

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...Henry Thomas.....

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
25/01333/FP	Change of use of former first floor office into residential, including internal alterations to form first floor residential unit and to facilitate relocation of retail ancillary space to ground floor. Demolition of external stair enclosure and reinstate external wall on original alignment. Replacement windows. New external doors.	27 - 29 Whitehorse Street Baldock Hertfordshire SG7 6QF

Submitted Plan Nos

22157_PL02 22157_PL03 22157_PL04 22157_PL05 22157_PL06 22157_PL07 2729WS_1 2729WS_E
2729WS_G 2729WS_R Location Plan

1.0 Policies

D1	Sustainable design
D3	Protecting living conditions
SP1	Sustainable development in North Herts

SP6	Sustainable transport
SP8	Housing
SP9	Design and Sustainability
HE1	Designated heritage assets
HS3	Housing mix
T1	Assessment of transport matters
T2	Parking
SECN12	Achieving well-designed places
SECN16	Conserve + enhance historic environment

2.0 **Relevant Site History**

2.1 **24/00202/LBC** - Demolition of external stair enclosure and reinstate external wall on original alignment. Alternative Victorian-style new and replacement windows, to supersede the Georgian-style windows approved on application 21/01606/LBC. New external doors. Internal alterations to create first floor flat and to facilitate relocation of retail ancillary space to ground floor.

Conditional Consent.

2.2 **21/01606/LBC** – Demolition of external stair enclosure and reinstate external wall on original alignment. Replacement double-glazed first floor windows. New external doors.

Internal alterations to create first floor flat and to facilitate relocation of retail ancillary space to ground floor.

Conditional Consent.

- 2.3 **17/01713/1LB** - Demolish single storey rear extension and make good rear elevation. Replace internal door with new external door.

Conditional Consent.

3.0 **Representations**

- 3.1 **Site Notice and Neighbour Notification** – None received.

- 3.2 **Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall Neighbourhood Planning Group** – None received.

- 3.3 **HCC Archaeology** – No objection subject to conditions.

- 3.4 **HCC Highways** – No objection with recommended informatives.

- 3.5 **NHC Conservation Officer** – No objection.

- 3.6 **NHC Environmental Health (Contaminated Land, Noise & Air Quality)** – No objection subject to conditions.

- 3.7 **Waste and Recycling** – None received.

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

- 4.1.1 The site consists of a semi-detached, Grade II listed building on the north-west side of Whitehorse Street within the Baldock Town Centre. The site is located within the Baldock Conservation Area. The site is also subject to the Baldock Article 4 Direction.

4.2 **Proposal**

- 4.2.1 Change of use of former first floor office into residential, including internal alterations to form first floor residential unit and to facilitate relocation of retail ancillary space to ground floor. Demolition of external stair enclosure and reinstate external wall on original alignment. Replacement windows. New external doors.

4.3 **Key Issues**

- The acceptability of the design of the proposed development and its resultant impact on the character and appearance of the locality.
- The impact that the proposed development would have on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers.
- The impact that the proposed development would have on car parking provision in the area.
- The impact that the development would have on the environment.

- The impact that the proposed development would have on the designated heritage assets.

Principle for Development

- 4.3.2 In terms of the principle of residential accommodation, it will be noted that the site is within a sustainable location being in the centre of Baldock where there are a large number of local services and facilities. Policy SP1 of the Local Plan supports the principles of sustainable development and to maintain the role of key settlements within and adjoining the District as the main focus for housing, employment and new development making use of previously developed land. The proposal would be consistent with this policy as well as Policy SP2 which identifies Baldock as one of the key settlements where up to 80% of the districts development needs will be met over the Plan period.
- 4.3.3 Policy SP9 of the Local Plan supports new development where it is well designed and located and responds to its local context. I consider that the proposal will, having regard to the particular design and layout of the scheme (see detailed comments below) and the character of the area, will be broadly consistent with Policy SP9 of the Local Plan.
- 4.3.4 The NPPF is clear at paragraph 86, part a) that in town centre locations such as Baldock Town Centre, there should be a suitable mix of uses including housing.
- 4.3.5 It is worth noting that the site falls within Baldock Town Centre and Policies SP3 and ETC4 also apply to the land in question. I can see no conflicts with these policies given that the ground floor commercial space will be retained.

Design and Appearance:

- 4.3.6 The objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include those seeking to secure the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings, and places (Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places). Paragraph 126 of the NPPF states that *“Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable communities”*. In this regard, Policy D1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan are consistent with the objectives set out within the NPPF.
- 4.3.7 The proposed works would require the demolition of the external stair enclosure and the reinstatement of the external wall. Given that this would help restore the property back to its original form and would be sited to the rear, out of view from the public realm. I find no objection to the proposed works. The replacement windows, doors and internal conversion works would not alter the character and appearance of the building as seen from Whitehorse Street.
- 4.3.8 This is considered in line with Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Policies D1 and D3 of the Local Plan.

Impact on Heritage Asset:

- 4.3.9 North Herts Council's Conservation Officer has been consulted on the application and finds the application to be unobjectionable. There are generally no external changes between this application and the existing Listed Building Consent under ref 24/00202/LBC. The conversion would help retain the optimum viable use of the building, as such, due to the nature of this proposal, it is considered that the proposal would not harm the character and the significance of the Listed Building or the Conservation Area.
- 4.3.10 With regard to the recommended condition from HCC Archaeology for a Written Scheme of Investigation. Given that no groundworks are required, and the historic fabric of the building is protected under the condition for 24/00202/LBC, I find it unreasonable to recommend and impose this condition.
- 4.3.11 The proposal is considered to comply generally with the provisions of Policy HE1 of the Local Plan and Section 16 of the NPPF.

Impact on Neighbouring Occupiers:

- 4.3.12 The objectives of the NPPF seek to ensure that developments secure a high standard of amenity for existing and future occupiers (Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places). This principle is reflected in the provisions set out in Policy D3 of the North Herts Local Plan.
- 4.3.13 Policy D3 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan sets out that planning permission will be granted for developments proposals which do not cause unacceptable harm to living conditions.
- 4.3.14 Given the change from office to residential, the new use is unlikely to differ to any noticeable extent. The impact of the change of use would mean that there would be an increase in the use of the proposed space in that the previous use largely relates to weekdays and daytime activities. I do not consider the noise level associated with the one small residential flats to be significant. I am satisfied that the proposed development will not significantly impact on the existing amenity of the neighbouring properties and is acceptable.

Highways and Parking:

- 4.3.15 Policy T1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan states that “*planning permission will be granted provided that... development would not lead to highway safety problems or cause unacceptable impacts upon the highway network*”.
- 4.3.16 Policy T2 states that “*planning permission will be granted provided that... proposal have regard to relevant Supplementary Planning Documents*”.
- 4.3.17 The site does not benefit from vehicle parking spaces, which would result in the creation of a two bedroom flat without a parking space. In my view, given the sustainability of a town centre location within close distance to multiple bus stops and the train station and the inclusion of a cycle shelter, the lack of provision of a vehicle parking space is considered acceptable.

Environmental Implications:

- 4.3.18 Section 14 of the NPPF sets out how the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future. The principles set out in Section 14 are reflected in Policy D1 of the North Herts Local Plan, which sets out that development proposal should take all reasonable opportunities to reduce energy consumption and waste, retain existing vegetation and propose new appropriate planting, and future proof for changes in technology and lifestyle.
- 4.3.19 The proposed development is the conversion of an existing building and is predominantly hardstanding. As such it is exempt from BNG Legislation defined under article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. In my view, the proposed development would be unlikely to have any significant implications for the local environment in terms of carbon emissions and therefore would be generally in compliance with Section 14 of the NPPF and Policy D1 and NE4 of the Local Plan.

Waste

- 4.3.20 The unit is currently served by a bin storage area to the rear of the property. The current bin storage area is sufficient to accommodate the required residential bins.

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 4.3.21 The proposed development is considered 'de minimis' and would not exceed the threshold of 25 sqm of on-site habitat, or and/ less than 5 meters of linear habitats. This application is therefore exempt from BNG legislation defined under article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

4.4 Conclusion

- 4.4.1 The proposed development is considered acceptable and in accordance with Policies SP1, SP6, SP8, SP9, D1, D3, HE1, HS3, T1 and T2 of the NHLP 2011-2031 and Sections 2, 5, 12 and 14 of the NPPF 2024.

4.5 Alternative Options

- 4.5.1 N/A

4.6 Pre-Commencement Conditions

- 4.6.1 N/A

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. In the event that contamination is found at any time when undertaking the approved development, it shall be reported in writing immediately to the Local Planning Authority. An investigation and risk assessment shall then be undertaken by a competent person, in accordance with BS10175:2011. A written report of the findings should be forwarded for approval to the Local Planning Authority. Following completion of remedial measures a verification report shall be prepared that demonstrates the effectiveness of the remediation carried out. No part of the development should be occupied until all remedial and validation works are approved in writing.

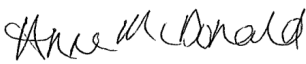
Reason: To protect human health and to ensure that no future investigation is required under Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

Biodiversity Net Gain

This development is not subject to the statutory Biodiversity Gain Plan condition because it is considered exempt under the statutory exemptions (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain-exempt-developments>) or transitional arrangements in respect of the biodiversity gain condition.

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 (paragraph 38) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

Signed  Anne McDonald	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Determining Officer Date: 22 July 2025	