

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

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

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
25/02472/FP	Sub-divide existing retail unit into two separate retail units. Installation of front ramp and rear steps. Alterations to shop front and rear and front fenestration.	11A - 11B Bancroft Hitchin Hertfordshire SG5 1JQ

Submitted Plan Nos

24073 - 001 24073 - 012

1.0 Policies

D1 Sustainable design

ETC4 Primary Shopping Frontages

2.0 **Site History**

2.1 None relevant

3.0 **Representations**

3.1 NHDC Conservation officer: No objections

3.2 Site Notice / Adjoining occupiers:

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

4.1.2 Modern shop premises on west side of Bancroft (not listed) .
The shop front to the right is stepped back further than the other larger part of the shop front.
At present the larger shop front has a set of double doors set back from the shop windows, the frame is narrow aluminium and the doors are glazed with aluminium framing.
Currently the smaller shop front has full height glazing. The fascia is currently removed but consists of a concrete material.
The shop is located in a prominent location along Bancroft and is situated within the Hitchin Conservation Area.
There are various different shop front and fascia signs in the vicinity of differing colours and styles.

4.2 **Proposal**

4.2.1 Sub-divide existing retail unit into two separate retail units. Installation of front ramp and rear steps. Alterations to shop front and rear and front fenestration.

The application form states that the use of the premises will remain as retail.

4.3 Key Issues

4.3.1 Principle of the development

- 4.3.3 The site is within a Primary shopping frontage as designated in the North Herts Local Plan. Policy ECT4 applies. It states as follows:



- 4.3.3 In this case there will be no change to the retail use at the site. Retail use would fall within Class E - 'Commercial, Business and Service' – within which there is flexibility for change to various uses including residential.
- 4.3.4 In Hitchin, the Council imposed an Article 4 Direction – confirmed on 13th February 2022 – that requires land owners to apply for planning permission if they would like to convert the property into residential housing. The purpose of the new Article 4 Directions is to protect the vitality and viability of the District's town centres. The application site is one of the properties included in this Direction. The Direction does not prevent a shop unit from changing to a range of other uses within Class E apart from residential and these are as follows:

b) Food and drink which is mostly consumed on the premises c) the following kinds of services principally to visiting members of the public i. financial services ii. professional services (other than medical services) iii. any other services which it is appropriate to provide in a commercial, business or service locality d) Indoor sport and recreation (not swimming pools, ice rinks or motorised vehicles or firearms) e) Medical services not attached to the residence of the practitioner f) Non-residential creche, day centre or nursery g) i) office ii) the research and development of products or processes or iii) any industrial process, (which can be carried out in any residential area without causing detriment to the amenity of the area)

There are no grounds to restrict the use of the premises further given the authorised changes of use within Class E.

- 4.2.6 There is no objection in principle to the use.

4.2.7 Design and appearance / impact on heritage assets

4.2.8 The proposals would be sympathetic to the existing modern shopping frontage of the existing shopfront.

4.2.9 The Council's Conservation officer has assessed the alterations as having only a minor impact on the heritage assets as follows:

'The site is located on Bancroft within the Hitchin conservation area. It is within Character 2a and the buildings all sit on the back of the pavement without any front gardens or yards, creating continuous frontages. Virtually all of the buildings are either listed, locally listed, or considered to be 'positive' apart from a range of 1960s development on the southeast side of Bancroft, and the Wilkinson Store at no. 18 Bancroft. Of note are the 1920s 'Tudorbethan' shops which turn the corner into Hermitage Road, such as nos.1-5 which are locally listed. Impact on setting of heritage assets and how this affects significance – There is minimal impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area. The front elevation will alter to accommodate for the unit being split into two and as a result there will be two front entrances. However, this is considered to minimal harm given there is no loss of historic fabric and the increased glazing and additional entrance is not out of character. The rear alterations are acceptable as they are out of public views and located in a predominantly service area. Overall, the application is considered to cause less than substantial harm at the lower end of that spectrum for the reason stated above'.

4.2.10 The alterations to the rear facing the service area are relatively minor and will have no impact on the character and appearance of the area

4.2.11 Highway implications

4.2.12 The development will have no impact on highway safety including any impact on pedestrians.

4.2.13 Climate change / BNG

4.2.14 Given its small scale the development will not have any significant impact on local climate change. The development is exempt from the BNG regulations

4.4 **Conclusion**

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.

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