

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...William Thompson.....

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
25/02316/FPH	Glazed link extension between ancillary annexe and main dwelling and insertion of window to courtyard wall.	Lutyens Cottage Hitchwood Lane Preston Hitchin Hertfordshire SG4 7RY

Submitted Plan Nos

02-363-01 02-363-02 02-363-03 02-363-04 02-363-05 02-363-06

D1	Sustainable design
D2	House exts, replcmnt dwellings outbuild
D3	Protecting living conditions
T2	Parking
HE1	Designated heritage assets
SECN12	Achieving well-designed places
SECN14	Meeting climate change,coastal,flooding
SECN16	Conserve + enhance historic environment

2.0 **Site History**

2.1 25/02318/LBC - Glazed link extension between ancillary annexe and main dwelling and insertion of window to courtyard wall.

Pending Consideration

2.2 19/00553/LBC - Internal and external alterations to facilitate the conversion of two cottages to single dwelling. Internal and external alterations and single storey extension to outbuilding.

Conditional Consent

- 2.3 17/04070/FP - Single storey extension to outbuilding and conversion to ancillary residential accommodation in association with the conversion of the two cottages into one dwelling. Amended site access (as amended by drawings received 23/05/2018).

Conditional Permission

- 2.4 17/04071/LBC - Internal and external alterations to facilitate the conversion of two cottages to single dwelling. Internal and external alterations and single storey extension to outbuilding (as amended by drawings received 25/05/2018).

Conditional Consent

- 2.5 91/01328/1 - Alterations to facilitate use of existing outhouse to single garage.

Conditional Permission

- 2.6 91/01262/1LB - Internal and external alterations to convert pair of semi-detached cottages into single dwelling. Alterations to outhouse to form single garage. (As amended by plans received 18th December 1991).

Conditional Consent

3.0 **Representations**

- 3.1 **Neighbour consultations** – None received.
- 3.2 **The Lutyens Trust** – No objection.
- 3.3 **Conservation Officer** – Objection.
- 3.4 **North Herts Council Ecologist** – No objection
- 3.5 **Preston Parish Council** – None received.

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

- 4.1.1 The application site accommodates a chalet-style detached bungalow, associated outhouse and link wall, designed by E.L. Lutyens for H.G. Fenwick. The dwelling and outhouse are constructed of red brick with red roof tiles.
- 4.1.2 The dwelling is Grade II listed. Originally, the site accommodated two semi-detached estate cottages, which were later converted to a single dwelling, and the outbuilding extended and converted to ancillary accommodation (ref. 17/04070/FP & 17/04071/LBC, later amended by 19/00554/NMA and 19/00553/LBC).

4.2 **Proposal**

- 4.2.1 Glazed link extension between ancillary annexe and main dwelling and insertion of window to courtyard wall.

4.3 **Key Issues**

- 4.3.1 The key issues for consideration are as follows:

- The impact of the proposed development on the designated heritage asset(s);
- The acceptability of the design of the proposed development and its impact on the character and appearance of the area;
- The impact of the proposed development on the living conditions of neighbouring properties;
- Access and parking matters;
- The impact of the proposed development on the environment.

Heritage Impact

- 4.3.2 Policy HE1 states that proposals affecting heritage assets should preserve the significance of the asset and its setting, as is supported by Policy SP1 of the Local Plan and Section 16 of the NPPF. Policy HE1 is commensurate with the LPA's statutory duty to preserve and enhance the character of Listed Buildings, as outlined by section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

- 4.3.3 Lutyens Cottages (referred to as Nos 1 and 2 Hitchwood Cottages by HE) is a Grade II Listed building. The Historic England List Entry (1176749) for the site is as follows:

2 estate houses, semi-detached and joint outhouse block. 1913 by E.L. Lutyens for H.G. Fenwick. Narrow red brick, lighter red jambs to windows and angles of building. Steep red tile roof. Tilehanging to gables at ends and on S side. A single-storey and attics block running E-W with large central chimney with recessed panels and waisted top. Central shared gable in middle of S side. Central recess in middle of N side allowing 1st floor window to each. Entrance on N under low eaves by a moulded plank door in heavy frame. Flush wooden casement windows with small panes and heavy glazing bars. Single-storey outhouse has door and window on S for each house. Central wall links it to houses. Tiled corbells continuous under bellcast eaves. No. 1 is on E. Associated with Home Farm to N, now Ladygrove Stud. (Lutyens Exhib Cat (1981)194).

- 4.3.4 Being a Lutyens-designed scheme, the significance of the designated heritage asset partially lies in the architectural style of the dwelling and its domestic character. In relation to the courtyard, outbuilding and connecting wall, which are curtilage listed, the significance of these elements lies within their contribution to the domestic character of the site and their relationship with the dwelling.

4.3.5 The Conservation Officer's initial recommendation reads as follows:

I raise an OBJECTION for the following reason:

Lutyens Cottage (grade II and described as nos.1 and 2 Hitchwood Cottages and outhouses linked to north) is a Lutyens-designed scheme associated with Home Farm to the north, now Ladygrove Stud. The outhouses are linked to the dwelling by a courtyard wall but is read as a detached built form. By reason of the gable form, amount of glazing and location on the western courtyard, the conservatory would be an incongruous addition interrupting the visual and physical relationship between host building and outhouses impairing their established relationship. Furthermore, the pair of 6-pane casement windows in the courtyard wall is not convincingly justified and would serve to accentuate the enclosure/conversion of the western courtyard. The conservatory and window will occasion a moderate level of less than substantial harm which is not offset by any public benefits and would not deliver an optimum viable use as this already exists. The proposal will fail to satisfy the provisions of Sections 16(2) (LBC only) and 66(1) (FPH only) 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.

4.3.6 Based upon the points raised above, the Conservation Officer has suggested an amended scheme:

If I were minded to consider supporting a link of some description I would probably be seeking a flat roof form (lead or zinc) so as not to interfere with the existing gable forms. I would also suggest that this narrow link has door access onto what would then be an enclosed courtyard space. In which case, there would appear to be no reason to introduce the 'window in the wall'. Even here, however, there may be problems regarding connection to both buildings at eaves level.

4.3.7 The Lutyens Trust have not raised an objection to the proposal. Their comments are as follows:

We are satisfied that, subject to appropriate details and execution, the scheme would not compromise the special historic character and interest of the buildings. The proposal brings the outbuilding into full beneficial use whilst retaining the legibility of the original form.

On that basis the Lutyens Trust raises no objection to the scheme.

We suggest that any listed building consent should include conditions controlling (inter alia):

**materials*

**details of any alteration or rebuilding of brickwork including materials, bond and mortar joint profile (possibly requiring a mortar sample)*

There is one minor discrepancy on the drawings. The plan appears to show an opening in the east brick wall of the conservatory, probably intended as a window. However, no opening is shown on the east elevation.

We would have no objection, whether with or without a window. Subject to careful detailing, a narrow off-centre window might afford useful supervision of the front door and be entirely consistent with Lutyens's delight in architectural jokes. However this is entirely a matter for client and council preference.

- 4.3.8 In response to the comments submitted by the Conservation Officer and the Lutyens Trust, the applicant stated that they would not compromise on a narrower, flat roof link extension. However, the applicant addressed the window opening discrepancy in the drawing, and stated that they would be willing to remove the window to the historic wall. The Conservation Officer has responded to the applicant's rebuttal, stating that they would still not support a larger link extension, as originally submitted, but support the removal of the window from the wall.
- 4.3.9 The conflict between the comments made by the Conservation Officer and the Lutyens Trust is noted. The Lutyens Trust have commented largely upon the aesthetical aspect of the proposal, suggesting that (subject to materials/finish) the glazed conservatory link, and window to the existing historic wall, would not cause unacceptable harm to the architectural significance of the asset. However, the Conservation Officer has suggested that the design of the extension would be incongruous to that of the existing built form and has raised concerns regarding the impact of the proposal upon other aspects of the asset's significance. The Conservation Officer concludes that the proposal would therefore constitute 'less than substantial harm' to the designated heritage asset.
- 4.3.10 The conservatory link would have a dual-pitched roof and would be finished with toughened glass. I am in agreement with the Conservation Officer that the gable design and scale of the conservatory would appear incongruous with the existing built form. In accordance with the suggested amendments, a reduced scale, flat roof form would appear more subservient to the host dwelling, as to not detract from the distinct architectural style of the Lutyens Cottage. As outlined by the Conservation Officer, the proposed glazing could be acceptable, providing that the scale of the extension was reduced and the roof form amended.
- 4.3.11 As outlined above, the significance of the dwelling partially lies in its domestic character, owing to its historic function as estate housing. Part of the domestic character of the dwelling can be attributed to the rear courtyard space and associated outbuilding. Furthermore, the significance of the outbuilding is based in its relationship with the dwelling in its domestic setting. The proposed glazed conservatory, to link the dwelling with the outbuilding, would infill the existing courtyard space, spanning from the historic wall to near match the west-most projection of the outbuilding. Due to the large footprint in relation to the size of the courtyard, I am in agreement with the Conservation Officer that the conservatory would diminish the historic relationship between host dwelling and outbuilding. Combined with the design incongruity, the cumulative impact of the proposal would cause less than substantial harm to the designated heritage asset.
- 4.3.12 Paragraph 215 of the NPPF states that 'where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use'.

- 4.3.13 The proposal would only have benefit to the occupiers of the dwelling. Therefore, there is no demonstrable public benefit as a result of the proposal. Given that the dwelling, courtyard and outbuilding are already being occupied in a domestic capacity, the proposal would not secure the asset's 'optimum viable use'. As such, it is agreed that the proposal would cause less than substantial harm to the designated heritage asset.
- 4.3.14 Thus, with regard to impact on heritage assets, the proposed development is contrary to the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Policy HE1 of the Local Plan, and Section 16 of the NPPF.

Design

- 4.3.15 Policy D1 of the Local Plan requires that development proposals respond positively to the site's local context. Policy D2 of the Local Plan requires extensions to houses to incorporate design that is sympathetic to the main dwelling in terms of its scale, form and orientation, and does not harm the character and appearance of the locality around the site. These policies are broadly consistent with Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 4.3.16 The proposed glazed link would encompass the width of the courtyard to join the main dwelling to the outbuilding, would have a depth to near match that of the outbuilding and would have a dual pitched, gable end roof form sitting slightly lower than that of the outbuilding. While the dwelling is positioned perpendicular to the highway, the proposed rear extension would be obscured from public realm views by existing vegetation along the highway. Therefore, the proposal would have a minimal impact upon the visual amenity of the wider locality.
- 4.3.17 As discussed at length in the 'Heritage Impact' section, the proposal would not be sympathetic to the host dwelling in scale, form and siting, and would therefore be incongruous with the design of its immediate context.
- 4.3.18 Thus, the proposal is considered to be contrary to paragraph 135 of Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Policies D1 and D2 of the Local Plan.

Impact on Neighbours

- 4.3.19 A core planning principle set out in the NPPF is to always seek to secure a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings. This principle is reflected in the provisions of Policy D3 of the NHLP.
- 4.3.20 The site is significantly distanced from neighbouring dwellings. Therefore, in terms of overdominance, shading or overlooking, the proposal would not harm the amenity of neighbouring residences.

4.3.21 Thus, the development is considered to be in accordance with Policy D3 of the NHLP and Section 12 of the NPPF in relation to amenity.

Highways and Parking:

4.3.22 The proposal would not increase the number of bedrooms. Therefore, with regard to Policy T2 of the NHLP, there would be no car parking issues arising from the development.

Environmental Implications

4.3.23 The proposed development would be consistent with the criteria set out in Policy D1 of the NHLP '*Sustainable Design*' with regard to sustainability. There are no other significant environmental implications as a result of the proposed development.

Biodiversity Net Gain:

4.3.24 This is a form of development which is exempt from BNG Legislation, defined under article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 due it falling under the scope of the 'de minimis' exemption.

4.4 **Conclusion**

4.4.1 In the absence of material planning reasons to the contrary it is my view that planning permission is **REFUSED**.

4.5 **Alternative Options**

4.5.1 None.

4.6 **Pre-Commencement Conditions**

4.6.1 None.

5.0 **Recommendation**

5.1 That planning permission be **REFUSED** for the following reason(s):

1. The proposal, by reason of being an incongruous addition interrupting the visual and physical relationship between host building and outhouses and impairing their established relationship, would fail to preserve or enhance the significance and setting of this heritage asset. No public benefits are identified to outweigh this harm nor would it deliver an optimum viable use. The development runs contrary to the provisions of Policy HE1 of the Local Plan 2011-2031 and Section 16 of the NPPF. The development is considered to be contrary with Sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) act 1990.
2. The proposal would not be sympathetic to the host dwelling in scale, form and siting, and would therefore be incongruous with the design of its immediate context. The proposal is considered to be contrary to paragraph 135 of Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Policies D1 and D2 of the Local Plan.

Proactive Statement:

Planning permission has been refused for this proposal for the clear reasons set out in this decision notice. The Council acted proactively through positive engagement with the applicant in an attempt to narrow down the reasons for refusal but fundamental objections could not be overcome. 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: 22 December 2025	