

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...Henry Thomas.....

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
24/01536/FP	Change of use from office to residential to create one 3-bed dwelling.	27 Kneesworth Street Royston Hertfordshire SG8 5AB

Submitted Plan Nos

2970.01A 2970.06 2970.09

1.0 Policies

NE4	Biodiversity and geological sites
D1	Sustainable design
D3	Protecting living conditions
SP1	Sustainable development in North Herts
SP6	Sustainable transport
SP8	Housing
SP9	Design and Sustainability
HE1	Designated heritage assets
HS3	Housing mix
T1	Assessment of transport matters
T2	Parking
SECN12	Achieving well-designed places
SECN16	Conserve + enhance historic environment

2.0 **Relevant Site History**

- 2.1 **24/01537/LBC** - Internal alterations to facilitate Change of use from office to residential to create one 3-bed dwelling.

Concurrent Application.

- 2.2 **21/01695/FP** - Change of use from office to residential to create one 3-bed dwelling (as amended by plans received on 11.8.21).

Conditional Permission.

- 2.3 **21/01696/LBC** - Internal alterations to facilitate Change of use from office to residential to create one 3-bed dwelling (as amended by plans received on 11.8.21).

Conditional Consent.

- 2.3 **90/00121/1LB** – Conversion of existing barns to offices (as variation of previous consent 1/757/87 relating to conversion of barn to 2 residential units and offices).

Conditional Consent.

- 2.4. **87/00757/1LB** – Application for Listed Building consent for alterations, extension and conversion of barns to provide two residential units and offices together with conservation area consent to demolish existing steel frame building.

Conditional Consent.

- 2.5 **87/00708/1** – Alterations, extension and conversion of barns to provide 2 residential units, and offices; erection of 2 semi-detached houses, provision of 8 parking spaces and ancillary work following demolition of existing steel frame building.

Conditional Permission

3. **Representations**

- 3.1 **Press, Site and Neighbour Notifications** – One neutral comment received stating

“Assessment of flood risk has been declared as 'Low'. For surface water flooding it is in fact 'High' when checked with the indicated processes. Applicant has failed to check.

Application is for a 3 bedroom proposal. Plans only show 3 bedrooms. Applicant has made a false application.”

3.2 **Statutory Consultees:**

NHC Conservation Officer – No Objection.

Royston Town Council – No Objection.

HCC Archaeology – None received.

Waste and Recycling – general comments received.

4. **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

- 4.1.1 The site is set back from Kneesworth Street and falls within Royston Town Centre. It is important to note that the site address relates to two properties under separate ownership. This application relates to the part known as 'The Malt House'. The site is a Grade II Listed Building within the Royston Conservation Area. The property is currently in use as an office. The local areas is a mixture of commercial and residential properties.

4.2 **Proposal**

- 4.2.1 The proposal is to convert the existing office (Class E(g)(i) use) into one three-bedroom dwelling (C3 use). The proposed works are internal only, with no amendments to the external façade.

- 4.2.2 The proposal is a renewal of permission from 21/01696/LBC & 21/01695/FP

4.3 **Key Issues**

- 4.3.1 The key issues for consideration are as follows:

- The impact of the development upon the Grade II listing.
- The acceptability of the design of the proposed development and its resultant impact on the character and appearance of the locality.
- The impact that the proposed development would have on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers.
- The impact that the proposed development would have on car parking provision in the area.
- The impact that the development would have on the environment.

Principle for Development

- 4.3.2 In terms of the principle of residential accommodation, it will be noted that the site is within a sustainable location being in the centre of Royston where there are a large number of local services and facilities. Policy SP1 of the Local Plan supports the principles of sustainable development and to maintain the role of key settlements within and adjoining the District as the main focus for housing, employment and new development making use of previously developed land. The proposal would be consistent with this policy as well as Policy SP2 which identifies Royston as one of the key settlements where up to 80% of the districts development needs will be met over the Plan period.

- 4.3.3 Policy SP9 of the Local Plan supports new development where it is well designed and located and responds to its local context. I consider that the proposal will, having regard

to the particular design and layout of the scheme (see detailed comments below) and the character of the area, will be broadly consistent with Policy SP9 of the Local Plan.

- 4.3.4 The NPPF is clear at paragraph 86, part a) that in town centre locations such as Royston Town Centre, there should be a suitable mix of uses including housing.
- 4.3.5 It is worth noting that the site falls within Royston Town Centre and Policies SP3 and ETC4 also apply to the land in question. I can see no conflicts with these policies, especially given that the Primary Shopping Frontage applies to ground floor only.

Impact on Designated Heritage Assets:

- 4.3.6 Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that “In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the Local Planning Authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.”
- 4.3.7 Paragraph 203 of the NPPF states that when “*determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of... the desirability of new development making positive contribution to character and distinctiveness*”.
- 4.3.8 Paragraph 205 of the NPPF sets out that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation.
- 4.3.9 Paragraph 206 of the NPPF sets out that any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification.
- 4.3.10 Paragraph 208 of the NPPF states “*Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use*”.
- 4.3.11 Policy HE1 of the North Herts Local Plan states:

“Planning permission for development proposals affecting Designated Heritage Assets or their setting will be granted where they (as applicable):

- a) Enable the heritage asset to be used in a manner that secures its conservation and preserves its significance;*
- b) Incorporate a palette of materials that make a positive contribution to local character or distinctiveness, where it is appropriate and justified; and*
- c) Will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset, and this harm is outweighed by the public benefits of the development, including securing the asset’s optimum viable use.”*

- 4.3.12 Following consultation with the Senior Conservation Officer, no objection has been raised to the proposed works and their impact to the grade II listed building. The proposed development would comply with both local and national planning policies.

Design and Appearance:

- 4.3.13 The objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include those seeking to secure the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings, and places (Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places). Paragraph 126 of the NPPF states that *“Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable communities”*. In this regard, Policy D1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan are consistent with the objectives set out within the NPPF.
- 4.3.14 The proposed works are internal only and therefore would not affect the external appearance of the building and therefore would not result in any adverse harm to the street scene or the character of the listed building.
- 4.3.15 This is considered in line with Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Policies D1, D3 and HE1 of the Local Plan.

Impact on Neighbouring Occupiers:

- 4.3.16 The objectives of the NPPF seek to ensure that developments secure a high standard of amenity for existing and future occupiers (Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places). This principle is reflected in the provisions set out in Policy D3 of the North Herts Local Plan.
- 4.3.17 Policy D3 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan sets out that planning permission will be granted for developments proposals which do not cause unacceptable harm to living conditions.
- 4.3.18 Given the change from office to residential, the new use is unlikely to differ to any noticeable extent. The impact of the change of use would mean that there would be an increase in the use of the proposed space in that the previous use largely relates to weekdays and daytime activities. With regard to noise ingress, a town centre location with a mixture of uses is considered to produce more noise than a predominantly residential location, however, this noise is restricted through hours of operations. The concurrent application for the ground floor unit will therefore be limited to reasonable hours to allow for this. In terms of increased noise level from the proposed use, as far as I am aware, the neighbouring units are under commercial usage and therefore would not be affected by noise from a residential unit, regardless I do not consider the noise level associated with a two-bedroomed property to be significant. I am satisfied that the proposed development will not significantly impact on the existing amenity of the neighbouring properties and is acceptable.

Highways and Parking:

- 4.3.19 Policy T1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan states that “*planning permission will be granted provided that... development would not lead to highway safety problems or cause unacceptable impacts upon the highway network*”.
- 4.3.20 Policy T2 states that “*planning permission will be granted provided that... proposal have regard to relevant Supplementary Planning Documents*”.
- 4.3.21 The site benefits from two parking spaces which is sufficient to meet the requirement set out within the Parking at New Developments SPD. As such, no objection is raised to the impact of the development upon parking in the area.

Environmental Implications:

- 4.3.22 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 North Herts Local Plan, which sets out that development proposal 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.
- 4.3.22 The proposed development is the conversion of an existing building and is predominantly hardstanding. As such it is exempt from BNG Legislation defined under article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. With regards to Policy NE4 of the Local Plan 2011-2031, the site is exempt from the requirement to deliver a biodiversity net gain and therefore does not run contrary to this policy or Section 14 of the NPPF.

Waste

- 4.3.24 The unit is currently served by a bin storage area to the front of the property. The current bin storage area is sufficient to accommodate the required residential bins.

Other Matters

- 4.3.25 In regard to the comments received from the neighbour. The governmental flood map from planning identifies the property as being within flood zone 1. Therefore, a flood risk assessment is not required.

4.4 Conclusion

- 4.4.1 The proposed development is considered acceptable and in accordance with Policies SP1, SP6, SP8, SP9, D1, D3, HE1, HS3, NE4, T1 and T2 of the NHLP 2011-2031 and Sections 2, 5, 12 and 14 of the NPPF 2023.

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. Prior to the occupation of the development hereby approved, details including location, materials, elevations and screening of bin stores shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To safeguard and enhance the appearance of the completed development and the visual amenity of the locality.

4. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 as amended no development as set out in Classes A to E of Part 1 of Schedule 2 to the Order, (or any subsequent Statutory Instrument which revokes, amends and/or replaces those provisions) shall be carried out without first obtaining a specific planning permission from the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: Given the nature of this development, the Local Planning Authority considers that development which would normally be "permitted development" should be retained within planning control in the interests of the character and amenities of the area.

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 Determining Officer	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Date: 17 September 2024	