

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

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

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
25/03098/S73	Variation of condition 2 (revised plans) 24/01108/FP granted 15.08.2024 for Conversion of first floor accommodation from Class E use to Class C3 to create 2 x 1-beds flats and subdivision of existing second floor flat to provide 2 x 1-bed flats. External alterations.	80 Hermitage Road Hitchin Hertfordshire SG5 1DB

Submitted Plan Nos

3728 01 Location Plan and Site Plan. 3728 03F 3728 04C

D1	Sustainable design
D3	Protecting living conditions
HE1	Designated heritage assets
SP13	Historic environment
SECN12	Achieving well-designed places
SECN9	Promoting sustainable transport
SP9	Design and Sustainability

2.0 **Site History**

- 2.1 17/00348/1: Addition of two storeys to existing building to provide 7 x 2-bed flats (floors 3 and 4); change of use of ground floor of No. 80 to A1 shop unit and entrance hallway, change of use of first floor of No. 80 Hermitage Road from A3 to C3 to provide 1 x studio flat; existing second floor flat of No. 74 Hermitage Road converted to 1 x studio flat and 1 x 1-bed flat; re-clad external elevations of existing building; provision of new stair and lift tower and associated refuse and recycling store. (As amended by plan nos. 3183 01B, 10H, 12D, 15 F, 16C, 22). Granted

20/01801/FP: Alterations to rear elevation windows and change of position of door to facilitate the conversion of first floor to 2 bedroom flat. Granted 23/9/20

24/01108/FP: Conversion of first floor accommodation from Class E use to Class C3 to create 2 x 1-beds flats and subdivision of existing second floor flat to provide 2 x 1-bed flats. External alterations. Granted

3.0 **Representations**

- 3.1 Site Notice / Adjoining occupiers: No response
- 3.2 Conservation Officer: No objection

- 3.3 Herts Highways: 'No objections'
- 3.4 NHDC Environmental Health officer:
No objections subject to retention of condition 3 of permission ref: 24/01108/FP
- 3.5 NHDC Waste & Recycling: No comments

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

- 4.1 Three storey building located on the south side of Hermitage Road comprising shop units on the ground floor and storage space / flats above. The site is within the Hitchin Conservation Area.

The present use of the first-floor accommodation is Class E (Commercial). The second floor is used as a single 3 bedroom flat.

4.2 **Proposal**

- 4.2.1 This S73 application seeks the following minor amendments to the scheme approved under permission ref: 24/024/01108/FP:

- A lightweight steel escape stair, powder-coated in a recessive colour.
- The staircase is positioned at the western end of the south elevation, constructed tight against the brick wall of the adjoining Premier Inn hotel, ensuring it is as discreetly located as possible and largely screened from wider public views.
- Minor adjustments to windows and doors on the south elevation to integrate the staircase, enable safe use, and retain the balance of the elevation.

4.3 **Key Issues**

4.3.0 **Principle of the use**

The premises are within the town centre of Hitchin and a secondary shopping frontage. Policy ETC5 ('Secondary Shopping Frontages') is only concerned with proposals and planning permission for ground floor uses. The provision of residential units above the shopping frontage is acceptable in principle as there will be no impact on the vitality and viability of the shopping frontage.

- 4.3.1 In any case the change of the use of the first floor Class E use to 2 x 1 bedroom flats is permitted development by virtue of Class G of Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015.

4.3.2 **Impact of new external staircase**

- 4.3.3 The new external staircase is positioned on a secondary and visually contained elevation, tightly abutting the Premier Inn wall, significantly reducing visibility and presence. Its simple design and 2 recessive finish ensure that has no material impact

on the character or appearance of the building or surrounding area. It is also noted that there are several other examples of rear staircases to the commercial and residential properties in Hermitage Road. The proposals would be consistent with this prevailing form of development in the area. It is considered that the design and positioning of the external staircase complies in general terms with Policies SP9 and D1 of the North Herts Local Plan.

4.3.4 Impact of the new fenestration

- 4.3.5 The updated fenestration is provided within the existing window openings and has a similar design and balustrading feature as the existing. The replacement of the existing openings would improve thermal performance in accordance with the Sustainability SPD and maintain and enhance the appearance of the building in compliance with Policies SP9 and D1.

4.3.6 Impact on residential amenity

The amendments do not introduce any overlooking, loss of privacy, overshadowing, or noise impacts. The fenestration changes are minimal and do not materially alter the relationship with neighbouring properties. The proposals comply with Policy D3 of the Local Plan.

4.3.7 Impact on heritage assets

The alterations to the rear (south) elevation involve a new staircase which is a common feature in this area, provision of replacement windows and a rendered finish to existing brick panels. The alterations to the front (north) involve replacement windows, two small glazed balustrades and rendered finish over existing brickwork. It is considered that these external alterations are relatively minor and will enhance the appearance of the building.

These alterations are very minor and do not affect the external appearance of the building to any significant degree and there would be no impact on the setting of the Conservation Area. As such the external staircase and alterations are considered acceptable and would comply with Policy HE 1 of the Local Plan.

4.3.8 Environmental implications

The proposed external alterations with this application are minor and consistent with the design criteria set out in Policy D1 of the Emerging Local Plan. Given this and the minor nature of the proposals there are no significant environmental implications arising from this proposed development.

4.3.9 Conditions

- 4.3.10 A Noise report has been submitted with the previous application. Compliance with condition 3 of permission ref: 24/01108/FP will be re-imposed

4.3 **Conclusion**

- 4.4.1 The proposals are acceptable in planning terms.

4.5 **Alternative Options**

4.5.1 None applicable

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 planning reference 24/01108/FP.

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. The development hereby permitted should be carried out in accordance with the recommended glazing and ventilation specifications set out in the submitted Noise Assessment report dated 17/7/24.

Reason: To ensure adequate protection of the living conditions of future occupiers and to comply with Policy D1 of the Local Plan

4. Prior to the occupation of the flats hereby permitted details of an ecological enhancement scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: To ensure biodiversity net gain and to comply with Policy NE4 of the Local Plan.

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  Shaun Greaves Determining Officer	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Date: 12 February 2026	