DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...Tom Donovan.....

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
18/01402/FP	Replacement front dormer window and insertion of rear dormer window to facilitate the conversion of existing wardens office space to four one-bedroom flats. Single storey front extension to form bin store. Alterations to fenestration.	55 Harkness Court Franklin Gardens Hitchin Hertfordshire SG4 0BS

Submitted Plan Nos

3007-C-001-00 3007-C-001-01 3007-C-001-02 3007-C-001-04

1.0 Policies

1.1 **North Hertfordshire District Local Plan No.2 with Alterations**

Policy 8 – Development in Towns
Policy 55 – Car Parking Standards

1.2 **National Planning Policy Framework**

Section 5 – Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places

1.3 **Emerging Local Plan 2011-2031 (Approved by Full Council 11th April 2017)**

Strategic Policies
SP1: Sustainable Development in North Hertfordshire
SP2: Settlement Hierarchy
SP9: Design and sustainability

Development Management Policies
T2: Parking
D1: Sustainable design;
D3: Protecting living conditions

1.4 **Supplementary Planning Document**

Vehicle Parking at New Development September 2011

2.0 **Site History**

2.1 None relevant.

3.0 **Representations**

3.1 **Local residents/public notice**
Concerns regarding potential overlooking/ loss of privacy.

3.2 **HCC Highways**
No objection.

3.3 **Environmental Health (Noise and other nuisance)**
No response received.

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

4.1.1 55 Harkness Court is currently an office building that used to be occupied by the former NHDC Careline operation. Part of the same building is in residential use whilst other residential properties are also located in the vicinity of the site.

4.2 **Proposal**

4.2.1 Change of use: Conversion of building to four self-contained one-bedroom flats.

4.2.2 Physical alterations include the following:
--Replacement front dormer window;
--Insertion of rear dormer window;
--Single storey front extension to form bin store;
--Alterations to fenestration.

4.3 **Key Issues**

4.3.1 The key issues for consideration are as follows:
--The acceptability of the principle of the change of use to residential.
--The effect on the character and appearance of the area.
--The effect on the living conditions of the neighbouring properties.
--The standard of the proposed accommodation.
--The effect on the highway network.

4.3.2 Principle
The site is located towards the outskirts of Hitchin but is well within the built core of the settlement. The current use is not afforded any particular policy protection and therefore the change of use to residential is unobjectionable. Indeed, I would go as far as to say that the residential use of the building would be a more appropriate use than the current office use.

4.3.3 Design and appearance
The creation of four self-contained residential units of a reasonable size would require various alterations and extensions to the building. The alterations to the front of the building would all be fairly minor and would not significantly alter the character or appearance of the building. However the rear dormer is a little unfortunate due to its size and form. That being said, it would be located at the rear, would have a degree of subservience in relation to the main building and would not have a significant visual impact. Accordingly I raise no objection to the rear dormer window.

4.3.4 In summary I consider that the proposed development would have an acceptable visual appearance and would be compliant with local and national design policy.

4.3.5 Impact on neighbouring properties
Being situated amongst other residential properties I do not consider that the proposed conversion to residential would cause any harm to the living conditions of neighbouring properties. The physical alterations would include an enlarged front dormer and a new rear dormer. The front dormer would face into the communal area at the front and would not cause a loss of privacy whilst the rear dormer would face towards a rear parking area and would therefore also not cause a loss of privacy. There are no window openings proposed for the flank elevation of the building and as such the privacy of properties to the north-west would not be negatively affected.

4.3.6 In summary I do not consider that the proposed development would cause any material harm to the living conditions of any of the neighbouring properties.

4.3.7 Standard of accommodation
The national space standard for a one bedroom one person flat is 37sqm. Three of

the four flats would meet this requirement whilst one of the flats would be slightly under (35sqm) but not to the extent that this would concern me. All of the habitable rooms would receive an ample amount of natural light.

4.3.8 Highways impact
An existing communal parking area is to be utilised and as such I am satisfied that car parking would not be an issue. Certainly the proposal would not have a severe impact on the local highway network.

4.4 **Conclusion**

4.4.1 In the absence of material planning reasons to the contrary it is my view that planning permission should be **GRANTED**.

4.5 **Alternative options**

4.5.1 None applicable.

5.0 **Recommendation**

5.1 I recommend that planning permission is **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.

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.

Signed  Simon Ellis Determining Officer	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Date: 6 August 2018	