

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

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

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
26/00109/FP	Erection of one self-build detached dwelling following demolition of the existing semi-detached dwelling including amenity space, landscaping, parking and widening of existing vehicular access/driveway.	11 Kingswood Avenue Hitchin Hertfordshire SG4 0PA
<u>Submitted Plan Nos</u>		
HD235506 D01 HD235506 D02 HD235506 D03 HD235506 D04 HD235506 D05 HD235506 D06 HD235506 D07 HD235506 D8 HD235506 D09		

1.0 **Policies**

D1	Sustainable design
D2	House exts, replcmnt dwellings outbuild

D3	Protecting living conditions
T2	Parking
SP1	Sustainable development in North Herts
SP2	Settlement Hierarchy and Spatial Distrib
SP9	Design and Sustainability
SP11	Natural resources and sustainability
NE4	Biodiversity and geological sites
NE8	Sustainable drainage systems
T2	Parking
SECN12	Achieving well-designed places
SECN14	Meeting climate change,coastal,flooding
SECN15	Conserve + enhance natural environment

2.1 25/02584/LDCP - Detached single storey outbuilding within rear garden.

Granted

3.0 **Representations**

3.1 **Neighbour Consultation:** 1 neutral – 12 Kingswood Avenue, 1 objection – 26 Kingswood Avenue.

- ☐ Concerns about damage to trees on public land.
- ☐ Concerns that the proposal would unduly harm the character and appearance of the uniform streetscene; therefore, would not respond positively to the site's local context.

3.2 **Environmental Health (Combined):** No objection subject to condition.

3.3 **Highways Authority:** No objection (to amended scheme) subject to conditions.

3.4 **Waste and Recycling:** No objection.

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

4.1.1 The application site accommodates a two-storey, semi-detached dwelling with an off-white render finish, brown roof tiles, and white uPVC windows and doors. The design and construction of the dwelling is typical of Kingswood Avenue, which is characterised by consistent rows of two-storey semi-detached dwellings with hipped roofs. Kingswood Avenue faces open countryside to the east.

4.2 **Proposal**

4.2.1 Erection of one self-build detached dwelling following demolition of the existing semi-detached dwelling including amenity space, landscaping, parking and widening of existing vehicular access/driveway.

4.3 Key Issues

4.3.1 The key issues for consideration are as follows:

- 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.

Principle

4.3.2 The proposal is a replacement dwelling within the settlement boundary of Hitchin, where development is supported in principle. Policy SP2 permits general development within the settlement boundary of Hitchin. Therefore, the principle of development is supported by this policy.

Design and Appearance

4.3.3 Policies SP9, D1 and D2 of the NHDC Local Plan requires that development proposals respond positively to the site's local context. These policies are broadly consistent with Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

4.3.4 Policy D2 of the Local Plan specifies the design requirements for replacement dwellings. Policy D2 states that replacement dwellings will be supported where:

(c) The proposal does not harm the character and appearance of the site;

(d) The location of the proposal does not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the streetscene or area.

4.3.5 An established design character of semi-detached dwellings with hipped roof forms is present along Kingswood Avenue. Dwellings are set back from the highway which has created a strong building line along the street.

4.3.6 The proposal would detach from neighbouring property, no.12 Kingswood Avenue, to create a detached replacement dwelling. The proposed increase in floor area would move the dwelling towards the northern boundary and diminish the established gap between the site and no.10 Kingswood Avenue. This approach would not be consistent with the design character of the street, where semi-detached dwellings are separated by uniform gaps. The proposal would see the replacement dwelling have a significantly increased footprint and built form by near doubling the width and depth of the existing dwelling.

4.3.7 While the design has been altered from the pre-application stage whereby it no longer incorporates a front gable projection and the proposal makes indication of 'making good' the adjoining dwelling, given the strong prevailing character of Kingswood Avenue, I conclude that the proposal would constitute an incongruous form of development that would erode the consistent and planned grain of development along Kingswood Avenue. This would cause unacceptable harm to the established uniform character of the streetscene. Thus, the proposal is considered to be contrary to Policies SP9, D1 and D2 of the NHLP.

Impact on Neighbour Amenity

4.3.8 Policy D3 of the Local Plan states that planning applications will only be granted where the proposal would not cause unacceptable harm to living conditions.

4.3.9 The replacement dwelling would remain sufficiently set away no.10 Kingswood Avenue and it is not considered that the proposal would cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of no.10, as to be objectionable, in terms of over-dominance, shading or loss of privacy.

4.3.10 Presently, the rear elevation of the existing dwelling (at two-storey level) is flush with the rear elevation of no.12 Kingswood Avenue (at two-storey level). Following the detachment of the dwellings, the scheme proposes to extend the southern two-storey element of the rear elevation beyond this line by 2.5m with a single storey element projecting a further 3m. The northern section would project at two-storey level by a further 5.5m. There is existing rear built form to no.12 and the proposal shows no upper-floor windows to the two-storey rear projection. The proposed elevation plans show a separation distance of approximately 1m from the north elevation of no.12. To the south elevation of the replacement dwelling, 1no. window at first floor level, and 2no. at ground floor level, are proposed. The proposed first-floor window would be obscure glazed and non-opening up to 1.7m from floor level. The submitted plans do not indicate any side elevation windows to no.12, so the relationship cannot be fully assessed; however, given the above, it is considered that the proposal would not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of no.12, as to be objectionable, in terms of over-dominance, shading or loss of privacy.

4.3.11 It is considered that the proposal would meet the requirements of Policy D3 or National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 135, which seeks amongst other things to ensure that developments add to local character and are sympathetic to the surrounding built environment.

Standard of Amenity for Future Occupiers.

4.3.12 The proposed development would deliver sufficient internal floorspace per the nationally described space standards for a dwelling of this size. Sufficient built in storage is shown on the floor plans. The dwelling would benefit from amenity space and is not considered to be harmed by the presence of neighbouring dwellings. Therefore, the standard of amenity for future occupiers is considered to be acceptable.

Highways, Access and Parking

4.3.13 The proposal includes an increase in the number of bedrooms from 3no. to 4no. However, the proposed site plan shows sufficient parking provision of minimum 2no. parking spaces to the front of the dwelling. The replacement dwelling would use the existing dropped kerb. Therefore, with regard to Policy T2 of the NHLP, there would be no car parking issues arising from the development.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

4.3.14 Policy NE4 outlines that development should incorporate appropriate mitigation measures and biodiversity net gains.

4.3.15 The proposed dwelling would be self-build and is exempt from needing to provide the mandatory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain, which would normally be required by a standard BNG condition. Local Plan Policy NE4 can still require new developments to provide a BNG, which is considered could be achieved given the proposal would only affect hardstanding and a small proportion of lawn. The proposal would likely comply with Policy NE4 of the Local Plan.

Other Matters

4.3.16 Policy SP11 outlines the District's commitment to climate adaptation, with Policy D1 (b)(iii) specifying that development proposals should 'reduce energy consumption and waste'. The agent has stated that the proposed replacement dwelling is being designed with a view to achieving a significantly improved EPC (target A/B), delivering better energy efficiency and lower operational carbon, which is broadly commensurate with the requirements of the NHLP.

4.3.17 Sustainable drainage is indicated on the submitted plans, but specific details have not been provided.

4.4 Planning Balance and Conclusion

4.4.1 Whilst the Council cannot demonstrate a 5-year supply of housing and therefore the tiled balance under paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework is engaged, the proposal would not result in a net increase in the number of dwellings and therefore little weight is given to the delivery of the proposed dwelling house. The proposed development would result in harm to the character and appearance of the area and significant weight is attached to this harm. The proposal would conflict with Local Plan Policies D1 and D2 and NPPF paragraph 135. It is therefore considered that the benefits of delivering this replacement dwelling would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the identified harm and therefore it is my view that planning permission is **REFUSED**.

4.5 Alternative Options

4.5.1 N/A

4.6 Pre-Commencement Conditions

4.6.1 N/A

5.0 **Recommendation**

5.1 That planning permission be **REFUSED** for the following reasons:

1. The proposed development, by reason of its size, scale, design, siting and appearance, would be excessive and out of character with the site and locality, resulting in harm to their character and appearance. The proposal does not comply with Policies D1 and D2 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 -2031 and also paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

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 early engagement with the applicant at the pre-application stage. This positive advice has however been ignored and therefore the Council remains of the view that the proposal is unacceptable. Since the Council attempted to find solutions, the requirements of the Framework (paragraph 38) have been met 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: 25 March 2026	