

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...Thomas Howe.....

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
26/00757/FP	Insertion of bifold doors to replace existing windows. Erection of bin storage and outdoor storage.	Hitchin Tennis Club Bancroft Hitchin Hertfordshire SG5 1NJ

Submitted Plan Nos

Location Plan H1972-A01 H1973 A02 H1972-A03 H1972 A04

D1	Sustainable design
D3	Protecting living conditions
HE1	Designated heritage assets
T2	Parking
SECN12	Achieving well-designed places
SECN14	Meeting climate change,coastal,flooding

2.0 **Site History**

2.1 23/01052/FP - Upgrade of tennis court lighting system to LED, including new columns – Conditional Permission

3.0 **Representations**

3.1 **Neighbour Consultation** – None Received.

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

4.1.1 The application site comprises Hitchin Tennis Club. The site layout is split, with tennis courts to the southern parcel, with the main clubhouse set centrally and to the east. As existing the building is accessed through a locked gate, with fencing around the site. Bancroft Recreation Ground borders the site to the north with footpaths to the east and north. Residential dwellings on Whinbush Road are to the east, and Hazelwood Close are to the south.

4.2 **Proposal**

- 4.2.1 Insertion of bifold doors to replace existing windows. Erection of bin storage and outdoor storage.

4.3 **Key Issues**

- 4.3.1 The key issues for consideration are as follows:

- The principle of the development.
- The acceptability of the design of the proposed development and its resultant impact on the character and appearance of the area.
- The standard of amenity afforded to future occupiers.
- The impact that the proposed development would have on the living conditions of neighbouring properties.
- The impact that the proposed development would have on car parking provision in the area.
- The impact that the proposed development would have on the environment.

Principle of Development:

- 4.3.2 The site is within the settlement boundary of Hitchin. Policy SP2 advises that 'general development' will be permitted where they are sited within the defined settlement boundary of Hitchin. Given that the site is within the settlement boundary, the proposed development would comply with Policy SP2.

Design and Appearance:

- 4.3.4 Policy D1 of the Local Plan states that development will be granted provided the design of the development appropriately and positively responds to the site's local context together with other criteria to encourage a positive and sustainable form of development. This policy is broadly consistent with Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework. Policy HE1 emphasises how permission will be refused where proposals would cause substantial harm or a loss of significance to a Heritage Asset, in this case, the Conservation Area, and permission should be refused unless it can be demonstrated that the proposal is necessary to deliver considerable public benefits to outweigh this harm or loss. Policy SP13 emphasises how great weight will be given to the potential harms to the significance of heritage assets, seeking their conservation and management of their setting. This policy is broadly consistent with Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework. Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) act 1990 emphasises that development should seek to the preservation or enhancement of the Conservation Area.
- 4.3.5 The proposed replacement bi-fold doors would be to the elevation facing the tennis courts. As existing, this elevation features a single doorway with casement windows. The introduction of the doors is not considered to harm the appearance of the building, or adversely impact upon local character. Its appearance would be complementary and suitably sympathetic to the appearance of the building in terms of its form, layout, location and scale. The proposed bin store, and outdoor stores, by virtue of their modest scale, and their locations within the site, are considered to be suitably sympathetic to the existing site and would not be harmful to local vernacular. Public views would be gained owing to the presence of footpaths around the site, and the visual permeability of the fencing. It is not considered that the street scene would be harmed by these additions

and alterations adversely owing to their modest scale and sympathetic and acceptable appearance.

- 4.3.6 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in compliance with Policies D1 and D2 of the Local Plan and the core principles set out within Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The potential impacts to the surrounding Conservation Area are considered to be acceptable, and the significance of this heritage asset will not be unacceptably harmed. Policies HE1 and SP13 of the Local Plan 2011-2031 and Section 16 of the NPPF are considered to be complied with. The development is considered to comply with Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) act 1990. The design and appearance are therefore acceptable.

Impact on Neighbouring Properties:

- 4.3.7 Policy D3 of the Local Plan permits development that does not result in unacceptable harm to the amenity of neighbouring occupiers and where necessary encourages the use of mitigation measures to reduce these impacts. This is generally reflected by the provisions within the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 4.3.8 The proposed bifold doors would not enlarge the bulk of the building, but would enlarge the openings. It is considered that unacceptable dominance or losses of light would not arise. Outlook, at ground floor level from these openings is not considered to be unacceptable. The bi-folds are not considered to give rise to unacceptable noise impacts from the club, owing to the existing openings within this elevation and the development not permitting changes to the nature of its operation or hours of opening and use. The built bulk of the proposed stores is not considered to harm neighbouring occupiers by reason of their modest scale, and their locations adjacent to the host building.
- 4.3.9 Given the above, it is considered that the proposed development would result in no unacceptable detrimental impact upon neighbouring occupiers and is therefore compliant with Policy D3 of the local plan and the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Environmental Implications:

- 4.3.10 The proposed development, by virtue of its limited scale in general terms together with the sustainable location would have no significant implications for the local environment in terms of carbon emissions and therefore would be generally in compliance with Section 14 of the NPPF. The development would fall within the 'de minimis' exemption for nationally required Biodiversity Net Gain as it would impact upon <25sqm of on site habitat. I do not consider it is necessary to require enhancements to BNG as per Policy NE4 of the Local Plan 2011-2031 given the modest scale and location of the development.

Impact on Highway Network and Parking Levels:

- 4.3.11 I do not consider that the development is likely to result in harm to local parking levels and would be unlikely to impact upon the safe operation of the highway locally. The development would therefore comply with Policies T1 and T2 of the Local Plan 2011-2031.

4.4 **Conclusion**

- 4.4.1 The proposed development is considered acceptable and is considered to comply with the necessary provisions of the Local Plan policies and the National Planning Policy Framework. Grant conditional permission.

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.

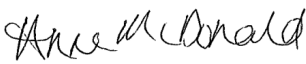
Reason: To ensure the development is carried out in accordance with details which form the basis of this grant of permission.

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	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Determining Officer Date: 16 June 2026	