

REGISTERED NUMBER:	5/2024/2093/PIP
APPLICANT:	Sandridge (Self Build) (Limited)
PROPOSAL:	Permission in Principle - Development of up to two dwellings
SITE:	Land Adjacent 38 House Lane Sandridge Hertfordshire
APPLICATION VALID DATE:	10/12/2024
HISTORIC BUILDING GRADE:	N/A
CONSERVATION AREA:	N/A
DISTRICT PLAN REVIEW:	Metropolitan Green Belt
WARD	Sandridge & Wheathampstead

RECOMMENDATION	GRANT PERMISSION IN PRINCIPLE
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1. Reasons for Call in to Committee

- 1.1. The application was called in by Councillor [REDACTED] for the following reasons:
- 1.2. The application proposes development of open space in the Metropolitan Green Belt, without providing an explanation of any “very special circumstances” which would justify such development (NPPF 152, SADC LP 1, SNP D1);
- 1.3. Reliance on an assumption that the land is “grey belt” (as defined in the draft August 2024 NPPF), without detailing how the five Green Belt purposes (December 2023 NPPF para 143) are unaffected;
- 1.4. The site is not identified for development in the SADC Regulation 19 Draft Local Plan (SNP D2);
- 1.5. Accepting that the application is below the 20-unit threshold for Affordable Housing, the proposed design does not offer any ameliorating argument for the use of Green Belt land, by the provision of housing density and tenure which would contribute to meeting the affordable housing needs of the District as defined in Chapter 4 of the Draft Local Plan, nor as required by SNP D3;
- 1.6. Accepting that Permission in Principle means that design conditions are for later consideration, the proposed provision of 4 car spaces per dwelling, and the proposed size (and hence market cost) of the housing suggests that future inhabitants are expected to use private cars as their prime means of transport. The development would therefore be unlikely to contribute to Regulation 19 Draft Local Plan Strategic Policy SP8 b) and c) and SNP Policy T3;
- 1.7. The proposed site plans as provided appear to obstruct Footpath 055, a HCC Right of Way, and in contrary to SADC LP 97 and SNP T3;
- 1.8. The proposed development may obstruct views of the village from Bridleway 053, contrary to SNP Policy E2.

- 1.9. The proposal is contrary to Policies 1 and 97 of the St Albans District Local Plan Review and Policies D1, D2, D3, D4(1), T3 and E2 of the Sandridge Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.10. The call-in request has been supported by Councillor Simon Johns and Councillor Owain McKenzie.

2. Relevant Planning History

- 2.1. None.

3. Site Description

- 3.1. The application site is a rectangular piece of land to the south of House Lane. To the north and east is residential development. The application site is located within the Green Belt.
- 3.2. The site formerly comprised part of the agricultural land to the west, however it has been physically separated by hedging along the boundaries. The site is currently open grassed land.

4. The Proposal

- 4.1. Permission in Principle - Development of up to, two dwellings

5. Representations

5.1. Publicity / Advertisement

Site Notice Displayed	Date	19/12/2024	Expiry Date	11/01/2025
Press Notice Displayed	Date	19/12/2024	Expiry Date	11/01/2025

5.2. Adjoining Occupiers

- 5.2.1. Neighbour letters were sent to six addresses in accordance with the Council's published Statement of Community Involvement.
- 5.2.2. At the time of writing this report, 22 objections and 2 representations in support have been received.
- 5.3. The objections received raise some or all of the following issues:
- The development is outside the village boundary as defined by the Sandridge Neighbourhood Plan; The site is not allocated for housing;
 - The Sandridge Neighbourhood Plan was approved after significant consultation to ensure that a balance was achieved and recognised the need for housing, particularly housing that meets identified local needs such as affordable, social and older peoples homes and protection of the inherent nature of a village that sits within Green Belt;
 - NPPF paragraph 145e) and f) states construction of new buildings is inappropriate except limited infilling; Small-scale infilling within the defined boundary has been permitted;

- The development is not infill it is sprawl; overdevelopment of a small plot that is designated as agricultural land;
- Granting the application would set a concerning precedent;
- The land was purchased by the last owners of No. 38 with the explicit provision that it would only ever be used as paddock/grazing land;
- It will impact on important views from the Woodland Park towards the village and church;
- It would be built alongside a Public Right of Way (Footpath 55); this footpath is part of the PROW improvement plan; it is much used and is part of the route that gives access to Jersey Farm Woodland Park; open views would be obscured and the footpath squeezed between buildings; the proposal does not show it includes the footpath within the site;
- The proposal conflicts with Neighbourhood Plan Paragraphs 5.59 and 5.6 the objective of which is to improve pedestrian and rider safety, with the creation of a bridleway along the southern side of House Lane, behind the existing hedge;
- How would the line and width of the new path be preserved without recourse to a planning condition which this method of application does not permit?
- The development is on a blind bend and extremely close to a road junction; traffic congestion is already a problem and House Lane is a bus route; nuisance and illegal parking already takes place on House Lane;
- Not in keeping with other houses in the road;
- Loss of an established hedgerow and wildlife;
- It would not result in biodiversity net gain, new planting would merely replace established hedgerow;
- Flooding will be exacerbated and the land is often waterlogged;
- Loss of light to neighbouring property.
- Representations have been received in support of the application:
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The supported objections received raise some or all of the following points:

- Support the proposal. St Albans isn't building enough housing, we need more;
- St Albans has an out of date plan and has failed to build the homes it needs for many years;
- Recent changes to the NPPF mean this site is clearly part of the "grey belt" and given the lack of housing supply there should be a presumption in favour of planning being granted.

5.4. Sandridge Parish Council

Sandridge Parish Council notes that this application has been made under the Town and Country Planning Act Order 2017 (as amended) for permission in principle to construct up to two dwellings on this site. It strongly objects to this application on the grounds that it contravenes a number of key planning development policies, in particular the following from Sandridge Neighbourhood Plan (SNP).

5.5. *Site – SNP Policy D1*

This site clearly sits outside the Settlement Boundary as defined in Policy D1 and Figure 2. It is agricultural land, part of the Green Belt, surrounded to the east and south by a large fully cropped field and to the west by a public right of way.

The site is not one identified for development in either the Regulation 19 Draft St Albans and District Local Plan or Sandridge Neighbourhood Plan.

The Planning Statement suggest that this site would represent “limited infilling” within the village envelope. In fact, the site is clearly outside the Settlement Boundary and bounded by agricultural land. Unlike the examples quoted by the applicant this is not in the middle of an existing line of housing, nor is it suggesting the construction of anything other than large executive housing.

The Planning Statement supplied by the applicant’s agent also suggests that this is “grey belt” land. The Parish Council refuses this. The land has never previously been developed and has only been used for agricultural purposes to the Parish Council’s knowledge. It provides an important undeveloped boundary to a well used footpath and contributes to key landscape views in the village (see later note under Policy E2).

The Planning Statement asserts that the site is well placed as it is “next to bus stops” which is factually inaccurate. The infrequency and unreliability of the local bus service is a source of complaint locally.

The claim that development of the site would “promote” walking and cycling and public transport belies the fact that it would actually obstruct a key component of such a network.

5.6. *Type of Development – SNP Policies D2 and D3*

The site lies within the Green Belt and no “exceptions” as set out in the NPPF have been stated to support development of Green Belt land. The site has not been specifically identified within the draft Local Plan.

It is not the type of affordable smaller family housing or dwellings for downsizing identified by the SNP as particularly needed in the Sandridge parish area.

5.7. *Housing Development – SNP Policy D4*

These proposed dwellings would contravene SNP Policy D4 (1) in that the site intrudes on the landscape (see reference to Policy E2 below).

The proposals also contravene SNP Policy D4 (8) as, instead of looking to provide pedestrian access along the frontage of this site to join the footway outside 38 House Lane leading into the village and creating a T junction with Footpath 55, the design shown involves direct access on to a busy road with poor sightlines. The Planning Statement states there would be a single access point, but the block plan shows two.

5.8. *Active Travel – SNP Policy T3*

Development of this site would obstruct a planned bridleway connection set out in the Herts County Council’s Rights of Way Improvement Plan. This planned bridleway also forms an essential part of a locally much desired active travel network of paths, as referred to in SNP Policy T3 and Figure 8. The rationale for this particular important link is safety for the many walkers and cyclists exiting from the north end of Jersey Lane on to House Lane by a blind corner, and also to provide incentives for both active travel and recreational activities leading to improved health and wellbeing. See SNP Paragraph 5.74 where this route is part

of the first priority outlined. This route would also form part of a wider key link between Jersey Lane, Sandridge village and Heartwood Forest.

5.9. *Landscapes, Views and Gaps – SNP Policy E2*

This proposal contravenes the provisions of SNP Policy E2 as it would significantly adversely affect a protected significant view (from Bridleway 53) into the village as indicated in Figure 13. It would increase the prominence of the settlement and cause the loss of agricultural land.

5.10. *Applicant*

It is noted that the company name shown as the applicant does not appear in this exact form on the Companies House website, so it is unclear whether or not it is a legal entity.

5.11. *Protection of Public Right of Way (Footpath 55)*

The block plan shows a portion of the adjacent Public Right of Way (Footpath 55) as being part of the curtilage of the proposed site. This is not mentioned by the applicant and there are no proposals to ensure the line and width of both the existing Right of Way and the Right of Way Improvement Plan route are safeguarded. As noted by the Countryside Officer, Footpath 55 requires protection along its length at the width recorded by Herts County Council (HCC). HCC Highways proposes a condition to protect its route, but the Parish Council understands it is not possible to attach conditions to this type of “permission in principle” application. If so, this important route could not be protected.

5.12. *Conclusion*

The Parish Council believes that use of a “permission in principle” application in this case may be inappropriate, as no conditions can be attached to any approval.

The proposed site has not been identified for development in the SNP or the draft local plan. It would contravene a number of approved planning policies (SNP D1), D2, D3, D4(1) and (8), T3 and E2) as outlined above.

The Parish Council requests refusal of this application and that it be “called in”, should the Planning Officer be minded to recommend approval.

6. Consultations:

6.1. SADC – Recycling and Waste

No objection. Full response set out in attached appendix.

6.2. HCC - Highways

No objection subject to conditions and informatives. Full response set out in attached appendix.

6.3. HCC Countryside Officer

The scheme does not allow for the provision of a new path and Footpath 55 should be retained at its recorded width. Full response set out in attached appendix.

6.4. HCC – Landscape

There is no principle objection to the proposed application. Full response set out in attached appendix.

7. Relevant Planning Policy

7.1. National Planning Policy Framework

7.2. St. Albans District Local Plan Review 1994:

POLICY 1	Metropolitan Green Belt
POLICY 2	Settlement Strategy
POLICY 34	Highways Considerations in Development Control
POLICY 39	Parking Standards, General Requirements
POLICY 40	Residential Development Parking Standards
POLICY 69	General Design and Layout
POLICY 70	Design and Layout of New Housing
POLICY 74	Landscaping and Tree Preservation
POLICY 97	Existing Footpaths, Bridleways and Cycleways

7.3. Sandridge Neighbourhood Plan:

POLICY D1	Settlement Boundary
POLICY D2	Potential Development Land
POLICY D3	Provision of Affordable Housing for Local People in Perpetuity
POLICY D4	Housing Development and Building Guidelines (Less Than 10 Dwellings)
POLICY D6	Sustainable Future Housing Design
POLICY E2	Landscapes, Views and Gaps
POLICY T3	Walking, Cycling and Recreational Travel

7.4. Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents
Revised Parking Policies and Standards 2002

7.5. Planning Policy Context

7.6. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that where in making any determination under the planning Acts, regard is to be had to the development plan, the determination shall be made in accordance with the plan unless material consideration indicates otherwise.

7.7. The development plan is the St Albans District Local Plan Review 1994 and the Sandridge Neighbourhood Plan.

7.8. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is also a material consideration.

7.9. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF states that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

7.10. For decision-taking this means:

- 7.11. c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.

- 7.12. Paragraphs 231 and 232 of the NPPF reads as follows:
The policies in this Framework are material considerations which should be taken into account in dealing with applications from the day of its publication. Plans may also need to be revised to reflect policy changes which this replacement Framework has made. This should be progressed as quickly as possible, either through a partial revision or by preparing a new plan.

However, existing policies should not be considered out-of-date simply because they were adopted or made prior to the publication of this Framework. Due weight should be given to them, according to their degree of consistency with this Framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given).

- 7.13. The degree of consistency of the Local Plan policies with the framework will be referenced within the discussion section of the report where relevant.

- 7.14. The Local Plan was submitted, on 29th November 2024, to the Planning Inspectorate for independent examination which will be carried out on behalf of the Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. This is in accordance with Regulation 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended). The Local Plan generally has limited weight in decision making at this time. The emerging policies have been considered but have limited weight in relation to the assessment of this application.

8. Discussion

- 8.1. This application seeks permission in principle for residential development of up to two dwellings.

- 8.2. The permission in principle consent route is an alternative way of obtaining planning permission for housing-led development which separates the consideration of matters of principle for proposed development from the technical detail of the development. The permission in principle consent route has 2 stages: the first stage (or permission in principle stage) establishes whether a site is suitable in-principle and the second (technical details consent) stage is when the detailed development proposals are assessed.

- 8.3. It should be noted that the matters that can be considered for an application for Permission in Principle are limited to location, land use and amount of development. It is therefore only the principle of the proposed development that

can be considered. The Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) (Amendment) Order 2017 (as amended) sets out that applications for Permission in Principle should set out the minimum and maximum number of dwellings proposed.

8.4. Other planning considerations including character and appearance, impact on future occupiers and neighbouring occupiers, parking, highways impact, impact on existing and proposed rights of way routes and landscape would be considered at the technical details stage should permission in principle be granted.

8.5. Principle

8.5.1. The Council cannot demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply. The proposed development would provide up to two additional dwellings as a contribution towards meeting housing need in the District. Paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF is therefore engaged and requires that where policies are out of date permission should be granted unless the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance (Footnote 7: including Green Belt and designated heritage assets) provides a strong reason for refusing the development or if any adverse impact of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

8.5.2. The application site is within the Green Belt. Guidance on Green Belt is given in Chapter 13 of the NPPF.

8.5.3. Paragraph 143 of the NPPF states that Green Belt serves five purposes:

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

8.5.4. Local Plan Policy 1 defines exceptions for development in the Green Belt that predate those in the NPPF. However, it does identify the Green Belt within the district and acknowledges the stated purpose of the Green Belt.

8.5.5. Paragraph 154 of the NPPF states that development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless one of the following exceptions applies:

- a) Buildings for agricultural and forestry;
- b) provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use), including buildings for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;
- c) The extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;
- d) The replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
- e) Limited infilling in villages;
- f) Limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and
- g) Limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land (including a material change of use to residential or mixed use including residential), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary

buildings), which would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt

h) Other forms of development provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These are:

- i. mineral extraction;
- ii. Engineering operations;
- iii. Local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location;
- iv. The re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction;
- v. material changes in use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or cemeteries and burial grounds; and
- vi. Development, including building, brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.

8.5.6. The submitted Statement considers that the application would fall under Paragraph 154 e), limited infilling in villages.

8.5.7. It is therefore necessary to consider whether the site is located within a village, which should be considered not only on village boundaries but also physical evidence on the ground, but also if the development represents infill and, if so, if the development is limited.

8.5.8. The site is outside of the defined Specified Settlement area of Sandridge in both the Local Plan and the Sandridge Neighbourhood Plan. In this case, the village boundary in this part of Sandridge is well defined and follows a line from the flank of No. 38 House Lane rearwards, along the rear of dwellings in Gibbons Close and Highfield Road beyond. Given the well defined boundary the proposed would encroach outside the village boundary.

8.5.9. Limited infilling is often understood to be the infilling of a gap within an existing development or frontage. The site does not have the characteristics of an infill site and does not form a gap within a built up frontage, with no built development between 38 House Lane until House Lane meets the Jersey Farm development at Sandringham Crescent.

8.5.10. Whilst the development is limited, in that it proposes up to two dwellings, given the above, it would not be in accordance with Paragraph 154 e) of the NPPF. It is not considered that the development would meet any of the exceptions set out in paragraph 154 of the NPPF.

8.5.11. Paragraph 155 of the NPPF sets out that:

8.5.12. The development of homes, commercial and other development in the Green Belt should also not be regarded as inappropriate where all the following apply:

- a) The development would utilise grey belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan;
- b) There is a demonstrable unmet need for the development proposed;
- c) The development would be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to paragraphs 110 and 115 of this Framework; and
- d) Where applicable the development proposed meets the “Golden Rules” requirements set out in Paragraphs 156-157.

8.5.13. Paragraph 155(a), Annex 2: Glossary of the NPPF defines “grey belt” as follows:

Grey Belt: for the purposes of plan-making and decision-making, “grey belt” is defined as land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b) or (d) in paragraph 143. “Grey Belt” excludes land where the application of policies relating to the areas or assets in footnote 7 (other than Green Belt) would provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development.”

- 8.5.14. The proposal does not comprise previously developed land and, as such, does not meet this part of the definition of grey belt land in this regard.
- 8.5.15. However, consideration of parts a) – d) of Para 155 are as follows:
- 8.5.16. Part a) considers whether the development constitutes Grey Belt land. The definition of Grey Belt land includes considering whether a development strongly contributes to any of purposes (a), (b) or (d) in Paragraph 143. These are as set out in para 8.5.3 above.
- 8.5.17. Given the size and location of the site, it does not strongly contribute to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas (a).
- 8.5.18. Given the location of this specific site, it would not result in neighbouring towns (in this case Sandridge and St Albans) merging into one another (b).
- 8.5.19. The proposal would not harm the setting and special character of Sandridge. It is also noted that the proposal would not be adjacent to any designated heritage assets (d).
- 8.5.20. The site is therefore considered to fall under the definition of Grey Belt land as set out in the NPPF 2024, it does not strongly contribute to any of the purposes (a), (b) or (d) in Paragraph 143. The proposal for up to two dwellings would therefore be in accordance with Paragraph 155 a) in that the proposal would utilise grey belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan.
- 8.5.21. In regard to Paragraph 155 b), the Council does not have a five year housing land supply, therefore there is a demonstrable unmet need for the residential development proposed.
- 8.5.22. Paragraph 155 c) requires that a development would be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to paragraphs 110 and 115 of the NPPF.
- 8.5.23. Paragraph 110 of the NPPF states:
The planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.”
- 8.5.24. Paragraph 115 of the NPPF states:
In assessing sites that may be allocated for development in plans, or specific applications for development, it should be ensured that:
a) *sustainable transport modes are prioritised taking account of the vision for the site, the type of development and its location;*

- b) *safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users;*
- c) *the design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflects current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code; and*
- d) *any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion) or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree through a vision-led approach.*

8.5.25. The application site is on the outskirts of the village and within approximately 350m walking distance from both bus stops (providing access to the south to St Albans and North to Wheathampstead). The site is approximately 170m from the village High Street, which includes a small shop and public houses and approximately 385m from a play area and recreation ground. Given the location and nearby amenities and opportunities for bus travel, the application site is considered to be in a sustainable location and would therefore be in accordance with Paragraph 155 c).

8.5.26. Paragraph 155 d) requires that where applicable development proposed meets the “Golden Rules” requirements set out in Paragraphs 156-157. The “Golden Rules” relate to major development sites, as the site is not a major development paragraph 156 does not apply.

8.5.27. On this basis, the site is considered to be Grey Belt and meets the exception to inappropriate development under paragraph 155 of the NPPF 2024.

8.6. Other Matters

8.6.1. Concerns in relation to impact on neighbouring amenity, protected views, public rights of way, parking, applicant details, highway matters and compliance with Policies D1, D2, D3, D4, T3 and E2 of the Sandridge Neighbourhood Plan are noted however, as mentioned above, these matters do not form part of the assessment under this type of application for Permission in Principle. These would be addressed during the technical details consent stage.

8.7. Planning Balance

8.7.1. The application site is considered to constitute grey belt and is in accordance with Paragraph 155 of the NPPF.

8.7.2. Issues relating to character, amenity, parking, highway safety, rights of way, impact on neighbouring amenity etc would be fully considered during the technical matters stage.

8.7.3. Given that the principle of the development is acceptable, the application is recommended for conditional permission.

9. **Comment on Town/Parish Council/District Councillor Concern/s**

9.1. Concerns raised are addressed above.

10. **Reasons for Grant/Refusal**

10.1. The proposed development constitutes grey belt and is therefore not inappropriate development within the green belt and will make a positive contribution to the Council’s housing land supply. The land use and amount of development is

considered acceptable. The proposal complies with the National Planning Policy Framework, 2024.

EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

Consideration has been given to Articles 1, 6, 8, 9, 10 and 14 of the First Protocol of the European Convention on Human Rights. It is not considered that the decision would result in a violation of any person's rights under the Convention.

When considering proposals placed before the Council as Local Planning Authority, it is important that it is fully aware of and has themselves rigorously considered the equalities implications of the decision that they are taking. Therefore, rigorous consideration has been undertaken by the Council as the Local Planning Authority to ensure that proper appreciation of any potential impact of the proposed development on the Council's obligations under the Public Sector Equalities Duty.

The Equalities Act 2010 requires the Council when exercising its functions to have due regard to the need to (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and (c) foster good relations between persons who share protected characteristics under the Equality Act and persons who do not share it. The protected characteristics under the Equality Act are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief; sex and sexual orientation.

It is considered that the decision has had regard to this duty. The development would not conflict with either St Albans City and District Council's Equality Policy and would support the Council in meeting its statutory equality responsibilities.

RECOMMENDATION:	Permission in Principle Granted	Decision Code:	A1
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11. Conditions

1. The development hereby permitted in principle, and with all of the technical details approved prior to the expiration of that date, shall be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

REASON To accord with the requirements as set out with the Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) (Amendment) Order 2017.

2. The technical details related to the development hereby permitted in principle shall be submitted in full accordance with the approved Site Location Plan.

REASON To accord with the requirements as set out within the Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) (Amendment) Order 2017.

3. The development hereby permitted in principle shall include and be limited to the use of the site, as outlined in red on the approved plan, for residential accommodation and the net number of dwellings to be provided shall be limited to a maximum of two as defined in Part 2A of the Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) (Amendment) Order 2017.

REASON To accord with the requirements as set out with the Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) (Amendment) Order 2017.

12. Informatives:

1. This determination was based on the following drawings and information: drawing nos. Sk003, Sk001 Rev A (received 29.11.24), Planning Statement.

2. The Local Planning Authority has been positive and proactive in its consideration of this planning application. The development improves the economic, social and environmental conditions of the District.

3. The applicant is advised that the following matters would be expected to form part of the Technical Details stage following the grant of permission in principle (but are not limited to):

- scaled drawings, including proposed elevations, floor plans and street scene;
- external materials;
- landscaping;
- biodiversity net gain;
- details in the form of scale plans regarding access, footways, visibility splays, parking provision and rights of way.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Officer



Section 65 Parties

None

Plans on website

<https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/view-and-track-planning-applications>

APPENDICES – Full Consultation Responses

1. **SADC – Recycling and Waste**
2. **HCC – Highways**
3. **HCC Countryside Officer**
4. **HCC – Landscape**

1. **SADC – Recycling and Waste**

This development would be on a road to which we already provide a collection service. Each property would be provided with a suite of containers which will need to be presented on the boundary with the public highway on collection day. Between collections, all containers must be stored within the property boundary or the proposed bin stores.

2. **HCC - Highways**

House Lane is a classified local distributor road and is highway maintainable at public expense. A 30mph speed limit applies. On HCC's Place and Movement network, House Lane is classed as Ps/M1 (eg residential street). No reported highway collisions recorded within the immediate vicinity of the application site (5 year rolling). The County Council considers House Lane not to be a traffic sensitive road. Sandridge Footpath (right of way 055) runs along the western side of the application site running north to south. An informative (AN5) is recommended in this instance, the footpath must be kept clear at all times. Due to the width of the road and on street parking trend, a construction method statement has been requested in order to protect highway safety and the amenity of other users of the public highway and rights of way in accordance with Policies 5, 12, 17 and 22 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018).

Access: Hertfordshires Place and Movement Planning Design Guide (P&MPDG) Part 2 Chapter 4 10.2 states "Developers will need to demonstrate how access to their development meets the requirements of LTP4. In particular, they shall be clear how the proposals would create more favourable access for walking, cycling, emerging forms of micromobility and passenger transport than for the private car."

The proposal is to include two new dropped kerb vehicular accesses from the highway, one per dwelling. Each new access would comprise up to a maximum of four flat kerbs, (3.6m) flanked by two ramped kerbs, each 0.9m (overall length 5.4m). The public right of way (Sandridge 055) must remain open and unaffected by any proposed works and vehicles, an informative is recommended in this respect (AN5).

Visibility: Achievable levels of inter-visibility between drivers exiting the site and other highway users (vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians) are not demonstrated on submitted plans. A visibility splay of 43m in each direction would be consistent with Manual for Streets, Table 7.1 and Hertfordshire's Place and Movement Planning Design Guide (PMPDG Part 3 Ch9 para 12) for a 30mph speed environment (set-back 2.4m from the carriageway, a 2m set-back may be considered in lightly trafficked and slow speed situations, MfS:7.7.7). Within the vertical plane, there should be no obstruction to visibility 2m high down to a point 600mm above the carriageway, the latter to ensure that small children can be seen (MfS 7.6.3), passing along the footway.

Trip Generation: The additional habitable space to be created as a result of the proposed development is unlikely to result in a material increase in vehicle trips to and from the site. No significant or severe impact on the transport network is identified in this respect.

Parking: The LPA shall be responsible for assessing the proposed development against local parking standards and to satisfy for itself that any level of parking it requires can be achieved within the boundary of the site and not overhang the highway, including the highway footway / grass verge/ vehicle crossover. A large hardstanding area would make provision for on-site parking and manoeuvring space. Hertfordshire's Place and Movement Planning Design Guide (P&MPDG) Part 2 Chapter 4 14.8 states "A garage which is large enough for the average sized family car, plus cycles and some storage space will be considered as a parking spaces. If it is smaller than 6m x 3m it will not count towards the parking space allocation."

Hertfordshire's Place and Movement Planning Design Guide (P&MPDG) Part 2 Chapter 4 14.9. Cycle parking provision should be made possible for all residential units. All flatted development should have secure communal cycle parking areas including visitor cycle parking areas. Communal cycle parking areas should be provided in accessible and secure locations with lighting.

Part 4 Chapter 6 Table 11.9 of Hertfordshire's Place and Movement Planning Design Guide states the required sizes of parking bays should be 5m deep x 2.5m wide (unobstructed) or 5m deep x 2.7m wide (obstructed on one side). Further information can be found here:

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/development-management/highways-developmentmanagement.aspx#designguidedshire>
County Council.

Accessibility: The site is currently shown as not having any pedestrian links to the existing footways other than the two dropped kerb vehicular access. HCC Highways would support a section of additional footway extended from the existing footway to the west of the site covering the proposed frontages of the site. Hertfordshire's Place and Movement Planning Design Guide (P&MPDG) Part 2 Chapter 4 10.2 states "Developers will need to demonstrate how access to their development meets the requirements of LTP4. In particular, they shall be clear how the proposals would create more favourable access for walking, cycling, emerging forms of micromobility and passenger transport than for the private car."

Several bus stops are located approximately 350m from the site (walking route) with both northbound and southbound services providing access to St Albans and Wheathampstead. The site lies approximately 350m from local amenities located on the High Street.

The northeast top corner of the plan appears to slightly cover an existing gated farm access, it is unclear if this access is still in use as there is no formal surfaced area for vehicles. The LPA may wish to take this into consideration.

Surface Water Flood Risk to the Highway: The transport network needs to be resilient to the risks from the impacts of climate change, including changing weather patterns and extreme events. Policy 5 and of the Hertfordshire Local Transport Plan (LTP4) seek to secure developer mitigation measures to limit the impacts of development on the network. HCC's Place and Movement Planning Design Guide,

states that water from areas that are not adoptable highway must not be allowed to run onto areas of adopted highway. The Government's flood risk maps for planning indicate parts of the nearby highway carriageway to be at low risk of surface water flooding: <https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/>

Emergency Vehicle Access: Consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework applications for development should allow for access by emergency vehicles. Guidance is set out in Manual for Streets (MfS) (6.7.2). HCC's Place and Movement Planning Design Guide (P&MPDG) (Part 2 Chapter 4). Requirements are set out in the Building Regulations: Fire Safety Approved Document B, Vol 1, Dwellings, 2010 (as subsequently amended). Access for a pumping appliance should be provided to within 45m of a single dwelling house (and within 45m of all points within the dwelling house).

Access for Refuse Vehicles: Refuse vehicles must be able to stop within a maximum carry distance of 25m from a bin collection point (Manual for Streets, 6.8.9). Residents should not be required to carry waste more than 30m to a storage point (Manual for Streets, 6.8.9).

Conclusion: HCC as Highway Authority has considered the proposal and concludes that it would not give rise to an unacceptable impact on the safety or operation of the surrounding highway. It raises no objections but recommends the inclusion of the above highway conditions and informative/advisory notes.

3. HCC Countryside Officer

This relates to a proposal for two houses on a paddock adjacent to 38 House Lane Sandridge. The County Councils Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP LTP) has a suggested a link path (bridleway) along the inside of the field to provide a safe link along House Lane to Jersey Lane from the village for vulnerable non-motorised path users.

The ROWIP proposal came from the consultation which was a requirement of the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000, put forward by the St Albans Access Forum (STAAF) which is a representative group of all the non-motorised path users in the District including the British Horse Society, St Albans Cycling Campaign and the Ramblers.

The scheme as shown on the applicants drawing below does not allow for any provision of this path linking across the frontages at House Lane. I appreciate that this would only establish part of the route however my consultees have highlighted this opportunity which I note would deliver a ROWIP suggestion that is related to the Local Transport Plan.

I have also noted that the subsoil of the connecting Footpath 55 is included within the site therefore I advise that this path should be retained at its recorded width in the Definitive Map and Statement of Public Rights of Way in Hertfordshire.

4. HCC – Landscape

The NPPF confirms that decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, and recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

Decisions should also ensure that new developments, are sympathetic to local character and history including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, support healthy lifestyles through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure and an appropriate amount and mix of green and other public space, and are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping.

The NPPF recognises that trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments and serves to ensure that new streets are tree-lined, that opportunities are to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards), that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long term maintenance of newly planted trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible.

The site lies within landscaper character area 102 – Ayres End Valleys and Ridges.

The landscape character is described as a network of dry interconnecting valleys with a sense of rural seclusion despite the close proximity of settlements on the higher ground to the rear of the smaller plateau areas on the fringes of this area.

The visual containment is aided by the prominent small and medium sized woods located on the upper reaches of the valley sides. Narrow lanes and equestrian activities create a relatively relaxed feel. The plateau areas are more open, with large arable fields and intermittent clipped hedgerows. On the fringes of the adjacent urban settlements there is a greater emphasis on recreational activities, including playfield fields, equestrian activity, golf and community woodland.

The condition is assessed as moderate and the strength of character is assessed as moderate, the overall strategy for managing change is to improve and conserve.

Landscape Proposals – We understand that this application is for 2 dwellings on a previously undeveloped plot of land. It is noted that the proposed dwellings would follow the existing residential built form and patten of development along House Lane.

We are supportive of the proposal to retain the existing hedgerows and supplement them with new planting of native species. Further information relating to the existing vegetation on site as well as the soft landscaping scheme for the site would need to be submitted at the next stage of the application.

Summary and Conclusion: We therefore advise the LPA that there is no in principle objection to the proposed application. As mentioned above further information will need to be submitted at the next stage of the application to evidence that the application would be acceptable in regard to landscaping and visual impact upon the existing character of the area as well as the layout and soft landscaping approach for the site.