

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...Alex Howard.....

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
25/00015/FP	Change of use of ground floor cycle/bin/flat storage area to one 2-bed flat (Development already carried out)	Apartment 1 Platinum Court 10 The Mead Hitchin Hertfordshire SG5 1EY

Submitted Plan Nos

MDL-1359-PL-25 MDL-1359-PL20 Block A MDL-1359-PL20 Block A MDL-1375-PL21 MDL-1375-PL22
MDL-1375-PL23 MDL-1375-PL24

1.0 Policies

2.0 Site History

- 2.1 **18/02433/FP** - Residential development comprising of three blocks of flats to provide 21 dwellings (15 x 2 bedroom flats, 6 x 1 bedroom flats) including 42 parking spaces and replacement vehicular access (as amended by drawing 2017-53-PL.001A received 06/11/2018).

Conditional Permission

3.0 Representations

- 3.1 **Site Notice and Neighbour Consultation** – None received.
- 3.2 **North Herts Housing Officer** – Full comments on public file. Summarises that no uplift in the commuted sums payment is expected.
- 3.3 **Environmental Health** – No objections.

4.0 Planning Considerations

4.1 Site and Surroundings

- 4.1.1 The site is one of three apartment blocks located on the south side of The Mead, Hitchin. The apartment block in question is sited on the eastern part of the site. The site has been built out following the grant of planning permission in June 2019 under ref: 18/02433/FP.

4.2 Proposal

- 4.2.1 Planning permission is sought for the change of use of ground floor cycle/bin/flat storage area to one 2-bed flat. The development has already been carried out.
- 4.2.2 Under the parent planning application for this scheme, Block A was to provide 5x2-bedroom and 3x1 bedroom flats, with a ground floor cycle, bin and general storage area. The scheme was built out and the approved ground floor cycle, bin and general storage area was converted into 1x2 bedroom flat. Cycle and bin storage has been provided to the rear of Block A next to the shared amenity space.

4.3 Key Issues

- 4.3.1 The principle consideration in this application is whether the change of use of the flat block's cycle/bin/general storage area into a 2 bedroom flat is acceptable. The use of the building is entirely residential so the addition of an extra flat would be reasonable. In terms of the requirements for this flat block to have suitable cycle/bin/general storage areas, following a site visit it is acknowledged that to the rear of the building there is a large bin storage area and cycle storage structure, which are the same size as those permitted to be internal in the original permission. Therefore, seeing as the storage areas have been provided elsewhere on site, and they are suitably sized, there are no objections to the principle of this development. Whilst these storage areas are located in what is the flat blocks amenity area, they are set into the corners of the main building and there remains a large area of lawn in this location for occupiers amenity, which is considered reasonable
- 4.3.2 It is acknowledged that the flat has a floor area of approx. 57.4sqm, which is less than that required in the nationally prescribed space standards for both a 2-bedroom/3-person and 2-bedroom/4-person 1 storey dwelling, which requires 61sqm and 70sqm respectively. However, the floor area and general layout of this flat is identical to the 1st and 2nd floor flats above it, which were considered acceptable during the consideration of the parent application and are 2-bedroom/3-person flats. Therefore, these other flats are also below the minimum space standards and under the original application, the case officer considered the scheme as follows in their officer report:
- “4.3.20 Standard of accommodation: residential guidelines and standards
Each of the residential units would provide an acceptable standard of accommodation with all primary habitable areas to be naturally lit and suitably-sized. It would be impractical to provide private amenity areas for the development but the site is within reasonable walking distance of outdoor amenity space including the King George V playing fields and the Bury Mead Springs. Ultimately I am satisfied that the proposed development would provide an acceptable standard of accommodation”.
- 4.3.3 As such, it is considered unreasonable to object to the scheme for this reason given the historic consideration of identical flats above the unit in question.
- 4.3.4 Following a consultation response from the Councils Housing Officer, it was concluded as follows:

“4.3.12 Affordable housing

In line with the Emerging Affordable Housing Policy HS2 it would be the case that the Council would require 35% of the 21 flats to be affordable and as such the following breakdown would normally be sought: 7 dwellings (5 rented and 2 intermediate affordable tenure).

4.3.13 However, in order to support the re-use of brownfield land, paragraph 63 of the revised Framework suggests that, where vacant buildings are being redeveloped, any affordable housing contribution should be reduced by an amount proportionate the existing gross floor-space of the existing buildings. Having considered the calculations provided by the applicant I agree with their conclusion that the affordable housing on site should be reduced by approximately 85% thereby leaving the affordable housing

requirement as one unit. In the context of this particular scheme I consider that one unit would be impractical and therefore, following discussion with the Housing Supply Officer the Council has agreed a payment of £26,182.55 in lieu of on-site affordable housing provision.

Based on the provision of 22 dwellings overall the affordable housing requirement would have been for eight affordable homes: five for rent and three for shared ownership.

On this basis reducing the affordable housing by 85% would still result in the provision of one affordable unit and so I would assume no uplift in the commuted sums payment if my understanding is correct”.

- 4.3.5 Therefore, it is considered that no uplift in commuted sums is required for this additional flat which would be for the open market, given the above rationale.
- 4.3.6 Under the parent application, the case officer considered parking standards and concluded that According to the Council’s Vehicle Parking at New Development SPD September 2011 each two bedroom flat should have a minimum of two car parking spaces and each one bedroom flat should have a minimum of one car parking space, and 0.25 visitor spaces. This would equate to a requirement for 40 car parking spaces and the scheme delivered 42 car parking spaces. In my view, this additional 2 parking spaces above the requirement is sufficient to serve this additional 2-bedroom flat, such that there are no concerns in this respect. The site is in a sustainable location with public transport, shops and general services nearby.
- 4.3.7 There are no design concerns, given that all of the works are internal, and there are no neighbour amenity concerns, given that the proposed use is residential which is appropriate in this local context.
- 4.3.8 The proposal would be exempt from the mandatory 10% BNG.

4.4 **Conclusion**

- 4.4.1 The proposal is considered acceptable in accordance with the relevant Local and National planning policies.

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

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: 18 June 2025	