

FAO William Thompson BY EMAIL planning.control@north-herts.gov.uk
Case Officer,
North Herts Council

2 Sept 2026
26/01793/FP

Dear Case Officer,

Re: Planning Application 26/01793/FP – Proposed single-storey extension and subdivision of commercial premises at Units 1–5, Rear of 93–98 Bancroft, Hitchin

Community Pharmacy Hertfordshire (CPH) is the statutory representative body for NHS community pharmacy contractors across Hertfordshire. We are writing to provide comments on the above application in relation to the site's role in delivering healthcare services to local residents.

Having reviewed the Design, Access, Planning and Heritage Statement submitted in support of the application, CPH is concerned that the current use of the premises and its contribution to local healthcare provision does not appear to be fully reflected within the application documents.

The planning statement states that the premises were "most recently occupied by Lloyds Pharmacy, which has now vacated" and describes the proposal as bringing flexible commercial floor space back into active use following the departure of the previous occupier.

However, our understanding is that NHS pharmaceutical services continue to be provided from the premises by CareRx Pharmacy. As such, the site continues to operate as an important healthcare facility serving patients in Hitchin and the surrounding area.

Community pharmacies are a vital part of the NHS primary care system. They provide access to dispensing services, medicines advice, vaccinations, minor illness consultations and a range of other NHS-commissioned services. For many residents, community pharmacies are the most accessible healthcare provider and play an important role in supporting wider NHS capacity.

While the application describes the site solely in terms of commercial Class E floorspace and focuses on the creation of smaller retail and service units, it does not appear to acknowledge the premises' ongoing healthcare function or assess the implications of the proposed subdivision and reconfiguration for the continued delivery of NHS pharmaceutical services from the site.

The statement also highlights the site's town-centre location and accessibility, together with its relationship to surrounding facilities. The location plan included within the application demonstrates the close proximity of the premises to healthcare facilities and other key community services.

CPH fully supports investment in town-centre premises and initiatives that promote the vitality and viability of Hitchin town centre. We are not objecting to development of the site in principle. However, we believe it is important that the Local Planning Authority is provided with a complete and accurate understanding of the current use of the premises before determining the application.

We therefore respectfully request that the Council:

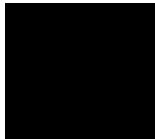
1. Verifies the current operational status of the premises, including the ongoing provision of NHS pharmaceutical services from the site.

2. Ensures that the application documentation accurately reflects the current use of the premises, recognising that the site continues to accommodate a community pharmacy serving local patients.
3. Considers the role of the premises within local healthcare infrastructure, including the contribution made by community pharmacy services to patient access and primary care delivery.
4. Assesses whether the proposed subdivision and reconfiguration could affect the continued operation of NHS pharmaceutical services from the site, either during construction or once the development is complete.
5. Ensures that the implications for patient access to pharmaceutical services are fully understood and considered as part of the planning process.

The application states that the proposal would create a few smaller commercial units through subdivision of the existing floor space while retaining Class E use. Whilst this may provide flexibility for future occupiers, the planning assessment does not currently address how the proposals relate to the site's existing healthcare function or whether sufficient consideration has been given to the continuation of pharmacy services from this location.

CPH considers it important that any planning decision is made with a full understanding of the site's current role in providing NHS services to the local community. We would therefore welcome clarification of these matters before the application is determined.

Yours faithfully,



Helen Musson
CHIEF OFFICER