees would be removed due to their proximity to the proposed dwelling. One of these is considered to be unsafe and the other two are of low amenity value. Their removal would therefore have little impact on the landscape quality. Furthermore, new tree and native hedging is proposed that would enhance the setting of the dwelling and the appearance of the surrounding area.

6.2.3.0 **Conclusion**

To conclude this issue, the proposal would represent a high-quality design that would enhance the character and appearance of the site and the surrounding area. The new dwelling would incorporate good quality materials and design features and would be set in attractive landscaped grounds. The new property would have no impact on neighbouring occupiers and future residents would have excellent living conditions. The proposal would therefore accord with Local Plan Policies DES3, DES4 and the provisions of the NPPF.

6.3.0 **Issue No 3: Highway Safety and Access**

6.3.1.0 **Policy Backdrop**

The NPPF seeks safe, secure and attractive places that minimise the risk between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles. Paragraph 111 advises that development should only be prevented on highways grounds where the cumulative impacts are severe. Local Plan TRA3 states that car parking requirements will be assessed on a site-by-site basis. Provision should be made secure cycle storage.

6.3.2.0 **Assessment**

The proposal would utilise the existing access arrangements from the B1368. The proposal would not generate any material increase in traffic in comparison to the existing situation. Vehicles would be able to manoeuvre safely within the site and exit in a forward gear.

6.3.2.1 Three off-street street car parking spaces would be provided, one of which would have an electric charging point. Three spaces would be ample for a single dwelling and there would, in any case, be space for additional vehicles on the driveway. Secure and weatherproof cycle storage would also be provided.

6.3.3.0 **Conclusion**

To conclude this issue, the proposal would ensure a safe means of access and sufficient levels of off-street car parking and cycle storage. The proposal would therefore comply with therefore comply with the requirements of Local Plan Policy TRA3 and the provisions of the NPPF.

6.4.0 Issue No 4: Sustainability

6.4.1.0 Policy Backdrop

Achieving sustainable development is a key focus of the NPPF. In environmental terms this involves improving biodiversity, minimising waste, mitigating and adapting to climate change and moving to a low carbon economy. Local Plan Policy CC1 requires all new development to demonstrate how it would minimise overheating in the summer and reduce the need for heating in the winter. CC2 encourages carbon reductions beyond the requirements of building regulations.

6.4.2.0 Assessment

The Design and Access Statement sets out a range of measures designed to increase sustainability. These include:

- Efficient building fabrics above Building Regulation requirements
- High efficiency triple glazed windows with solar control
- An air-tight build
- Highly efficient heating
- Water saving features and fittings
- Rainwater harvesting and grey water recycling
- A SuDS drainage strategy
- Cycle storage provision and vehicle charging points
- New native planting, include biodiversity friendly trees and shrubs

6.4.2.1 Incorporating these measures into the final scheme would ensure a highly energy efficient dwelling and would result in a significant improvement compared to the existing building. The need for heating in the winter would be reduced and the solar control glazing would minimise overheating in the summer.

6.4.3.0 Conclusion

To conclude this issue, the proposal would provide a highly energy efficient, low carbon dwelling in compliance with Local Plan Policy CC1 and the provisions of the NPPF.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

7.1.0 This report relates to a planning application for the demolition of the existing dwelling and the erection of a replacement dwelling at Quinbury Farm Cottage, Hay Street. The proposal is promoted in the following circumstances:

- The applicants' permitted development rights represent a realistic fallback position. In comparison to this, the proposed scheme would represent a visual improvement that better preserves the character and appearance of the site and its rural surrounding in compliance with Local Plan Policy GBR2.
- The proposal would represent a high-quality design that would enhance the character and appearance of the site and the surrounding area. The new dwelling would incorporate good quality materials and design features and would be set in attractive landscaped grounds. The new property would have no impact on neighbouring occupiers and future residents would have excellent living conditions. The proposal would therefore accord with Local Plan Policies DES3, DES4 and the provisions of the NPPF.
- The proposal would ensure a safe means of access and sufficient levels of off-street car parking and cycle storage. The proposal would therefore comply with the requirements of Local Plan Policy TRA3 and the provisions of the NPPF.
- The proposal would provide a highly energy efficient, low carbon dwelling in compliance with Local Plan Policy CC1 and the provisions of the NPPF.

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