

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...Tabitha Kaye.....

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
26/01286/FPH	Rear roof extension and insertion of front rooflights to create habitable accommodation at second floor level. First floor and single storey rear extensions including rear canopy following demolition of existing rear extensions. Alterations to fenestration.	1 Bedford Street Hitchin Hertfordshire SG5 2JG

Submitted Plan Nos

303-001 - Location Plan 303-010 303-020 303-021 303-022 303-023 303-030

1.0 Policies

SECN12 Achieving well-designed places

SECN14 Meeting climate change,coastal,flooding

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

- 4.1.1 The application site accommodates an end-of-terrace dwelling situated on Bedford Street, Hitchin. The site benefits from a small rear garden. View of the rear are largely obscured by the neighbouring garage of no. 9 Oughton Head Way.
- 4.2.1 The site is within the Hitchin settlement boundary and the Butts Close Conservation Area.

4.2 **Proposal**

- 4.2.1 Rear roof extension and insertion of front rooflights to create habitable accommodation at second floor level. First floor and single storey rear extensions including rear canopy following demolition of existing rear extensions. Alterations to fenestration.

4.3 **Key Issues**

- 4.3.1 The key issues for consideration are as follows:

- Design and impact on the Historic Environment;
- Impact on neighbour amenity;
- Highways and parking matters;
- Impact on the environment;
- Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).

Design and Impact on Local Character

- 4.3.2 Policies D1 and D2 of the North Herts Local Plan (NHLP) require that development proposals respond positively to the site's local context. Policy D2 specifies that extensions to houses should be sympathetic to the main dwelling in terms of scale, form and orientation. These policies are broadly consistent with paragraph 135 of Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 4.3.3 Paragraph 139 of the NPPF states that "outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, **so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings**" (my emphasis).

- 4.3.4 No.1 Bedford Street forms the end terrace of a homogenous row of C19 dwellings. To the rear, the terrace features a typical outrigger, which mirrors the adjoining property. Materials along the terrace are consistent, featuring red brick to the front, with lighter brick and render to the rear.
- 4.3.5 I consider that the 2no. proposed roof lights are unobjectionable as they would mirror the scale and design of those on the front roof slope of the neighbouring garage of no.9 Oughton Head Way. Therefore, the roof lights would not considerably alter the character of the dwelling or the street.
- 4.3.6 The scheme proposes a staggered rear extension across all storeys and roofscape. The extension would be sited in the narrow corridor between the outrigger and east boundary. However, the proportions and design of the extension would not respect the existing built form. The proposed green aluminium rainscreen cladding, and large amounts of vertical glazing, would not relate to the established character of the terrace. In terms of siting and scale, the proposed extension would cause the rear elevation to appear visually unbalanced: the first floor flat roof element would exceed the eaves height of the gabled outrigger, and the flat roof dormer would increase the pitched roof height of the outrigger to one side of the roof. The visual dominance of the proposal would be exaggerated by its siting within a narrow corridor to the rear of the terrace. Consequently, the overall proposed rear extensions would neither be subservient, nor sympathetic, to the main dwelling.
- 4.3.7 While the innovative nature of the design, as well as the sustainability value of the proposed sedum roof, is noted, the scheme fails to fit with the overall form and design of its immediate context. I therefore conclude that the rear extension would be contrary to Policies D1 and D2 of the NHLP, as well as paragraphs 135 and 139 of the NPPF.

Impact on the Historic Environment

- 4.3.8 Policy HE1 emphasises how permission will be refused where proposals would cause substantial harm or a loss of significance to a Heritage Asset - in this case, the Butts Close Conservation Area - and permission should be refused unless it can be demonstrated that the proposal is necessary to deliver considerable public benefits to outweigh this harm or loss. Policy SP13 emphasises how great weight will be given to the potential harms to the significance of heritage assets, seeking their conservation and management of their setting. These policies comply with the LPA's statutory duty under s.72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and are broadly commensurate with Section 16 of the NPPF.
- 4.3.9 The Butts Close Conservation Character Statement (2011) outlines that Nos. 1-6 Bedford Street make a 'positive' contribution to the character of the Butts Close Conservation Area. Specifically, No.1 Bedford Street is an example of the C19 "modestly sized (...) cottage" which characterises the Conservation Area. The addition of a rear extension across all storeys and roofscape would dominate the traditional

features of No.1 Bedford Street and would, as a result, detract from the traditional 'modest' character of the site.

- 4.3.10 The supporting Heritage Statement (dated May 2026) argues that the proposal would preserve the character of the Conservation Area as there would be "limited visibility" of the proposed development to the rear. However, the preservation requirement relates to the conservation area as a whole and not only the street scene or public vantage points and harm may be inflicted even from private vantage points. The harm would be low within the spectrum of less than substantial harm. Public benefits have not been identified that would outweigh this minor harm.
- 4.3.11 Regarding the proposed 2no. conservation-style roof lights to the front roof slope, I consider that these would be minimal in scale and of an appropriate design for their setting. Therefore, the rooflights would not have an unacceptable impact on the character of the Butts Close Conservation Area.
- 4.3.12 Given the harm posed by the proposed rear extension to the significance of the Butts Close Conservation Area, and that no public benefits have been identified to outweigh harm, the proposal is contrary to the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Policy HE1 of the NHLP, and Section 16 of the NPPF.

Impact on Neighbours

- 4.3.13 Policy D3 of the Local Plan permits development which would not harm the amenity of neighbouring occupiers, and encourages the use of mitigation measures where necessary. Policy D3 is generally reflected by the provisions of the NPPF.
- 4.3.14 While the proposed rear extension would be of a considerable scale, the extension is distanced from neighbouring property to the east, no.9 Oughton Head Way, by this property's detached garage and rear garden. I consider this to be an acceptable level of separation to mitigate overshadowing and overbearing impacts to the east. This is supported by the Design and Access Statement (DAS) (dated May 2026), which demonstrates via the 'BRE 25 degree test' that the proposal would not give rise to overshadowing impacts.
- 4.3.15 No side facing windows are proposed to the rear extension. While the rear windows would therefore be south facing, I consider that the large amount of glazing at first and second floor level would still create a sense of overlooking to the rear garden amenity space of no.9 Oughton Head Way.
- 4.3.16 Due to the mitigation of the existing outrigger and ground floor element, the rear extension would not give rise to overshadowing or overbearing impacts to the west. However, given that the plot sizes of the adjoining terraces are small and narrow, I consider that the large amount vertical glazing at first and second floor level would give rise to the overlooking of the adjoining property's rear garden amenity space.

- 4.3.17 As a result of the combined vertical glazing at first and second floor level, the proposed rear extensions would give rise to unacceptable overlooking impacts which would harm the residential amenity of occupiers of that residential property, which is contrary to Policy D3 of the NHLP and Section 12 of the NPPF.

Highways and Parking

- 4.3.18 The site is within a sustainable location with established off-street parking. The proposal therefore complies with Policy T2 of the NHLP.

Environmental Implications

- 4.2.18 Policy D1 of the NHLP outlines the Council's commitment to supporting climate change mitigation through the requirement for schemes to incorporate the principles of 'sustainable design'; with which the proposal is commensurate with. Policy D1 is broadly consistent with the aims of Section 14 of the NPPF. There are no other environmental implications as a result of the proposed development.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

- 4.3.19 This is a form of development which is exempt from BNG Legislation, defined under article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 due it falling under the scope of the 'de minimis' exemption.

4.4 **Conclusion**

- 4.4.1 In the absence of material planning reasons to the contrary it is my view that planning permission is **REFUSED**.

4.5 **Alternative Options**

- 4.5.1 None.

4.6 **Pre-Commencement Conditions**

- 4.6.1 None.

5.0 **Recommendation**

5.1 That planning permission be **REFUSED** for the following reasons:

1. The proposed rear extensions would not be sympathetic, or subservient, to the character of the host dwelling and terrace in respect of scale, design and use of materials. As a result, the proposal would fail to preserve the special character of the Butts Close Conservation Area, cause less than substantial harm the significance of this designated heritage asset and there are no identified public benefits arising from the proposal that would outweigh that harm. The proposed rear extensions are therefore contrary to Policies D1, D2 and HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031, as well as Sections 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024.
2. As a result of the combined vertical glazing at first and second floor level, the proposed rear extensions would give rise to unacceptable overlooking impacts which would harm the residential amenity of occupiers of 9 Oughtonhead Way through loss of privacy whilst using their garden contrary to Policy D3 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024.

Proactive Statement:

Planning permission has been refused for this proposal for the clear reasons set out in this decision notice. The Council has not acted proactively through positive engagement with the applicant as in the Council's view the proposal is unacceptable in principle and the fundamental objections cannot be overcome through dialogue. Since no solutions can be found the Council has complied 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	