

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

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

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
26/00479/FP	Change of use of 467sqm (Unit 2) for a flexible use to include Class E(g(iii) and d), B2 and B8 with ancillary trade counter (amendment to Planning Permission 22/00863/S73).	Unit 2 Royston Gateway Trade Park Darlington Road Royston Hertfordshire SG8 5PF

Submitted Plan Nos

113423-P3.5 Rev C 113423.3-L4.2 Location and Site Plans 113423.3-L4.2

1.0 Policies

1.0 **Local and National Policy**

1.1 **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024)**

Section 2 – Achieving sustainable development
Section 6 – Building a strong, competitive economy
Section 9 – Promoting sustainable transport
Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places
Section 14 - Meeting the challenges of climate change, flooding and coastal change

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

Strategic Policies

Policy SP1 – Sustainable Development in North Hertfordshire
Policy SP3 – Employment
Policy SP6 – Sustainable transport
Policy SP9 – Design and Sustainability

Development Management Policies

Policy D1 – Sustainable design
Policy ETC1 – Appropriate uses in Employment Areas
Policy T1 – Assessment of transport matters
Policy T2 - Parking

1.4 **Supplementary Planning Design (SPD)**

NHC Vehicle Parking at New Development (2011)
NHC Sustainability (2024)

2.0 **Relevant Site History**

2.1 22/00863/S73 - Variation of Condition 2 of planning permission 18/02892/FP granted on 19.08.2019 - to increase the eaves/ridge height of the units and remove the glass canopy on the front elevations as shown on plans 113-423-P-3.3 Rev E, 113-423-P-3.5 Rev B, 113-423-P-3.6 Rev B, 113-423-P3.7 Rev B. Approved.

2.2 18/02892/FP - Erection of B1c, B2 and B8 units with ancillary Trade counter and associated car parking, service yards and access road – Approved 19/08/19.

- 2.2 14/01809/1 - Erection of industrial warehouse building for the purposes within Use Class B8 (Storage or Distribution) with offices and ancillary facilities, service yard and 60 car parking spaces; erection of foodstore together with associated car parking (200 spaces); provision of new road on junction of A505 and new link road to Orchard Road Industrial Estate (as amended by plans received 5.11.14 and 27.11.14) – Approved 25/02/15.

3.0 **Representations**

- 3.1 **Site and Neighbour Consultation** – None received.
- 3.2 **Royston Town Council** – No objection.
- 3.3 NHC Environmental Health (Noise, Nuisance & Air Quality) – No objection subject to condition re Noise Management Plan for Use Class E d).

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

- 4.1.1 The site relates to the development of several units previously granted planning permission under 18/02892/FP at land now known as Royston Gateway Trade Park. The site is accessed from Darlington Road to the southwest, with the rear northwestern boundary adjoining the A505.
- 4.1.2 A short internal access road serves the development, with units arranged on either side of the park. Each unit is provided with a limited amount of allocated parking with access to additional shared parking including disability bays and cycle parking.
- 4.1.2 Unit 2 is located on the northwestern edge of an established industrial/employment area and is allocated within the Local Plan under Policy RY9. Surrounding land uses are consistent with this designation.

4.2 **Proposal**

- 4.2.1 Change of Use of 467sqm (Unit 2) for a flexible use to include Class E(g(iii) and d), B2 and B8 with ancillary trade counter (amendment to Planning Permission 22/00863/S73).

4.3 **Key Issues**

- 4.3.1 The key issues for consideration are as follows:
- The acceptability of the design of the proposed development and its resultant impact on the character and appearance of the area.
 - The impact that the proposed development would have on the operations of adjoining units in terms of amenity.
 - The impact that the proposed development would have on car parking provision in the area.
 - The impact that the proposed development would have on the environment.

Proposed Use

- 4.3.2 The use of the unit seeks to include Class E(g(iii)) and (d). Class E (g(iii)) incorporates industrial processes such as those previously seen in the former B1c light industrial use, whilst Class E(d) incorporates indoor sport and recreation which would include gym's, fitness studios and other indoor recreation uses.
- 4.3.3 The proposed introduction of a Class E(g (iii)) and (d) use within the unit would represent a material change from the established use assessed against Policies ETC1 and site allocation Policy RY9 and other relevant policies. Policy ETC1 provides for appropriate uses within employment areas such as office, research and development, industrial processes, industrial and storage and distribution. Exceptions to Policy ETC1 are considered acceptable where they are compliant with i-iv. The proposed uses would represent a departure from the permitted use and the character of the immediate area, however I consider it to be a complimentary use that would sit alongside other uses. Whilst it is not essential to the continued operation of the established premises or would make use of a site that would otherwise be likely to become or remain vacant for an extended period of time, the greater use would ensure the continued viability of the unit in the longer term.
- 4.3.4 There are no hours of operation specified on the original consent. While such restrictions may be appropriate where a unit is within close proximity to residential or other noise sensitive uses, in this case the site is located within a mixed use area. As such, I do not consider it appropriate to impose a condition restricting operating hours.
- 4.3.5 On balance, the proposal would retain an employment generating use within the unit and would not result in the loss of the site to non-employment purposes. Given the mixed use nature of the wider Royston Gateway Trade Park and surrounding area, the principle of introducing these uses is considered acceptable.

Impact on Employment Land Supply

- 4.3.4 The proposal would result in the loss of one unit from potential approved uses; however, the site as a whole comprises a number of units and continues to provide a range of employment opportunities. No evidence has been provided to suggest that the unit is required for ongoing industrial or storage use or that its loss would prejudice the overall function of the employment area. In addition, the introduction of an indoor leisure based use may support the vitality of the employment area by providing services for those working in the area which would be in line with iii of Policy ETC1.
- 4.3.5 Given the scale of the development and the retention of employment use within the unit, it is not considered that the proposal would not have a significant impact on the supply or function of employment land within the allocated area of Policy RY9.

Impact on Amenity

- 4.3.6 The site is located in a predominantly industrial and commercial area where there are limited activities that would be at risk by the introduction of the proposed uses. Nevertheless, Class E(d) can give rise to amenity concerns compared to traditional uses, particularly in relation to noise, hours of operation, increased footfall and parking. Whilst there is potential for leisure activities to operate earlier in the morning, later in the evenings and at weekends, the area is not located close to residential or other noise

sensitive uses and neighbouring uses are unlikely to be impacted significantly providing a condition is included around the ability to manage noise associated with an indoor leisure use.

Compatibility with Surrounding Uses

- 4.3.7 The surrounding area comprises a mix of employment uses and the proposed inclusion of the proposed use classes is not considered to introduce a use that would be incompatible with the surrounding employment area.

Highways and Parking

- 4.3.8 The site is served by an internal access road connecting to Darlington Road, with each unit provided with allocated parking, Unit 2 benefitting from 5 allocated spaces and having access to 23 additional spaces for use by the wider park. The proposed Class E(d) use would typically generate a higher intensity of activity and a greater turnover of visitors compared to the approved uses. With increased demand in parking provision particularly early morning/evenings. Supplementary guidance does not specify a certain amount of parking spaces required for an indoor leisure use associated with Class E. Given the size of the unit, it is unlikely that the existing level of parking provision within the area would be significantly impacted resulting in an overspill that could adversely impact the functioning of the wider estate.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

- 4.3.9 This development is not subject to the statutory Biodiversity Gain Plan condition because it is exempt under the statutory exemptions as set out in paragraph 17 of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024.

Environmental Implications

- 4.3.10 The Council's Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document (2024) seeks to ensure that new developments are future proofed against the challenge of climate change.
- 4.3.11 Section 14 of the NPPF sets out how the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future. The principles set out in Section 14 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.
- 4.3.12 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 compliance with Policy D1 of the Local Plan and Section 14 of the NPPF.

4.4 Conclusion

- 4.4.1 The proposal would introduce additional use classes within an existing allocated employment area both of which would be acceptable in principle within this location and

would not result in significant harm to the function of the employment area, the amenities of neighbouring occupiers, or the operation of the highway. I am therefore satisfied that the proposal is in accordance with Policies SP1, SP3, SP6, SP9, D1, ETC1, RY9, T1 and T2 of the Local Plan 2011-2031 and Sections 2, 6, 9, 12 and 14 of the NPPF 2025.

4.5 **Alternative Options**

4.5.1 N/A

4.6 **Pre-Commencement Conditions**

4.6.1 N/A

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. No class E(d) activity shall commence until a Noise Management Plan has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. Such a management plan shall identify measures to control noise emanating from the hereby permitted facility. Any identified measures shall be implemented in accordance with the approved plan at all times.

Reason: To protect the amenity of neighbouring businesses.

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. 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 (paragraph 38) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

Signed  Anne McDonald	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Determining Officer Date: 14 May 2026	