

5 Hillside Road, Northwood

Application Supporting Statement

Longcroft[®]
LUXURY CAT HOTEL



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Introduction

1. This Planning Statement supports an application for the installation of a bespoke outbuilding to operate as a Longcroft Luxury Cat Hotel, comprising 7 suites, on land forming part of the residential property known as 5 Hillside Road, Northwood, HA6 1PY.
2. The proposal relates to the relocation of a purpose-built seven-suite modular Longcroft Luxury Cat Hotel (Longcroft standard design) that previously operated in Fontwell.
3. The former Fontwell cat hotel was granted permission on 19 May 2014 by the Arun District Council (ref: AL/24/14/PL) and has operated successfully for 12 years with no issues or complaints. That site is now closing (as the operators are retiring), and the existing purpose-built structure will be dismantled and re-installed at the new location, providing continuity of this high-quality, low-impact service for local cat owners.
4. The reuse of the approved and successfully operated cat hotel structure from Fontwell which ran for over 12 years with no complaints, provides a strong precedent and fallback position, further supporting the acceptability of the proposed development.
5. Longcroft Luxury Cat Hotels offer high-quality, boutique-style boarding for cats. Since its inception in 2010, the Longcroft model has expanded across the UK, offering cat owners a well-managed, hygienic, and low-impact alternative to conventional catteries. These facilities are typically located in residential or rural settings and are operated from home by trained franchise partners under strict operational standards.
6. This statement sets out the proposal, outlines planning context and relevant policy, and addresses key planning considerations, including residential amenity, access and parking, biodiversity, drainage, and sustainability.

Background to Longcroft Luxury Cat Hotels

7. Since 2010, Longcroft Luxury Cat Hotel has provided a low-key, high-quality, and niche service for cat owners requiring short-term accommodation for their pets. Designed as an alternative to large-scale commercial catteries that often house many animals in smaller, noisier settings, Longcroft's approach focuses on limited occupancy, generous space, and a calm, hygienic environment.
8. Longcroft hotel buildings are manufactured to exceptionally high standards by specialist suppliers, similar to those used by leading animal welfare charities. Constructed from impervious and durable materials that do not harbour odours or deteriorate over time, they markedly differ from conventional catteries, which often rely on timber structures that degrade and hold scent.



9. The business model, launched as a partnership scheme in 2012, enables individuals known as 'Longcroft Partners' to operate from their own homes, maintaining full alignment with Longcroft HQ protocols. This arrangement ensures that all hotel partners follow strict welfare, hygiene, and operational procedures through a binding contractual relationship. The model also enables flexible home working, fulfilling local needs for premium cat care.
10. Longcroft's first hotel opened in Welwyn Garden City in 2010. Since then, it has received national acclaim, including the 'Smarta 100 Business' award in 2012, The Guardian's 2016 Small Business Showcase Award, and 'Best Place to Work' at the Red Ribbon Awards. The original hotel remains operational and inspired a second nearby outlet.
11. Numerous local authorities across the UK have granted planning permission for Longcroft hotels in sensitive areas, including conservation zones, green belt land, and rural countryside. Examples include the following, with planning reference numbers where applicable:
 - a. **St Albans**: Planning permission granted due to compatibility with local character (Ref: 5/2011/2931).
 - b. **Letchworth**: Required and secured heritage approval in a Conservation Area (Heritage Foundation and LPA consent, 2015).
 - c. **Winchmore Hill**: Sited within AONB and near a listed building; temporary permission later made permanent (Refs: CH/2013/1737/FA & CH/2016/0054/FA).
 - d. **Sandridge**: Located amongst residential dwellings; approved due to scale and lack of impact (Ref: 5/2021/0323).
 - e. **Liphook (SDNPA)**: Approved within South Downs National Park due to sustainable design and low impact (Ref: SDNP/17/003314/FUL).
 - f. **Lockerley (TVDA)**: Granted permission in open countryside under policies supporting rural business (Ref: 19/02823/FULLS).
 - g. **Garmouth (Scotland)**: Granted permission in a conservation area in the garden of a listed building.
12. Further approvals in Flamstead, Croydon, Braintree, and Sheffield confirm a consistent track record of support for Longcroft proposals where impacts on amenity, highways, and drainage are demonstrably low. In each case, the business's high welfare standards and discrete footprint have been recognised as aligning with planning policy.
13. Crucially, Longcroft hotels do not accommodate dogs, distinguishing them further from dual-purpose catteries and preserving the peace and tranquillity of their settings.

About the Applicant and Proposal

14. The proposed development involves the installation of a pre-used modular cat hotel building, positioned in the rear section of the garden at the property. Designed and



manufactured to Longcroft's strict specifications, the structure represents an investment of approximately £30,000 into the local economy, supporting local tradespeople for its dismantling, relocation, installation, and ongoing maintenance.

15. The cat hotel will feature 7 suites, each capable of accommodating up to two cats, in accordance with current Animal Activities Licensing (AAL) standards. In total, the facility will house up to 14 cats at any one time. However, it is Longcroft policy to not mix cats from different households, meaning that the hotel will rarely run at full capacity. The building is designed for animal comfort, hygiene, and visual discretion, using materials and specifications similar to those adopted by reputable charities such as Cats Protection and Blue Cross.
16. The cat hotel is a prefabricated uPVC structure that can be easily erected or taken down and removed.
17. Building Details:
 - a. Constructed from uPVC panels and framed glazing with galvanised safety mesh.
 - b. Fully insulated, soundproofed, and equipped with a heat-reflective polycarbonate roof.
 - c. Built on a concrete base measuring approximately **48.3m²** (11.15m x 4.34m) (built using already existing hardstanding measuring c.25m²).
 - d. Height: 2.480m at the front, tapering to 2.180m at the rear, enabling climbing and movement for cats.
 - e. Fitted with energy-efficient lighting, including diffused low night lighting in sleeping areas and corridor lighting with prisms. No external lighting is proposed.
18. Each suite includes:
 - a. A thermostatically controlled sleeping area.
 - b. Bespoke antimicrobial furniture.
 - c. Impervious flooring and grout system for optimal hygiene.
 - d. Fully covered exercise area allowing cats the space they need to climb and relax.
19. The external environment will include an attractive wooden pergola, softened by natural planting and seasonal hanging baskets. Bird boxes will also be installed, supporting local biodiversity.

Operations and Activity

20. **Appointment-only system:** Visitors are strictly by appointment between 9:00am and 5:00pm, Monday to Saturday. No visitors on Sundays or Bank Holidays.
21. **Traffic and parking:** Anticipated vehicle activity is extremely low, with an average of one car per day stopping briefly for drop-off or collection.



22. **No external staff:** The hotel will be operated solely by Kate Fuller, the resident owner. Supplies will be sourced as part of normal domestic shopping, with no commercial deliveries.

Hygiene and Waste

23. The building design avoids water runoff; no hosing is used, and floors are cleaned using dry, vet-approved protocols. Mains water is not required.
24. Cats are only accepted with proof of vaccination and worming and flea treatments.
25. Cat litter is specifically chosen for odour control and waste reduction. Waste is triple bagged, stored in a separate 240L bin (separate from all household waste), and collected by a registered private carrier.

Amenity and Noise

26. Longcroft buildings exceed Chartered Institute of Environmental Health acoustic insulation standards.
27. The quiet nature of cats, combined with robust insulation, ensures absolutely minimal noise disturbance.
28. The proposed facility reflects the high standards associated with the Longcroft brand and will operate discreetly from a purpose-built, high-specification modular building located within the rear garden of 5 Hillside Road. Measuring approximately 11.1m × 4.3m, the building has been specifically designed to provide premium cat boarding accommodation whilst remaining sympathetic to its residential surroundings.
29. Key features include:
- a. UPVC insulated panels, impervious hygienic flooring, and polycarbonate roofing.
 - b. Bespoke antimicrobial cat furniture.
 - c. Energy-efficient lighting and thermostatic control.
 - d. Installation of a decorative pergola with natural planting and bird boxes to soften visual impact and enhance biodiversity.
30. The facility will be operated solely by Kate Fuller, the property's co-owner and resident. The boarding activity will be run on an appointment-only basis, during the hours of 9:00am to 5:00pm, Monday to Saturday. No visits are permitted on Sundays or Bank Holidays. No employees will be engaged and customer turnover is anticipated to be an average of one car per day.



The Need for the Facility

National Context

31. As of 2024, there are an estimated 12.5 million cats in the UK, with approximately 29% of households owning at least one cat (source: Pet Food Manufacturers Association). Yet, there are only around 2,000 licensed catteries nationally. Many existing facilities are outdated, constructed from materials like timber which retain bacteria and odours, and are unable to meet modern licensing standards.
32. The Government's introduction of stricter animal boarding regulations in 2018 has improved welfare but also caused the closure of many facilities that could not comply, further limiting availability. During the pandemic, demand surged due to a rise in pet ownership and the closure of numerous catteries, many of which have not reopened. This mismatch between rising demand and shrinking supply is particularly acute during peak travel periods.
33. The Longcroft concept was founded specifically to address this gap. The business model is built around high-quality, low-volume, home-based care, and the majority of its demand comes from repeat bookings by customers who use the service several times each year. The proven need for additional capacity is evidenced by the success of every existing Longcroft hotel.

Local Context

34. The London Borough of Hillingdon has experienced significant population growth over the last decade. Between the 2011 and 2021 Censuses, the resident population increased by approximately 11.7%, from around 273,900 to 305,900 residents, representing an increase of approximately 32,000 people. This rate of growth exceeded both the London average (7.7%) and the national average (6.6%), demonstrating continued demand for local services across the Borough.
35. Hillingdon is now one of London's largest outer London boroughs, with a substantial and growing residential population. Applying the Pet Food Manufacturers' Association estimate that approximately 29% of UK households own at least one cat suggests that many thousands of households within the Borough are likely to require access to high-quality boarding facilities. As the population continues to grow, demand for specialist pet care services can reasonably be expected to increase accordingly.
36. Whilst a number of boarding establishments operate within the wider West London area, there remains a limited supply of premium, purpose-built cat-only accommodation within the immediate locality. Many traditional boarding establishments continue to operate alongside dog kennels or from older facilities that do not provide the quiet, spacious and hygienic environment increasingly sought by modern cat owners. The Longcroft model addresses this demand by providing low-density, luxury accommodation designed



exclusively for cats, operated in accordance with rigorous welfare, hygiene and licensing standards.

37. The proposed development will therefore address both a quantitative and qualitative need for premium cat boarding accommodation within the Borough. By providing a professionally managed, low-impact facility operated from the applicant's home, the proposal will improve local service provision, support a sustainable home-based business and provide an important community facility without giving rise to unacceptable impacts on residential amenity or the character of the surrounding area.

Site Description

38. 5 Hillside Road is a freehold detached property set within a spacious garden plot in a residential location off Northwood way approximately 1 mile east of Northwood centre.
39. The application site benefits from excellent accessibility to local services and facilities, including Northwood town centre, local shops, schools and public transport. Despite its convenient location, the property enjoys a quiet residential setting with mature landscaping. These characteristics make the site particularly well suited to the proposed Longcroft Luxury Cat Hotel, which is specifically designed to operate as a discreet, low-intensity home-based business with minimal impact upon the surrounding area.
40. A review of the London Borough of Hillingdon's online planning records has not identified any planning history relevant to the determination of this application.
41. According to the Government's online flood risk map, the land is in an area with a "low risk" of surface water flooding and a "very low risk" of flooding from rivers and the sea. No works are proposed that would affect existing trees or landscaping.
42. The property is not within a Conservation Area and is not affected by any Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). The garden is surrounded by mature hedging and trees which provide visual screening.

Planning Policy Context

National Policy (NPPF 2024)

43. The proposal aligns with the NPPF's presumption in favour of sustainable development (§11) by delivering an appropriate, well-designed home-based business with no significant impact on amenity or infrastructure. It supports small-scale entrepreneurship (§81), ensures a high standard of amenity (§135), and contributes to net biodiversity gain (§188).



44. In line with **NPPF §11**, the proposal should benefit from the presumption in favour of sustainable development, being in full accordance with up-to-date Local Plan policies and causing no significant adverse impacts.
45. The proposal also supports the Government's objective of encouraging entrepreneurship and sustainable home-working. The development enables a resident-operated business to function from an existing dwellinghouse without materially altering its residential character, thereby supporting local economic growth whilst minimising commuting, construction impacts and the use of additional land.

Local Policy

46. The proposal accords with Policy DMHB 11 (Design of New Development), which requires development to be of a high standard of design, harmonise with its surroundings and safeguard the character of the area. The proposed Longcroft hotel is modest in scale, located within the rear garden of an existing detached dwelling, and has been carefully positioned to minimise its visual presence. The use of high-quality materials, mature boundary screening and sympathetic landscaping ensures that the development integrates successfully with its residential setting.
47. The proposal also complies with Policy DMHB 11 by protecting the amenities of neighbouring occupiers. The facility will operate as a low-intensity, appointment-only home-based business, generating negligible traffic and noise. No external lighting is proposed, no staff will be employed, and the insulated construction of the building, together with the inherently quiet nature of cats, ensures there will be no unacceptable impacts arising from noise, odour, disturbance or loss of privacy.
48. The proposal is consistent with Policy DME1 7 (Biodiversity Protection and Enhancement). The development has been designed to minimise ecological impacts by utilising a substantial area of existing hardstanding and limiting the loss of vegetated land. No trees, hedgerows or other important habitats will be removed. Furthermore, biodiversity enhancements, including additional planting and the installation of bird boxes, will provide a modest ecological benefit beyond the existing baseline.
49. The proposal accords with Policy DMT 1 (Managing Transport Impacts) by ensuring that safe access and adequate off-street parking are available within the site. Customer visits will be strictly by appointment and are anticipated to average approximately one vehicle per day. Consequently, the proposal will not prejudice highway safety, increase on-street parking demand or give rise to any material transport impacts.

Planning Considerations

Residential Amenity



50. There are no neighbouring properties in close proximity that would be adversely affected. The use of high-spec acoustic materials, strict hygiene protocols, and the absence of external lighting ensures the proposal has no adverse impact on amenity.

Parking and Access

51. The property has 4 off-street parking spaces and ample driveway space for visitors in its open driveway. Customer visits are minimal (typically one short visit per day), and all visits are by prior appointment.

Drainage and Flood Risk

52. The site benefits from mains drainage and lies in an area of very low flood risk. The cat hotel does not require additional drainage infrastructure.

Biodiversity and Landscaping & Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

53. The proposed development comprises the installation of a 48.3m² concrete base to accommodate a small-scale commercial structure within the garden of a residential property. Importantly, this base will incorporate approximately 25m² of existing hardstanding already present on-site. As such, the extent of new land affected by this proposal is materially limited.
54. The area being developed does not contain any priority habitat, planting, or ecologically sensitive features, and the surfaces being replaced are of negligible biodiversity value. Based on current guidance issued by Natural England and DEFRA, developments that result in habitat losses below 25m², particularly where the baseline biodiversity value is very low, are generally considered to fall within the *de minimis* threshold for Biodiversity Net Gain requirements.
55. Given that the proposed works are taking place predominantly on pre-existing hard surfaces, with a minimal net increase in impermeable area over low-value ground, it is considered that this development will not result in measurable biodiversity loss. Accordingly, it is considered that the proposal falls below the *de minimis* threshold for statutory Biodiversity Net Gain assessment.
56. In any event, we are keen to support biodiversification and as such, no trees or hedges will be removed. Enhancements include a decorative pergola, new border planting, and bird boxes. The development has no impact on local habitats or protected species.

Waste and Hygiene



57. Waste is minimal and disposed of using a 240L bin stored within the property boundary until collected by a registered waste carrier. All cleaning follows Longcroft's veterinary-led hygiene protocols. No odour issues are anticipated.

Summary and Conclusion

58. This application relates to the installation of a pre-used temporary and removable outbuilding to provide short-term luxury boarding accommodation for cats, comprising seven suites, on land forming part of the residential property known as 5 Hillside Road. The proposed site is set within a spacious, well-screened garden plot in a tranquil setting, with no heritage constraints or biodiversity impact, and no risk of flooding. The proposed building is discreetly located in the rear garden, screened by mature landscaping, and its domestic scale and appearance are in keeping with the character of the surrounding area.
59. The facility will be run by the resident owner and will remain ancillary to the residential use of the dwelling. No staff will be employed, and customer visitation is strictly by appointment only, during regular working hours. Vehicle movements are minimal — an average of one car per day — and there are no delivery requirements beyond those typical of domestic use. The use will therefore have no material impact on residential amenity, traffic, or local infrastructure.
60. The proposed building is of exceptionally high quality and is manufactured to standards comparable to those adopted by leading animal welfare organisations. Unlike many traditional catteries — often constructed from timber and difficult to maintain — the Longcroft model provides a clean, quiet, and comfortable environment with state-of-the-art hygiene protocols.
61. There are now over 25 Longcroft Cat Hotels (a total of 35 having opened but some having since closed) operating across the UK, including many in sensitive locations such as Conservation Areas, Green Belt land, National Parks, and the open countryside. Planning authorities have consistently recognised that the model is compatible with its surroundings and meets high standards for animal welfare and design. The demand for such facilities continues to grow — the UK is now home to over 12.5 million cats, yet only around 2,000 licensed catteries remain. Many of these are ageing or have closed following the introduction of the 2018 licensing regulations and the COVID-19 pandemic.
62. Locally, Hillingdon has seen a significant rise in population and household growth, and current projections suggest further increases by 2041. An estimated 29% of households in the district are likely to own at least one cat. Despite this, there remains a limited supply of premium cat-only boarding facilities within the Borough.
63. This application directly addresses the shortfall in high-quality cattery provision in both a qualitative and quantitative sense. It introduces a valuable local service, contributes to the local economy, supports home working, and promotes sustainable enterprise — all aims that align closely with national and local planning policy.



64. In line with the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in the NPPF, and the principles of the Government's "Plan for Growth," this proposal should be positively supported and planning permission granted as it is a sustainable, low-impact business aligned with both national and local planning objectives. It enhances local service provision while respecting the character and amenity of the area.
65. In summary:
- a. It promotes economic diversification.
 - b. It is appropriately scaled and visually screened.
 - c. It generates minimal traffic or disruption.
 - d. It respects biodiversity and design policies.
66. The application complies with the NPPF and the Hillingdon Local Plan and should be supported accordingly.
67. When assessed as a whole, the proposal delivers clear social, economic and environmental benefits. It provides a valuable local service, supports sustainable home working, reuses an existing purpose-built building, enhances biodiversity, generates negligible traffic and causes no unacceptable harm to residential amenity or the character of the area. There are no material planning considerations which weigh against the proposal. It is therefore respectfully submitted that planning permission should be granted.
68. We thank you kindly for your time in reading this statement, and the applicant welcomes any questions or clarifications.