

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...Vicki Wood.....

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
26/00612/FP	Installation of perimeter railing, gate and wall following removal of existing fence. Installation of free-standing Air Source Heat Pump and associated enclosure, new bin and cycle store together with hard and soft landscaping works including low-level lighting (as amended by plans received on 10/09/2026).	The Biggin Queen Street Hitchin Hertfordshire SG5 1AB

Submitted Plan Nos

299 000 299 001 299_002 299_010 299_011 299_012 299_013 299_014 299_030 29_031
299_070 299 080 299 081 299 082 299 083 299 032 Rev R02 299 033 Rev R01

1.0 Policies

1.0 **Local and National Policy**

1.1 **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2026)**

Chapter 4 Achieving sustainable development

Policy S3: Presumption in favour of sustainable development

Policy S4: Principle of development within settlements

Chapter 5 Meeting the need of climate change

Chapter 8 Ensuring the vitality of town centres

Policy TC2: Development in town centres

Chapter 14 Achieving well-designed places

Policy DP3: Key principles for well-designed places

Chapter 20 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Policy HE4: Securing the conservation of heritage assets

Policy HE5: Assessing effects on heritage assets

Policy HE6: Proposals affecting designated heritage assets

Policy HE7: Decisions on non-designated heritage assets

Policy HE9: Conservation areas

Policy HE10 Loss or removal of heritage assets

1.2 **North Hertfordshire Local Plan (2011-2031)**

Strategic Policies

Policy SP1 Sustainable Development in North Hertfordshire

Policy SP2 Settlement Hierarchy and Spatial Distribution

Policy SP4 Town Centres, Local Centres and Community Shops

Policy SP9 Design and Sustainability

Policy SP13 Historic environment

Development Management Policies

Policy D1 Sustainable design

Policy D2 House extensions, replacement dwellings and outbuildings

Policy D3 Protecting living conditions

Policy ETC3 New retail, Leisure and other main town centre development

Policy HE1 Designated heritage assets

Policy HE4 Archaeology

1.3 **Supplementary Planning Design (SPD)**

NHC Sustainability (2024)

2.0 **Relevant Site History**

2.1 Associated application 26/00613/LBC for internal and external alterations including replacement and repairs to fenestration, external timber and rainwater goods repairs and installation of gate. Decision Pending.

3.0 **Representations**

- 3.1 **Press, Site and Neighbour Consultation** – None received.
- 3.2 **Historic England** – Supports the proposed works subject to any conditions deemed necessary by the Conservation Officer.
- 3.3 **NHC Conservation Officer** – Unobjectionable subject to conditions.
- 3.4 **HCC Historic Environment (Archaeology)** – No objection subject to conditions.
- 3.5 **NHC Environmental Health (Air Quality/Noise & Nuisance & Contaminated Land)** – No objection subject to condition requiring compliance with approved plans.

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

- 4.1.1 The application site is situated on the south side of Biggin Lane, which is accessed from Queen Street to the east. The site comprises of a detached, two-storey, grade II* listed building within the Hitchin Conservation Area. The front elevation of the building faces a northern direction towards Hitchin Market.
- 4.1.2 The site is located within the settlement boundary for Hitchin and is within the designated town centre boundary where development is generally supported in principle, subject to compliance with other relevant policies.

4.2 **Proposal**

- 4.2.1 Installation of perimeter railing, gate and wall following removal of existing fence. Installation of free-standing Air Source Heat Pump and associated enclosure, new bin and cycle store together with hard and soft landscaping works including low-level lighting (as amended by plans received on 10/09/2026).
- 4.2.2 The application has been amended to reflect changes to window design following consultee comments from the Conservation Officer.
- 4.2.3 The application is accompanied by the following documents:
- ☐ Design and Access Statement dated February 2026
 - ☐ Statement of Significance dated February 2026
 - ☐ Architectural Impact Assessment dated February 2026
 - ☐ Initial Structural Report dated 26th February 2026
 - ☐ Services Integration Report
 - ☐ Condition Schedule and Proposed Repairs
 - ☐ Landscape Strategy

4.3 **Key Issues**

- 4.3.1 The key issues for consideration are as follows:
- The impact of the development upon the designated heritage assets: Listed Building and Conservation Area.
 - The impact of the development on Hitchin town centre.

- The impact 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.

Impact on Heritage Assets

- 4.3.2 Where development proposals affect a listed building or its setting, and are located within a Conservation Area, the Council is required to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building, its setting and any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses, as well as preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area, in accordance with Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Chapter 20 of the NPPF relates to the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets which is reflected in Policy HE1 of the Local Plan.
- 4.3.3 NPPF Chapter 20 makes it clear that when considering the impact of development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, substantial weight should be given to its conservation. The NPPF also emphasises that the more important the heritage asset, the greater the weight that should be attached to its conservation when balancing potential impacts against other material considerations. As Grade II* listed buildings are designated heritage assets of more than special interest, considerable importance and weight must therefore be given to their preservation when assessing development proposals.
- 4.3.4 Given the minor scale of the proposed development and its relationship to the listed building, together with its relatively screened position within the Conservation Area and use of sympathetic materials, I am satisfied that the development is acceptable and in accordance with Policy HE1 of the Local Plan and Chapter 20 Policies HE4, HE5, HE6, HE7 and HE9 of the NPPF.

Impact on Hitchin Town Centre

- 4.3.5 Chapter 8 of the NPPF seeks to ensure that town centres remain the heart of communities by supporting their vitality and viability. This is reflected in PolicyTC2 of Chapter 8 and in Policy ETC3 of the Local Plan.
- 4.3.6 The proposed development seeks to maintain the residential use of the property which supports the overall vitality and viability of the town centre which includes residential accommodation on this site and is therefore in accordance with planning policy.

Design, Appearance & Sustainability

- 4.3.7 Chapter 4 of the NPPF sets out the Government's approach to achieving sustainable development through the planning system. It establishes the economic, social and environmental objectives of sustainable development and confirms that these objectives should be pursued in a mutually supportive way. The chapter also reinforces the presumption in favour of sustainable development, requiring planning decisions to support development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan and contribute positively to sustainable development. It also recognises that planning decisions should ensure development is visually attractive, responds positively to local character and creates places that function well for existing and future users.
- 4.3.8 Policies D1 and D2 of the Local Plan are consistent with the objectives set out in the NPPF Chapter 4 Policies S3 and S4 and Chapter 14 Policy DP3.

- 4.3.9 The Statement of Significance sets out the scope of work which the application entails including many internal alterations covered by a separate listed building consent application. In terms of the proposed works under this application, following removal of existing perimeter fencing and entrance gateway, a new brick plinth with railings above and a re-positioned entrance gate would be installed along the frontage of the site. At its highest point, the boundary treatment would measure 1.6 metres above ground level.
- 4.3.10 Set back from the front boundary, a short section of low-level timber fencing would be installed with a gateway providing access to a new paved area providing for a bin storage area following removal of an existing bin store. This area would be screened from public view by the proposed new boundary treatment and appropriate planting. A similar paved area to the south side elevation of the building would provide for a secure cycle store and low-level lighting would act as a guide to this area.
- 4.3.11 In addition to the above, the proposal includes the installation of a free-standing air source heat pump (ASHP), this would be positioned within the north western area of the site, alongside the proposed bin storage area. A separate and secure enclosure would be formed to the ASHP by way of low-level fencing and a gateway. Given the position of the ASHP, it would be screened from public view as per the bin storage area.
- 4.3.12 In association with the works a mix of soft and hard landscaping is proposed throughout the site.
- 4.3.13 I am satisfied that the proposed works, would be a visual improvement to the appearance of the site and internally would provide for a more functional outside space.
- 4.3.14 It should be noted that the number of residential units would remain unchanged by the proposed development, with the scheme continuing to provide 11 residential units. Whilst the unit numbering shown on the submitted plans may initially suggest the provision of 12 units, this arises because there is no Unit 1 within the numbering sequence. Consequently, the development would continue to comprise 11 residential units in total.
- 4.3.14 By virtue of the minor scale of the proposed works, the external layout and proposed design would not result in visual harm to the street scene and would preserve the character and appearance of its surroundings. As such the proposal is in accordance with Policies D1, D2 and D3 of the Local Plan and Chapters 4 Policy S3 and S4 and 14 Policy DP3 of the NPPF.

Archaeology

- 4.3.15 Chapter 20 Policy HE10 of the NPPF recognises archaeological remains as an irreplaceable part of the historic environment and seeks to ensure that their significance is properly understood before planning decisions are made. Development proposals affecting sites of archaeological interest should be supported by appropriate information proportionate to the asset's significance, and where harm cannot be avoided, suitable measures for investigation, recording, preservation and public benefit should be secured. The overarching aim is to conserve archaeological heritage in a manner appropriate to its significance whilst enabling sustainable development.
- 4.3.16 Policy HE4 of the Local Plan reflects the objectives of the NPPF by seeking to ensure that development proposals appropriately conserve and, where possible, enhance the significance of archaeological heritage assets. Accordingly, any potential impact on archaeological remains must be carefully assessed and weighed against the public benefits of the proposal

- 4.3.17 The Historic Environment Advisor (Archaeology) has reviewed the proposed development and advises that, whilst there is potential for the works to affect archaeological remains, this can be appropriately addressed through the imposition of planning conditions requiring archaeological investigation, recording and reporting commensurate with the scale and nature of the development.
- 4.3.18 Subject to the recommended conditions, any archaeological remains encountered during the course of development would be appropriately investigated, recorded and preserved by record, thereby ensuring that the significance of any heritage assets of archaeological interest is properly understood and documented. The proposal is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy HE4 of the Local Plan and Chapter 20 Policies HE4, HE5, HE6, HE7 and HE10 of the NPPF.

Impact on Neighbouring Properties:

- 4.3.19 A core planning principle set out in Chapter 14 of the NPPF is to always seek to secure a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings. This principle is reflected in the provisions of Policy D3 of the Local Plan.
- 4.3.20 No objections have been received from neighbouring occupiers, and I am satisfied that the proposed development, by virtue of its minor scale and its relationship to existing built form, would not impact existing residential amenity to any significant degree and would be in accordance with Policy D3 of the Local Plan and Chapter 14 Policy DP3 of the NPPF.

Highways and Parking:

- 4.3.21 Existing parking provision will remain which is provided off-site. An area of cycle storage is proposed within the southern area of the site.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

- 4.3.22 The development is not subject to the statutory biodiversity gain condition, as it falls within one of the exemptions set out in paragraph 17 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024 (as amended).

Environmental Implications:

- 4.3.23 The Council's Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document (2024) seeks to ensure that new developments are future proofed against the challenge of climate change.
- 4.3.24 Chapter 5 of the NPPF sets out how the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future. The principles set out in Chapter 5 are reflected in Policy D1 of the Local Plan, which sets out that development proposals 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.
- 4.3.25 Based on the details submitted, the proposed development, is unlikely to have any significant implications for the local environment in terms of carbon emissions and therefore would be generally in accordance with Policy D1 of the Local Plan and Chapter 5 of the NPPF.

4.4 Conclusion

- 4.4.1 The proposed development is considered acceptable and in accordance with Policies SP1, SP2, SP4, SP9, SP13, D1, D2, D3, ETC3, HE1 and HE4 of the Local Plan 2011-2031 and Chapters 4, 5, 8, 14 and 20 of the NPPF.

4.5 **Alternative Options**

- 4.5.1 N/A

4.6 **Pre-Commencement Conditions**

- 4.6.1 The agent has agreed to the pre-commencement archaeology conditions.

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. A No demolition/development shall take place/commence until an Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. The scheme shall include an assessment of archaeological significance and research questions; and:
 1. The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording
 2. The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording as required by the historic building recording results
 3. The programme for post investigation assessment
 4. Provision to be made for analysis of the site investigation and recording
 5. Provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the analysis and records of the site investigation
 6. Provision to be made for archive deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation
 7. Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation.
 8. Provision to be made for public outreach and interpretationB The demolition/development shall take place/commence in accordance with the programme of archaeological works set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under condition (A)

C The development shall not be occupied/used until the site investigation and post investigation assessment has been completed in accordance with the programme set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under condition (A) and the provision made for analysis and publication where appropriate

Biodiversity Net Gain

1. 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. The Council acted proactively through positive engagement with the applicant during the determination process which led to improvements to the scheme. 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  Shaun Greaves Determining Officer	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Date: 15 September 2026	