

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...Melissa Tyler.....

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
25/01118/FPH	Enlargement/excavation of basement, installation of two front basement glazed doors to facilitate conversion of basement into habitable accommodation. Addition of roof light to existing roof and addition of front railings. Enlargement/alteration to rear windows (amended plans received 26/08/2025)	The Library 10 Brand Street Hitchin Hertfordshire SG5 1HX

Submitted Plan Nos

208_001 208_002 208_003 208_004 208_005 208_006 208_007 208_020B 208_020 Downtakings
208_021 208_021 Downtakings 208_022_B 208_022_A Downtakings 208_023 208_024 208_024
Downtakings 208_025A 208_026 208_027

1.0 Policies

D1	Sustainable design
D2	House exts, replcmnt dwellings outbuild
D3	Protecting living conditions
HE1	Designated heritage assets
SECN12	Achieving well-designed places
SECN16	Conserve + enhance historic environment

2.0 **Site History**

2.1 Extensive history – see file

2.2 **24/00988/PRELB** Internal and external alterations including creation of new roof top sun terrace, extending/excavating existing basement to form a new habitable space, the addition of a new light well and install two new staircases following removal of existing staircase.

2.3 **25/01119/LBC** External and internal alterations including extending/excavating existing basement, installation of two front basement glazed doors to form a new habitable space. Insertion of a mezzanine level. Repairs to roof and addition of roof light to existing roof. Alterations to windows on rear elevations. Addition of front railings (amended plans received 26/08/2025) TBD

3.0 **Representations**

3.1 **Conservation Officer – No objection - CONDITIONS RECOMMENDED ON LB APP**
- the proposal is considered to see minimal loss of historic fabric and will see some heritage gain in terms of revealing historic internal structural elements. In terms of setting and impact on the conservation area due to new openings is not considered to be negative. In summary the proposal is considered to cause less than substantial harm with many interventions being reversible if required. Therefore, as submitted it will satisfy the provisions of Sections 16(2) (LBC) and /or 66(1) (FP/FPH) and/or 72(1) (both) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the

aims of Section 16 of the NPPF and Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031.

- 3.2 **HCC Historic Environment – CONDITIONS RECOMMENDED** - The Library is Listed as being of architectural and historic significance and dates from at least 1860. This is noted by documents supplied with this planning application, a Design and Access Statement and a Heritage Impact Assessment. The latter notes that the proposed development is likely to reveal parts of the historic fabric of the building (i.e. above ground archaeology) and that below ground works such as those to the basement offer an opportunity for (i.e. below ground) archaeological investigation. I believe that the position of the proposed development is such that it should be regarded as likely to have an impact on heritage assets of archaeological interest and I recommend that the following provisions be made, should you be minded to grant consent

3.2 **Neighbours - 8 objections have been received**

Flat 21 Latchmore Court – objection (received before and after amendments) – summary below

- ☐ Development out of keeping with Listed building
- ☐ Impact of listed building
- ☐ Access and parking issues
- ☐ Ownership of parking bay

Flat 11 Latchmore Court – objection (received prior to amendments) – summary below

- ☐ Issues with limited access and parking for development to take place
- ☐ Impacts of excavation of neighbouring properties
- ☐ Impact on listed building

Flat 8 Latchmore Court – objection (received prior to amendments) – summary below

- ☐ object to light well being built directly in parking space B. This space is leased by 6 Hicce House - not 10 Brand Street.
- ☐ Impacts on listed building

Flat 6 Hicce House - objection (received prior to amendments)

- ☐ Parking space B – impact on parking – lightwell and rear access door encroachment into space
- ☐ Noise and dust during construction
- ☐ Issues with limited access and parking for development to take place

Flat 5 Latchmore Court 0 objection (received prior to amendments)

- ☐ object to light well being built directly in parking space B.
- ☐ Impacts on listed building

Flat 1 Hicce House (received prior to amendments)

- ☐ Noise and dust during construction
- ☐ Issues with limited access and parking for development to take place

Flat 10 Hicce House – objection (received before and after amendments)

- ☐ Issues with limited access and parking for development to take place
- ☐ Impact on listed building
- ☐ Noise and dust during construction

Hitchin Forum/Hitchin Historical Society – Objection (received prior to amendments)

- proposal in that it compromises the modest rear elevation with its Victorian merit and character. Whilst that may not be its most public-facing elevation, what is currently proposed alters the fabric of the building unacceptably.
- excavation adjacent to the neighbouring buildings, probably requiring underpinning, and with the potential to destroy important archaeological features
- Impacts on listed building

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

4.1.1 The Library, 10 Brand Street has the following listing description

Monumental rectangular building of stone in the Italian style, erected in mid-C19 by Bellamy. Light rustication; bands at first floor level, 2 storeys. Massive cornice, developed with simple modillions. Hipped slate roof. 5 windows x 3 windows all in projecting architraves, those on the piano nobile being much taller and embellished with hoods raised by lit blank panel above their heads. Massive central entrance porch.

4.2 **Proposal**

- 4.2.1 Planning permission is sought for the enlargement/excavation of basement, installation of two front basement glazed doors to facilitate conversion of basement into habitable accommodation. Addition of roof light to existing roof and addition of front railings. Enlargement/alteration to rear window.
- 4.2.2 The scheme was amended during the application process with the removal of new fenestration and lightwell on rear elevation. Amended plans were received 26/08/2025.

4.3 **Key Issues**

4.3.1 The key material considerations are design and impact upon the Conservation Area and listed building.

Impact on character and appearance of the conservation area.

- 4.3.2 The site falls within the Hitchin Conservation Area. Character Area 2 covers the historic town centre from Bancroft in the north to Tilehouse Street/Bridge Street in the south. It is focused on the Market Place and St Mary's Church and its churchyard and is notable for the high concentration of listed or locally listed buildings. Of interest is the survival of the medieval (or earlier) street plan and burgage plots which provides the long thin building plots and associated buildings which help to define the special character of this part of Hitchin.
- 4.3.3 Brand Street leads off High Street and represents a 19th century widening of a former alleyway. It has more mixed development than the other two streets, and has suffered from a greater degree of modern infilling or redevelopment. The western end of the street is dominated by Hitchin Town Hall, built in 1900 and grade II listed. To the north-west is the former Friends Meeting House (grade II listed and now known as Centenary House) and located almost opposite the Town Hall on the south side of Brand Street, is the former Town Hall of 1840 (now 'Ivory'), which is also grade II listed and provides a rare example in the town centre of a substantial, stuccoed building.

- 4.3.4 The corner into Paynes Park is marked by a red brick block, Latchmore Court which was part converted into flats in 2016, four storeys high and dating to the 1970s or 1980s. Beyond the current Friends Meeting House (a BLI) and to the west, is Thomas Bellamy House, an early to mid-19th century yellow brick grade II listed building marking the entrance into the conservation area from this direction
- 4.3.5 There will be impact on the character of Hitchin Conservation area as a result of the changes to the front of the building, but these are not considered to be detrimental in building of this period and its former and present use.

Impact on Listed Building

Internal alterations and opening up the ceiling.

- 4.3.6 The internal alterations and opening up the ceiling will see minimal loss of historic fabric i.e. most of the architectural decorative features such as cornices are lost. The ceiling level could be reinstated if it is found to be of historical importance. It will enable the features such as the existing trusses and their bearings to be revealed and an improved understanding of this space.

Forming a new rooflight and the repairs to the existing roof

- 4.3.7 No historic fabric of significance will be lost through the intervention required. No changes to the to roof pitch and ridge and the rooflight could be reversed if required. The proposed rooflight is consisted of a number of panes of glass which are not uncommon features in institutional buildings like this. Additionally it would be hardly visible form the public domain and neighbouring properties.

Forming new window infill to the rear elevation

- 4.3.8 The revisions to the rear elevation are especially in terms of fenestration and the omission of an access door is considered to an improvement and more in line with the classical proportions of this rear elevation and the overall style of the building.

New Basement, lightwell, low level windows and alterations to the front

- 4.3.9 This intervention will alter how the space functioned historically how is not considered to be the most significant part of the building. The front elevation will now receive a new lightwell serving the new basement and glazing to respond to the size of the original opening mirroring the east and therefore reinstating the symmetrical treatment often seen in classical buildings. Although lightwells are not a common feature in Hitchin they are not unheard of in institutional buildings and townhouses.

Design and appearance

- 4.3.10 It is considered that the proposed bi-fold doors and window are sympathetic to the existing house in height, form, proportions and materials.

Impact on neighbours

- 4.3.11 I note the concerns raised by the neighbouring properties. However, in terms of impact on neighbouring amenity, I am satisfied that there will be no additional overlooking and subsequent loss of privacy to the occupant(s) of neighbouring properties.

Parking

4.3.12 The amended development has no parking implications.

Biodiversity

4.3.13 This application is exempt from the need to deliver 10% biodiversity net gain under the Environment Act 2021 legislation

Climate Change

4.3.14 The proposed development is of a scale that will have no impact on local climate change.

4.5 **Conclusion**

4.5.1 It is considered that the proposal will not occasion harm to the listed building's special character or harm the character or appearance of the Hitchin Conservation Area. The proposal would satisfy the provisions of Sections 16(2) & 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the aims of Section 16 of the NPPF and the aims of Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031.

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. A No demolition/development shall take place/commence until an Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. The scheme shall include an assessment of archaeological significance and research questions; and:
 1. The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording
 2. The programme for post investigation assessment
 3. Provision to be made for analysis of the site investigation and recording
 4. Provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the analysis and records of the site investigation

5. Provision to be made for archive deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation

6. Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation.www.hertfordshire.gov.uk

Reason: Protect the archaeological and historic interests of the site in line with Section 16 of NPPF.

4. B The demolition/development shall take place/commence in accordance with the programme of archaeological works set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under condition (4)

Reason: Protect the archaeological and historic interests of the site in line with Section 16 of NPPF.

5. C The development shall not be occupied/used until the site investigation and post investigation assessment has been completed in accordance with the programme set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under condition (4) and the provision made for analysis and publication where appropriate.

Reason: Protect the archaeological and historic interests of the site in line with Section 16 of NPPF.

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. The Council acted proactively through positive engagement with the applicant during the determination process which led to improvements to the scheme. 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: 22 October 2025	