

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

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

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
25/01825/FP	Conversion of second floor of existing coach house to form a one-bedroom flat with associated external and internal alterations including dormer windows and rooflights. Installation of garage doors to enclose covered parking area.	Coach House Park Lane Court 2 Park Lane Knebworth Hertfordshire SG3 6EW

Submitted Plan Nos

ODC.25.04.01 ODC.25.04.02 ODC.25.04.02

1.0 Policies

D1	Sustainable design
D3	Protecting living conditions
NE4	Biodiversity and geological sites
NP5	Knebworth NP
SECN11	Making effective use of land
SECN14	Meeting climate change,coastal,flooding
SECN12	Achieving well-designed places
SECN5	Delivering sufficient supply of homes
SP6	Sustainable transport
SP9	Design and Sustainability
T1	Assessment of transport matters
SPDVP	Vehicle Parking at New Development

2.0 **Relevant Site History**

2.1 17/00883/1:

Outline planning application (landscaping reserved) for residential development of 10 units comprising 9 x two bed flats, conversion and part two storey/part single storey side extension to existing building at the rear of the site to provide 4 parking spaces and cycle store at ground floor with 1 x 2 bed flat over and 18 car parking spaces within site following demolition of existing buildings. Repairing and raising of existing wall on northern boundary to 2.5 metres in height and repairing and raising of existing wall to western boundary to 2.1 metres in height – Granted Conditional Permission on 09/08/2017

18/00992/RM:

Reserved matters application for approval of landscaping details for outline planning application 17/00883/1 granted 09.08.2017 for residential development of 10 units comprising 9 x two bed flats, conversion and part two storey/part single storey side extension to existing building at the rear of the site to provide 4 parking spaces and cycle store at ground floor with 1 x 2 bed flat over and 18 car parking spaces within site following demolition of existing buildings. Repairing and raising of existing wall on northern boundary to 2.5 metres in height and repairing and raising of existing wall to western boundary to 2.1 metres in height. Conditional Approval of Details issued on 25/07/2018.

18/02992/NMA:

Alterations to the external appearance of the detached building adjacent to the northern boundary of the site (as Non_Material Amendment to Planning Application 17/00883/1 granted on 09/08/2017). Granted 22/11/2018

18/02993/NMA:

Amendments to the landscaping scheme (as Non-Material Amendment to Planning Application 18/00992/RM granted on 25/07/2018). Granted 22/11/2018

18/02515/S73:

Residential development of 10 units comprising 9 x two bed flats, conversion and part two storey/part single storey side extension to existing building at the rear of the site to provide 4 parking spaces and cycle store at ground floor with 1 x 2 bed flat over and 18 car parking spaces within site following demolition of existing buildings. Repairing and raising of existing wall on northern boundary to 2.5 metres in height and repairing and raising of existing wall to western boundary to 2.1 metres in height. Section 73 Application: Variation of condition 11: Changes to the external and internal appearance of the scheme pursuant to planning permission 17/00883/1 granted 09/08/2017 and as amended by 18/01468/NMA granted 28/06/2018) Conditional Permission granted on 14/12/2018

21/01014/FP:

Alterations to roof of existing buildings to provide 1 x 1 bed and 1 x 2 bed additional flats including 3 additional parking spaces. Granted 22/9/2021

3.0 **Representations**

3.1 Site Notice / Adjoining occupiers:

Several letters of objection raising the following concerns:

- ☐ No parking is provided for the new flat
- ☐ Already inadequate parking to serve the whole development
- ☐ Parking is at a premium in the locality and will lead to problems
- ☐ New occupants may park in allocated spaces
- ☐ Waste facilities already at capacity

Full details of the representations are recorded on the Council's web site.

3.2 NHDC Environmental Health: No objections on noise or contamination grounds.

3.3 Herts Highways: 'Does not wish to restrict the grant of planning permission'

3.4 Knebworth Parish Council: No comments have been received.

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

Park Lane Court is a three storey newly constructed block of residential flats situated on the north side of Park Lane, Knebworth. The site benefits from off-street car parking (25 spaces – see site plan no. ODC 25/04.02) and direct access to Knebworth train station. Furthermore, the site is not situated within a Conservation Area.

On street parking is heavily restricted in the immediate area with double yellow lines outside of the site and the rail station. Further along Park Lane single yellow lines are in place with no parking between 8.00am – 6.00pm

4.2 **Proposal**

Conversion of second floor of existing coach house to form a one-bedroom flat with associated external and internal alterations including dormer windows and rooflights. Installation of garage doors to enclose covered parking area.

4.3 **Key Issues**

4.3.1 The key issues for consideration are as follows: -

- ☐ The principle of the proposed development.
- ☐ Design and appearance.
- ☐ Living conditions / Impact on neighbours
- ☐ Highway impact and car parking provision in the area.
- ☐ Environmental matters.

4.3.2 Principle of the Proposed Development:

4.3.3 The application site is located within Knebworth village boundary a large village identified for significant growth in the North Herts Local Plan. Given the location of the site within an existing residential development and within the large village of Knebworth, the principle of development in this location is considered acceptable.

North Herts Council cannot demonstrate a 5 year supply of housing land and there is a pressing need for more housing in the district. As such the 'tilted balance' applies in favour of granting permission for sustainable development.

4.3.4 Design and Appearance

4.3.5 The proposals involve the following external alterations to the existing coach house building:

Floor Plans

Ground floor – insertion of 2 x garage doors to the parking area and sub-division of parking area with internal dividing wall. Provision of new ground floor window

First floor – minor internal alterations to facilitate staircase access to 2nd floor.

Second Floor – conversion of existing attic to a one bedroom flat

External alterations

Provision of ground floor window, provision of garage doors (x 2) two front facing dormer windows and five additional roof windows (2 in the front, 3 in the rear roof slope)

Garage doors and dormers to match existing windows

4.3.6 As mentioned in the supporting DAS the proposed external alterations would be modest and would be in keeping with the character, form, design and materiality of the existing building. With respect to the proposed dormer windows, these would be small in the context of the roof and have a modest projection. As a result, they would not dominate the roof slope and be well-proportioned. The flats opposite at Florence Court and adjacent at Dancote also have several roof dormers. Other external alterations would involve the insertion of a small number of rooflights, but these would be small and have little visual impact. There is also a prevalence of three storey accommodation in the area including Park Lane Court itself, Florence Court, Dancote etc. Given the above it is considered that the proposed development would be sympathetic to the character and

appearance of the area and comply with Policies SP9 and D1 of the Local Plan and Section 12 of the Framework.

4.3.7 Living conditions / Impact on neighbours

4.3.8 The proposed new one bedroom flat would have a gross internal area of 58 sq metres. This meets the minimum standards for a one bedroom 2 person unit (58 sqm) and exceeds the standard for a one bedroom 1 person flat (39 sqm) in the Government's Technical housing standards – nationally described space standards (2015). In terms of outdoor space the accommodation would only be a short walk to the Lytton Fields Play Space (5 minutes) and 10 minutes from the Knebworth Recreation Ground. Adequate light and ventilation would be received within the new flat due to the several rooflights and two dormer windows. In terms of noise, the unit is set back from Park Lane and shielded from the railway by the existing Park Court block. In any event the provision of residential accommodation on this site was considered acceptable on noise grounds with the granting of the original consent for the main flat development. In addition, the Council's Environmental Health officer raises no objections on noise grounds.

4.3.9 Given the above factors it is considered that the proposed development would provide an adequate standard of living for the prospective occupiers and therefore comply with Policies D1 and D3 of the NHLP.

4.3.10 In terms of impact on existing residents the proposed dormer windows would face south over the existing parking area to Park Lane Court and would thus not overlook neighbouring properties. New rooflights would be at a high level and would thus not cause any loss of privacy to neighbouring properties. The use would be complimentary to the prevailing use of the site which is residential. The development would therefore have an acceptable impact on existing residents in accordance with Policies D1 and D3 of the NHLP.

4.3.11 Impact on car parking provision / highway safety

4.3.12 As states in the DAS no additional parking is proposed and none is to be allocated to the new one bedroom flat.

4.3.9 There is an existing block-paved car park serving the whole site comprising 25 parking spaces. Parking provision across the whole site comprises two spaces per flat apart from a one-bed flat which has one space. There are also two visitor spaces at a lower level adjacent to the site access drive. Currently there are 12 flats in total within Park Lane Court.

4.3.10 The Council's Supplementary Planning Document 'Vehicle Parking at New Developments' (2011) sets out the parking standards for new development including housing. Appendix 4 of the Local Plan provides updated guidance on Residential Parking Standards. A one bedroom flat would require 1 parking space.

4.3.11 Appendix 4 states that reductions in provision will be considered where:

- 1) Alternative publicly available off-street parking is available within 2 minutes' walk of the site;
- 2) Visitor parking arising from small-scale (i.e. infill) development can be accommodated on-street without compromising highway safety, the amenity of existing residents or the ability for businesses to operate; or
- 3) Relevant evidence is submitted by the applicant which supports a reduction in standard and considers existing and future car ownership and likely visitor demand.

4.3.12 Car parking is available at the station and there is some unrestricted on street parking further along Park Lane to the west. The applicant considers that the proposed approach to not provide any additional parking is consistent with the Council's parking standards SPD which indicates that a reduction in parking is appropriate in sustainable locations and would moreover be consistent with a range of appeal decisions for new residential developments in highly sustainable locations within North Hertfordshire.

4.3.13 The NPPF encourages the opportunities to use modes of transport other than reliance on a car (paragraph 109).

4.3.14 In terms of the impact of the development on the wider highway network the Highway Authority have advised that the existing access has adequate visibility and meets emergency access requirements. Essentially though they consider that as the proposals are on private land beyond the jurisdiction of the Highway Authority there is limited ability for the Authority to comment. In any event, the NPPF states in paragraph 116 that:

'Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios.'

In this case the Highway Authority has not suggested that the lack of parking for this one bed unit would lead to conditions detrimental to highway safety.

4.3.15 It is concluded in view of the above, the small size of the proposed unit and the sustainable location there is no need for additional parking provision and that the development will have no material impact on the safe operation of the surrounding highway network.

4.3.16 Environmental matters

4.3.16 The site is on previously developed land and as the majority of the works are limited to the existing roofspace / roofslope there would be no implications for ground contamination.

4.3.17 The roof already exists and water run off from it is already provided for within the drainage strategy for the site hence there would be no flood implications arising from this development.

4.3.18 In terms of noise affecting the prospective residents the principle of residential development has already been accepted for this site with the previous residential planning permissions. Noise associated with the conversion and construction works is

likely to be short term given the modest amount of works involved. The Council's environmental health team raise no objection on noise grounds.

4.3.19 No BNG is required as there is less than 25 sqm of on site habitat affected.

4.3.20 The small scale of the development proposals means that the development is unlikely to have any significant impact on local climate change.

4.3.21 Section 106 matters

4.3.22 The previous existing development is considered to have been completed and occupied or ready to be occupied. Therefore this application is considered a proposal for a one new unit only and does not take into account the previous development that recently took place on the site. Therefore, there are no policy grounds for a S106 contribution to be requested. This was the approach taken by the LPA when assessing S106 matters with the previous application for two additional flats at the site (21/01014/FP).

4.4 **Conclusion**

4.4.1 The development is acceptable in planning and highway 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 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.

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.

Informative/s:

AN1) Storage of materials: The applicant is advised that the storage of materials associated with the construction of this development should be provided within the site on land which is not public highway, and the use of such areas must not interfere with the public highway. If this is not possible, authorisation should be sought from the Highway Authority before construction works commence.

Further information is available via the County Council website at:

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/business-licences/business-licences.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

AN2) Obstruction of highway: It is an offence under section 137 of the Highways Act 1980 for any person, without lawful authority or excuse, in any way to wilfully obstruct the free passage along a highway or public right of way. If this development is likely to result in the public highway or public right of way network becoming routinely blocked (fully or partly) the applicant must contact the Highway Authority to obtain their permission and requirements before construction works

commence. Further information is available via the County Council website at:

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/business-licences/business-licences.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

Signed  Anne McDonald Determining Officer	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Date: 11 September 2025	