DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...Tom Rea.....

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
18/01332/FP	Erection of 8 x 1-bed flats following demolition of existing surgery building	The Surgery 1 Stevenage Road Knebworth Hertfordshire SG3 6AN

Submitted Plan Nos

Location Plan A801A 1A 2A 4 5A 6A

1.0 Policies

LP5	Excluded Villages

LP26	Housing Proposals
LP55	Car Parking Standards
LP57	Residential Guidelines and Standards
SECT4	Promoting Sustainable Transport
SECT6	Delivering Wide Choice High Quality Home
SECT7	Requiring Good Design
SECT8	Promoting Healthy Communities

2.0 **Site History**

15/02299/1: Erection of 8 x 1 bed flats with 8 car parking spaces and cycle store following demolition of existing building (as amended by plan no. A801A). Granted 22/12/15

3.0 **Representations**

3.1 **Knebworth Parish Council:** No objections

3.2 **Site Notice/ Adjoining occupiers** : No representations received

3.3 **Hertfordshire Highways:** No objections. Recommends conditions and highway informative

4.0 Planning Considerations

4.1 **Site & Surroundings**

4.1.1 The application site comprises a rectangular shaped site located on the north side of Station Road, Knebworth at its junction with London Road. The site contains a 19th century two storey building formerly used as a dwelling and flats and currently used as a doctors surgery. The property has a large surface car parking area between the building and Station Road (14 spaces) and an in and out vehicular access.

4.2 **Proposal**

4.2.1 The proposal, as amended, is to demolish the existing building and construct a two storey building with roof accommodation to accommodate 8 one bedroom flats. The ground and first floor levels would accommodate three flats and the roof would accommodate two flats. The revised plan shows the building moved southwards on the site so that it is approximately level with the adjacent building No. 20 Station Road.

4.2.2 The proposed layout of the site would include a single point of vehicular access onto London Road. Ten parking spaces are proposed including two visitor spaces. A detached cycle storage building and a detached refuse collection area are also proposed.

4.3 **Key Issues**

4.3.1 The key issues are the principle of the development including the change of use, character and appearance, parking and access, environmental matters and planning obligations.

4.3.2 **Principle of residential development**

The site is within the built up area of Knebworth, a settlement excluded from the Green Belt. Within such settlements housing development is acceptable if the proposal is compatible with the maintenance and enhancement of village character and maintains the Green Belt boundary. The application site is within an area of mixed development in the centre of the village although there are a number of residential properties at Nos. 2 - 20 Station Road and nearby in Westland Road and London Road. Flatted development is common in the area closer towards the station.

I therefore conclude that the development would not be out of context in this location. Furthermore the site is previously developed land (formerly a house and flats) and the redevelopment proposal would accord in general terms with the advice in the NPPF which encourages development in sustainable locations subject to appropriate environmental considerations. The development of this site would have no imapct on the settlement boundary. In general terms the development of this site with a residential scheme would be in accordance with Policy 5 of the Local Plan. The NPPF sets out three criteria to achieve sustainable development which should be sought jointly and simultaneously. In economic terms terms I consider that the proposal fulfills the requirement to bring land forward for development to support growth. In social terms this site would meet an identified housing need in the district, creating a high quality environment accessible to local services. In environmental terms the proposals would, through re-development of a rather tired and much altered building with an unattractive car park with a high quality scheme, enhance the local environment and potentially improve biodiversity

with the introduction of gardens, the provision of frontage trees and new landscaping. I consider therefore that the scheme would achieve the aims of sustainable development as required by the NPPF.

4.3.3 The issue of the loss of the existing surgery as a community facility is an issue that requires some consideration. Section 8 of the NPPF advises against the unecessary loss of valued facilities and services particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day to day needs. I consider that this would include a doctors surgery. However the applicants agents have explained that the applicant is not seeking to close the existing surgery but to obtain a planning permission in the event that the current practice who are on a statutory continuation of a lease, give notice of termination of the lease which may result in the building becoming empty and boarded up while planning permission sought for redevelopment.

A new combined surgery and library has been approved at St. Martins Road in Knebworth (planning permission ref: 16/01369/1, dated 6/1/17).

In view of the above factors I consider that it would be unreasonable to refuse this application on the loss of a community facility as there is no indication that the facility is under threat of closure. The fact that permission has already been granted for this flat development in 2016 and is still an extant permission confirms my view that there can be no objection on principle to this proposal.

4.3.4 **Character and Appearance**
The existing building is set back from the Station Road frontage and the general appearance of the site is poor given the dominating impact of the large car park on the street scene which is accessed off Station Road. By moving the building forward and placing a smaller car park at the rear the visual amenities of the street scene would be improved in my opinion with a well landscaped frontage onto the Station Road elevation with the closure of the existing access.

The provision of a new building closer to the Station Road frontage would not be out of keeping given that the building would be more or less level with the existing buildings along the road.

4.3.5 The design of the proposed building is intended to fit in with the surrounding scale and design of existing buildings. The building would be constructed in a stock brick with Victorian detailing (arched brick headers to windows, casement windows, render and brick elevations, flat roofed dormers) and I consider that the detailing, massing and scale is appropriate to the existing pattern of development and therefore consistent with Policy 57 of the local plan and Section 7 of the NPPF.

4.3.6 The siting of the new building closer to the southern boundary would mean that there is a better relationship with the adjacent property at No. 20 allowing more natural light into the rear garden of that property. Also the removal of parking spaces alongside No. 20 and the provision of a garden would reduce fumes and noise and therefore environmentally be an improvement on the amenities of the occupiers of No. 20.

4.3.7 **Parking and Access**
The proposed layout shows the provision of only one access which would render the site safer in highway terms as the existing access close to the roundabout junction would be removed. The new access would be moved 6 metres to the south

away from the access which serves the adjacent commercial property at No 1 The Studios, London Road. I consider that this would also be safer in highway terms as it would reduce the amount of vehicular cross over through which pedestrians have to currently travel.

4.3.8 A separate pedestrian access to the building for the occupiers of the development is also shown directly off the Stevenage Road footpath - this also separates pedestrian users from the car park.

4.3.9 The Highway Authority raises no objections to the proposal in highway terms.

4.3.10 The proposal includes the provision of 10 parking spaces. This meets the requirements of the Parking SPD on parking (1 space for each 1 bed flat and two visitor parking spaces at 0.25% of the total number of units).

4.3.11 The proposal also meets the cycling space requirements of the SPD (1 secure space per dwelling) given the provision of the secure cycle storage building.

4.3.12 **Environmental matters**

A noise survey has been submitted that specifies special acoustic glazing on road facing windows. It is recommended that a condition is attached to this permission requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the submitted noise survey.

4.3.13 The site is not known to have been previously contaminated and given the nature of the proposed use (a small block of flats with no private gardens) it would not be necessary to require the imposition of a contaminated land condition.

4.3.14 The site has no ecological value and given that the building is a busy, well lit location it is not thought to be suitable for roosting or foraging for bats. It would not be necessary therefore for a protected species survey to be undertaken prior to the determination of this planning application.

4.3.15 **Planning Obligations**

The quantum of development is below the threshold set by the Government following the Court of Appeal decision into Planning Obligations in 2015 (above 10 residential units) that would require a section 106 agreement and as such no S106 is necessary.

4.4 **Conclusion**

4.4.1 The proposal is considered to be acceptable in planning and highway terms.

5.0 Recommendation

5.1 That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.

   Reason: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out wholly in accordance with the details specified in the application and supporting approved documents and plans listed above.

   Reason:To ensure the development is carried out in accordance with details which form the basis of this grant of permission.

3. Details and/or samples of materials to be used on all external elevations and the roof of the development hereby permitted shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before the development is commenced.

   Reason:To ensure that the development will have an acceptable appearance which does not detract from the appearance and character of the surrounding area.

4. The approved details of landscaping shall be carried out before the end of the first planting season following either the first occupation of any of the buildings or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner; and any trees or plants which, within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development, die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased, shall be replaced during the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority agrees in writing to vary or dispense with this requirement.

   Reason:To safeguard and enhance the appearance of the completed development and the visual amenity of the locality.

5. Before the occupation of any of the dwellings hereby permitted, the car parking facilities shown on the approved plan shall be marked out and made available, and shall thereafter be kept available solely for the parking of motor vehicles.

   Reason:To ensure the provision of satisfactory car parking facilities clear of the public highway to meet the needs of the development.

6. No development shall commence until full details (in the form of scaled plans and written specifications) have been submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority to illustrate the following:
   - reinstating the kerb to a full height at the closure of the access on Station Road
   - alterations to the access/vehicle crossover on Stevenage Road and the reinstatement of the footway and full height kerb between the north side of the proposed access and the northern boundary line of the property.
   - the provision of a widened footway on the corner of Stevenage Road and Station Road to ensure that the footway is 2m wide for the full length between the pedestrian

refuge island crossing on Station Road and the proposed vehicle access on Stevenage Road. The existing pedestrian footway is as narrow as 1.3m to 1.5m at the curve of the road and the footway would need to be widened to the back of the existing footway into the site. The extra width would need to be offered for dedication as highway and subsequently adopted once the works have been completed and any maintenance certificates have been signed.
o at the location of the existing pedestrian refuge island crossing on Station Road to the south of the site the provision of:
o tactile paving on the footway either side and on the refuge island;
o narrower pedestrian dropped kerbs to match the width of the tactile paving and no wider.
o The crossing point shall be provided with tactile paving to the standards laid out in Guidance on the use of Tactile Paving Surfaces and dropped kerbs flush with the carriageway Please refer to Sections 1.5.3 and 1.5.2 of the guidance for more information.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety

7. Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted the vehicular access (indicated for improvement on drawing number A801A) and other necessary highway works shall be completed in accordance with the Highway Authority's construction specification. Prior to use arrangements shall be made for surface water drainage to be intercepted and disposed of separately so that it does not discharge from or onto the highway carriageway.

Reason: In the interest of highway safety and traffic movement.

8. Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby, the access from Station Road shall be permanently closed, and the footway shall be reinstated in accordance with a detailed scheme to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority, concurrently with the bringing into use of the new access.
Reason: In the interests of highway safety and amenity.

9. Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted the proposed access, on-site car parking and turning area shall be laid out, demarcated, levelled, surfaces and drained in accordance with the approved plan and retained thereafter available for that specific use.
Reason: To ensure permanent availability of the parking / manoeuvring area, in the interests of highway safety.

10. The development shall not begin until full details of all proposed construction vehicle access, movements, parking arrangements and wheel washing facilities have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The relevant details should be submitted in the form of a Construction Management Plan and the approved details are to be implemented throughout the construction programme.
Reason: To minimise danger, obstruction and inconvenience to users of the highway.

Proactive Statement:

Planning permission has been granted for this proposal. Discussion with the applicant to seek an acceptable solution was not necessary in this instance. The Council has therefore acted proactively in line with the requirements of the

Framework (paragraphs 186 and 187) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

Informative/s:

HIGHWAY INFORMATIVE:
HCC recommends inclusion of the following highway informative / advisory note (AN) to ensure that any works within the public highway are carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Highway Act 1980:

AN) Agreement with Highway Authority: The applicant is advised that in order to comply with this permission it will be necessary for the developer of the site to enter into an agreement with Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority under Section 278 / 38 of the Highways Act 1980 to ensure the satisfactory completion of the access and associated road improvements. The construction of such works must be undertaken to the satisfaction and specification of the Highway Authority, and by a contractor who is authorised to work in the
public highway. Before works commence the applicant will need to apply to the Highway Authority to obtain their permission and requirements. Further information is available via the website https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/development-management/highways-development-management.aspx or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

Signed  Simon Ellis Determining Officer	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Date: 10 July 2018	