

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...Tom Rea.....

**APPLICATION
REFERENCE**

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF
DEVELOPMENT**

APPLICATION SITE

25/03157/FPH

Installation of 2 motorised entry and
exit timber gates.

15 Deards End Lane
Knebworth
Hertfordshire
SG3 6NL

Submitted Plan Nos

1872-P-01 1872-P-02

1.0 Policies

1.0 Planning Policy

1.1 North Herts Supplementary Planning Documents.

Design SPD

Vehicle Parking Provision at New Development SPD.

1.2 National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

Section 2 - Achieving sustainable development

Section 11 - Making effective use of land.

Section 12 - Achieving well-designed places.

Section 16 – Protecting and Enhancing the Historic Environment

1.3 North Hertfordshire District Local Plan 2011-2031

Policy SP1 Sustainable Development in North Hertfordshire

Policy SP9: Design and Sustainability

Policy SP13: Historic Environment

Policy T2 Parking

Policy D1 Sustainable Design

Policy HE1 : Designated heritage assets

Policy T1: Assessment of Transport Matters

The application site lies within the settlement of Knebworth as identified in the North Herts Local Plan.

1.4 Knebworth Neighbourhood Plan (Made in May 2022)

- Policy KBBE4 Design
- Policy KBBE2 Sustainable Buildings
- Policy KBEF4 Important Views and Character Areas

2.0 Site History

2.1 16/0159/1LB & 16/01568/1HH Hipped roof and dormer windows to existing single storey rear extension. Planning permission and listed building consent granted.

2.2 90/00955/1LB & 90/00857/1 First floor and part two storey rear extension. Planning permission and listed building consent granted.

2.2 19/01289/FPH: Installation of entry gates. Refused 17/10/2019. Dismissed on appeal 28th January 2020.

3.0 **Representations**

3.1 Conservation Officer – Raises an objection – proposal would be contrary to the character & appearance of the area – would cause less than substantial harm to designated assets

Conservation officer's concluding comments :

'I have a duty under Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA. Section 66(1) of the Act also requires the decision maker, in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest. I have considered this very carefully and find the proposal OBJECTIONABLE.'

3.2 Highway Authority – 'Does not wish to restrict the grant of permission'

3.3 Knebworth Parish Council – "With regards to application **25/03157/FPH** Installation of 2 motorised entry and exit timber gates at 15 Deards End Lane Knebworth Hertfordshire SG3 6NL the PC's Planning Committee met on the 14th of January 2026 and commented that this application was previously submitted and refused (Ref 19/01289/FPH). The Parish Council submitted a comment on the application back in 2016 that said "*Deards End Lane is a busy narrow lane which becomes easily congested. The Planning Committee therefore recommended that the gates are located so that there is sufficient space for a vehicle to wait off the road whilst the gates are opening. Otherwise, the Parish Council has no objections*"

The Planning Committee reiterated that their previous comment as above was still relevant to the new application **25/03157/FPH** if this could be noted.

3.4 Local Residents – no comments received.

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

4.1.1 15 Deards End Lane is a detached house located in a cul-de-sac wing of the lane. It is a grade II listed building in the Neo Georgian style by Edwin Luytens. It is located

within Deards End Lane Conservation Area, which has the character of a rural leafy lane with large detached houses set back within the plots.

4.2 **Proposal**

- 4.2.1 The proposal is to erect 2 motorized side hung timber gates to each existing vehicular entrance measuring 1.57m high. They would be hung from 200mm diameter timber posts. The gates would be 5.4 metres wide. Please see submitted drawings. Using the amended Block Plan, the gates appear to be set in 3.4 metres (exit gate) and 4.8 metres (entrance gate) from the highway. Both gates are proposed to open inwards into the site.

4.3 **Key Issues**

- 4.3.1 The key planning considerations relate to the effect of the proposal on heritage assets and highway considerations.

4.3.2 Impact on heritage assets

There are two relevant heritage assets considerations with this proposal. Firstly, the setting of the host property, a grade II listed building designed by Sir Edward Lutyens and secondly the character and appearance of Deards End Lane Conservation Area.

The applicants 'Heritage Impact Assessment' is noted and in particular the following conclusions:

'The repositioning of the proposed gates back from the main viewpoints from the lane is considered to have a neutral impact of the setting of the Conservation Area, thus preserving the existing special rural character of the area. It was noted within the Planning Inspectorate's report that although a number of dwellings in the lane had gates, these were set back into the driveways and were not prominent within the street scene. The result of this proposal will not bring any building works or enclosure along the lane or near the verge that may prohibit any views toward the Grade II listed building. This proposal will maintain the site's semi-rural appearance and continue its public benefit within the Knebworth Conservation Area'.

- 4.3.3 Notwithstanding the case made within the submitted Heritage Impact Assessment, I would refer you to the detailed advice of the Conservation Officer, a summary of which appears at paragraph 3.1 above. In conclusion, it is felt that the gates would be harmful to both the setting of the listed building and the character of the conservation area. I can see no reason to disagree with these comments.

As the Conservation officer states there would be less than substantial harm and that harm would be at the lower end of the less than substantial continuum. However there are no public benefits to this proposal as required by paragraph 215 of the Framework.

4.3.4 Appeal decision re 19/1289/FPH

- 4.3.5 In addition to the above, a material consideration is the appeal decision on planning application ref: 19/01289/FPH for a similar proposals for entrance gates at the property. Whilst the design of the gates now proposed differs from that to the appeal decision (now timber gates at a lower height than the appeal metal gates at a greater height and

now set further from the road boundary) the appeal Inspector clearly was of the opinion that any gates in this location would be harmful to the generally open character of the property frontages in the area by commenting at paragraphs 9 and 15 as follows:

‘As I saw at the time of my site visit, the majority of properties within the area had open frontages with soft boundary treatments, this was particularly visible along Deards Lane. Those that had gates were generally set back by long driveways and were not prominent within the street scene. Although, the design of the ornate metal gates is not necessarily out of keeping with the context of the style of the dwelling, they would enclose the property, be prominent within the setting of the lane, whilst creating an imposing suburban addition to the area. This would be at odds with the prevailing character of the CA which is of a garden village and of predominantly non-gated frontages’.

‘In support of the appeal, my attention was drawn to other properties in the area that have already been altered in a similar manner to the proposal. I saw that these are very much in the minority and without information about the individual circumstances relating to other gates in the area I am unable to give significant weight to the issue of precedent. In event, those that I saw served to confirm that such alterations do reduce the soft boundaries within the area, change the nature of the relationship between the appearance and prevailing character of a garden village, all to the detriment of the character and appearance of the area’

4.3.6 In my view the proposed gates, even though reduced in height and set back from the road frontage, will still be quite visible in public views to the property contribution to an erosion of the open, landscaped character of the area and thus causing harm to the setting of the conservation area and its character and appearance.

4.3.7 Highway matters

The highway authority raise no objections on the grounds of highway safety and amenity, subject to a condition, as referred to in paragraph 3.2 above. Although the gates are shown on the Block Plan to be set in from the highway less than the recommended 6 metres, It may be possible to achieve this distance by placing the gates at an angle and for this reason I do not include this matter in the recommendation for refusal.

4.4 Environmental Considerations

4.4.1 There are no significant environmental considerations beyond matters of heritage assets and highways as discussed above.

4.5 **Conclusion**

4.5.1 The proposals are not acceptable in planning and heritage terms.

4.6 **Alternative Options**

4.6.1 None applicable

5.0 **Recommendation**

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

1. No.15 Deards End Lane is a Neo-Georgian style Lutyens designed grade II listed building which is located within the Deards End Lane Conservation Area, the prevalent character of which is that of a 'garden village'. Whilst the proposed pair of timber gates would not necessarily be incongruous in the context of the style of the host building and their materiality and height is an improvement when compared with the previously refused metal gates, they would nevertheless enclose the property, be prominent within the setting of the lane, and would be at odds with the prevailing character of the Deards End Lane Conservation Area where non-gated frontages prevail. The private garden area is screened by buildings and hedges and although the Heritage Impact Assessment says that the gate installation "will create an enhancement to the site by securely protecting the historic building" this is not considered to be a convincing justification. The proposal would be contrary to the character and appearance of the area occasioning harm thereto and would fail to satisfy the provisions of Sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the aims of Section 16 of the NPPF and Policies SP9, SP13, D1 and HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 - 2031. The proposal will occasion less than substantial harm towards the lower end of the less than substantial harm continuum and no public benefit has been identified.

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 March 2026	