

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...Melissa Tyler.....

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
26/01126/FP	Erection of no.2 industrial units with associated access, parking, landscaping and biodiversity enhancements following demolition of existing industrial building.	Unit 8 Baldock Industrial Estate Baldock Hertfordshire SG7 6NG

Submitted Plan Nos

73815-001A 73815-002B 73815-003A 73815-004A BHT-200B BHT-SK1240626

1.0 Policies

1.0 **Relevant Planning Policy:**

1.1 National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

Relevant throughout with particular reference to the following:

Section 2: Achieving sustainable development
Section 6: Building a strong competitive economy
Section 9: Promoting Sustainable Transport

1.2 North Herts Local Plan 2011 - 2031

Policy SP1: Sustainable Development in North Hertfordshire

Policy SP3: Employment

Policy SP6: Sustainable Transport

Policy SP9: Design & Sustainability

Policy ETC: Appropriate Uses in Employment Areas

Policy D1: Sustainable Design

Policy D3: Protecting Living conditions

Policy D4: Air Quality

Policy T1: Assessment of Transport Matters

Policy T2: Parking

Policy NE4: Biodiversity & geological sites

1.3 Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall Neighbourhood Plan

Policies G3, G4 are relevant.

1.4 **Supplementary Planning Design (SPD)**

NHC Vehicle Parking at New Development (2011)

NHC Sustainability (2024)

NHC Design Code (2026)

2.0 **Site History**

2.1 None

3.0 **Representations**

3.1 Site Notice / Adjacent occupiers:

Objections received from No. 10/12 and 14 Alders Close. Summary of objections below:

- ☐ The proposed development is considered to result in an overbearing and visually intrusive form of development by reason of its increased height, scale, bulk and floorspace, particularly having regard to the lower ground levels of adjoining residential properties in Alder Close.

- The design approach is considered to fall short of the high standard of sustainable and context-sensitive design sought by national and local planning policy, including adopted design guidance.
- Representations raise concern that the submitted drawings and supporting information do not accurately reflect site conditions, including boundary distances, changes in ground level, retaining structures and the relationship with neighbouring residential land.
- The proposed use of lightweight metal cladding is considered inappropriate in this location due to concerns regarding limited sound attenuation and the potential for increased noise and disturbance to nearby residential occupiers.
- The proposed parking and access arrangements are considered inadequate and impractical, with concerns that parking spaces would obstruct loading doors, vehicle manoeuvring areas and pedestrian or vehicular access routes.
- The submitted drainage information is considered insufficient and inconsistent, particularly in relation to increased roof area, surface water disposal, flood risk, sewer connection details and the absence of a clearly demonstrated sustainable drainage solution.
- The proposed biodiversity measures are considered inadequate, with particular concern that the proposed northern boundary hedge is unlikely to establish due to restricted space, limited light, the presence of a retaining wall, the proximity of the new building and the existing conifer hedge.
- Representations identify the site's former MOD and specialist manufacturing use and raise concern regarding potential land contamination, indicating that further assessment may be required.
- Concerns are also raised regarding recent tree removal and the absence of robust ecological mitigation or clear evidence that biodiversity net gain requirements would be achieved.

3.2 Herts Highways: Notice is given under article 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 that Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority does not wish to restrict the grant of permission.

3.3 NHDC Environmental Health: Recommends conditions regarding land contamination and noise.

3.4 NHDC Ecologist: Condition recommended

The Small Sites Metric provided identifies the site biodiversity baseline as 0.048 habitat units and the post-development habitats of the site are valued at 0.08 habitat units and 0.17 hedgerow units thereby meeting the mandatory requirement for 10% BNG.

I note 120m² of other neutral grassland of moderate condition is proposed post development but the location of this is not clear on the plans. Even if this can be accommodated on site I

think modified grassland would be a more realistic habitat to create and manage. The applicant can detail this at discharge of condition stage.

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

- 4.1.1 The site is within an established employment site off London Road, Baldock. The site lies outside of the Baldock Town Centre boundary.
- 4.1.2 The existing unit is 320 sq metres single storey single unit with 8 parking spaces along the front elevation. Some rear boundary vegetation exists.

4.2 **Proposal**

- 4.2.1 Planning permission is sought for the erection of no.2 industrial units with associated access, parking, landscaping and biodiversity enhancements following demolition of existing industrial building.
- 4.2.2 The proposals comprise:
- Demolition of the existing industrial building
 - Construction of two new industrial units (Use Class B2)
 - Ground floor industrial accommodation with first floor office space above
 - On-site parking, access and servicing
 - Retention of the existing rear boundary fence
 - Introduction of native hedgerow planting along the rear boundary

4.3 **Key Issues**

Principle of the development

- 4.3.1 The site is located within a designated Employment site in the Local Plan. It is identified as such on the Local Plan Proposals Map for Baldock. Within the Employment areas development is limited to office, research and development, industrial processes, industrial and storage and distribution uses under Policy ETC1 although other uses may be permitted subject to certain criteria.
- 4.3.3 Given the nature of the proposed development and the context of the site within an established industrial estate as well as the sustainable location within the town and with the available public transport choices, it is considered that there can be no objection in principle to the proposed development.

Design and appearance

- 4.3.4 Policy SP9 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan seeks to ensure that development is well designed, responds positively to its local context and contributes to high quality, sustainable development. Policy D1 requires proposals to achieve a high standard of design that respects and responds to the site's context, whilst Policy D2 requires development to relate well to its surroundings in terms of scale, massing, height, proportions and overall appearance.
- 4.3.5 In this case, the replacement of the existing single industrial unit with two industrial units is considered to achieve these objectives. Although the proposed buildings would result in an

increase in overall built form, the design has been carefully considered to minimise visual impact. The eaves adjacent to the rear boundary would be approximately 0.4 metres lower than those of the existing building, reducing the perceived scale at the closest point to neighbouring land. The proposed mono-pitched roof would slope away from the rear boundary, with a maximum height of 7.2 metres. Whilst this exceeds the existing building's maximum height of 4.4 metres, it would be no higher than the adjacent industrial unit and is therefore reflective of the established scale and character of development within the industrial estate.

- 4.3.6 The proposal is considered to provide a functional, contemporary industrial form and use of materials that integrates satisfactorily with the surrounding employment area and would preserve the character and appearance of the site. Accordingly, the proposal is considered to comply with the design objectives of Policies SP9, D1 and D2 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan.

Landscaping and ecology

- 4.3.7 The development site is largely restricted to the original footprint and service areas providing limited scope for new landscaping. Broadly speaking the landscaping of the site will be similar to the existing arrangement with parking spaces along the frontage of the building. However, a landscape and habitat plan proposes the provision of some additional native species hedge to be located in the rear boundary of the development site that borders the residential properties on Alder Drive.
- 4.3.8 The Council's Ecologist has no objection to the small sites metric submitted which will meet the 10% biodiversity net gain in accordance with Policy NE4 of the Local Plan.

Impact on neighbouring properties

- 4.3.9 The nearest residential neighbours are those that back on to the site from Alder Close. I note the concerns raised as stated above by the neighbouring properties that back onto the proposal. I requested a section drawing to show the relationship between the proposed units and the residential properties. The proposed units have a slight lower eaves height than the existing unit along the shared boundary and the roof slopes away with the highest part of the unit at the front of the units, no windows are proposed on the rear or side elevations and along with the proposed and existing boundary vegetation in my opinion it is unlikely that there will be any physical impact on these neighbouring properties. The Council's Environmental Health officer has recommended several conditions designed to protect residents from plant noise to comply with Policy D3 of the Local Plan.

Parking, access

- 4.3.10 There are 8 existing spaces located at the front of the unit. There is no change to the proposed number of spaces. The Vehicle Parking at New developments for B2 development is stated as 1 space per 50 m² gfa. It is proposed the new units would have a combined floor space of 450 Sq m which is an increase of 130 sqm. Given the standard is a maximum the provision of 8 spaces is sufficient to meet the SPD. No cycle parking is shown. I have recommended that the provision of at least 4 spaces is provided on site.
- 4.3.11 The application site is located within the Baldock Industrial Estate, which is served by a network of private, unadopted roads accessed directly from London Road. The proposed

development comprises a like-for-like replacement unit, and as such is not expected to materially alter the nature or level of activity associated with the site. It is therefore unlikely that vehicle trip generation or traffic patterns associated with the new building will change to any extent that would adversely impact the existing access arrangements onto London Road. The established access is considered adequate to accommodate the anticipated level of use. All construction activities, including the parking of contractor vehicles, delivery operations, and the storage of materials, will be contained entirely within the boundaries of the site. This will ensure that there is no obstruction or interference with the internal estate roads or the public highway network.

Sustainability and energy

- 4.2.12 The site is located within a sustainable location close to Baldock Town Centre and its range of services and facilities. The NPPF and the Local Plan encourages development to be focussed in locations which are accessible and sustainable and the proposed development will, as a result of its location, comply in general terms with the locational criteria for new development as required by the NHLP and NPPF.

Climate change

- 4.2.13 The development makes the most efficient use of a previously developed site and includes improved biodiversity. Overall, the development is unlikely to have any significant effect on local climate change.

4.4 Conclusion

- 4.4.1 The proposals are acceptable in planning policy terms and the design and scale of the development is appropriate for this industrial location. No objections have been received from statutory consultees and any matters requiring additional information or mitigation can be dealt with by appropriately worded planning conditions. Overall the development will achieve sustainable development in accordance with national and local plan policies.

4.5 Alternative Options

- 4.5.1 None applicable

4.6 Pre-Commencement Conditions

- 4.6.1 I can confirm that the applicant is in agreement with the pre-commencement conditions that are proposed.

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. The use hereby permitted shall be limited to Use Class B2 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) and the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) unless agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the general amenity of the locality and to comply with Policies D1 and D3 of the Local Plan.

4. No development approved by this permission shall take place until the following has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority:
 - A Preliminary Risk Assessment report documenting the ground conditions of the site with regard to potential contamination;
 - A Generic Quantitative Risk Assessment (where shown to be necessary by the Preliminary Risk Assessment);
 - A Detailed Quantitative Risk Assessment (where shown to be necessary by the General Quantitative Risk Assessment)
 - A Remedial Options Appraisal and Remediation Strategy (where shown to be necessary by the Detailed Quantitative Risk Assessment).

All such work shall be undertaken in accordance with Land Contamination Risk Management (Environment Agency, 2023) or other appropriate guidance issued by the regulatory authorities. The work shall be sufficient to ensure that measures will be taken to mitigate any risks to human health and the wider environment.

Reason: To prevent unacceptable risk to Human Health and Controlled Waters and to prevent pollution of the Environment in accordance with the aims and Paragraphs 187(f), 196 and 197 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024).

5. Prior to any unit being occupied a validation report shall be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority to demonstrate the effectiveness of any agreed Remediation Strategy. Any such validation shall include responses to any unexpected contamination discovered during works.

Reason: To prevent unacceptable risk to Human Health and Controlled Waters and to

prevent pollution of the Environment in accordance with the aims and Paragraphs 187(f), 196 and 197 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024).

6. Activities which generate noise audible externally shall not take place except between 0800 and 1900 hours Monday to Friday and 0800 and 1300 hours on Saturdays and at no time on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

Reason: The use is located in close proximity to residential properties and the restriction of activity is necessary to ensure that the residents of those properties can continue to expect to enjoy times of reasonable peace and quiet. Local Plan Policy D3.

7. Prior to the use of the development hereby permitted, unless agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, details of secure cycling for a minimum of 4 cycles shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The cycle parking storage shall be constructed and laid out in accordance with the agreed details and completed prior to occupation of the development hereby approved and shall thereafter be retained, maintained, for the duration of the development at all times.

Reason: To ensure construction of a safe development and to promote sustainable development in accordance with Policies 5, 19 and 20 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018).

Biodiversity Net Gain

1. The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for the development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition "(the biodiversity gain condition)" that development may not begin unless:

- (a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and
- (b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan if one is required in respect of this permission would be North Hertfordshire District Council.

There are statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not always apply

(<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain-exempt-developments>).

Based on the information available this permission is considered to be one which will require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun because none of the statutory exemptions or transitional arrangements are considered to apply.

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: 10 July 2026	