



**STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT
ON BEHALF OF
BELLBOROUGH LTD**

**SITE AT:
9-10 HIGH STREET HITCHIN
SG5 1BH**

Date: 25 June 2024
Job No:151

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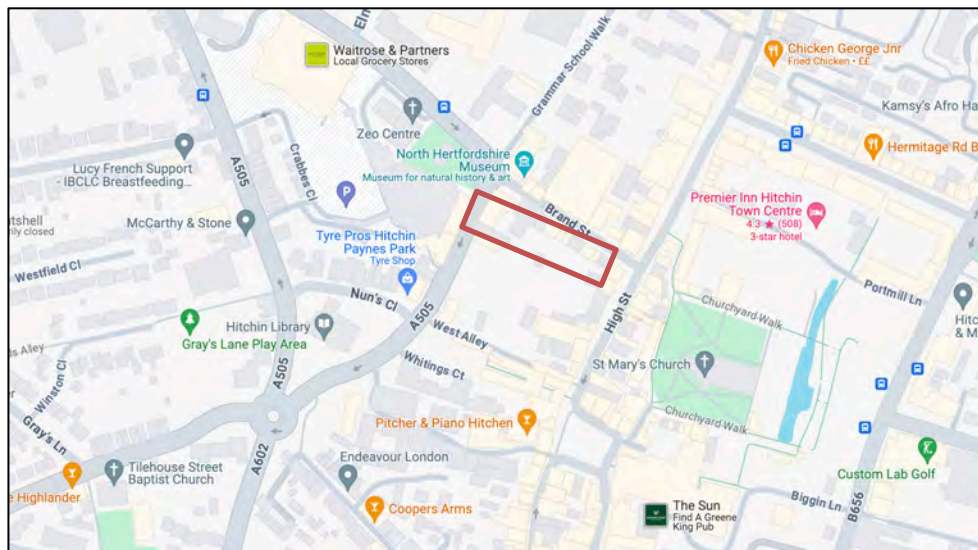
1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This Statement of Community Involvement (*hereafter referred to as 'SCI'*) describes the pre-application consultation, public consultation and response process undertaken by the applicant Bellborough Limited, in relation to the proposed demolition and redevelopment of 9-10 High Street, Hitchin. This document sets out the commitment the applicant has to both fulfilling the legal requirements, and the commitment to work closely with the local community, which will be enhanced as a direct result of this development.
- 1.2 The description of development for the application is as follows:
- "Demolition and redevelopment to provide 44 residential apartments, including 325 sqms of Class E floorspace at ground floor fronting the High Street, landscaping, amenity and associated parking"*
- 1.3 The application site is located on the west side of Hitchin High Street at 9-10 High Street, within the planning jurisdiction of North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC). A site location plan illustrating the site is attached at **Appendix 1**.
- 1.4 Section 2 summarises the approach to the public consultation. Section 3 reviews and analyses the feedback received from the public consultation held at the development site. Section 4 summarises the feedback received from the pre-application consultation held with NHDC. Section 5 examines the design and technical team's response to the public consultation and pre-application consultation feedback. This addresses how the application proposals have been amended to address a number of comments from the consultations and why certain feedback comments were not possible to address or incorporate.
- 1.5 The consultation undertaken for 9-10 High Street; Hitchin has included the following:
- Consultation with North Hertfordshire District Council for pre-application advice
 - Local community engagement at a public consultation exhibition
 - Published information on the emerging scheme online, including the public consultation invite letter and feedback form on PowerHaus Consultancy's website
- 1.6 At the time of the public consultation, the description of development was as follows:
- "The existing site comprises two shops with storage and offices above and a dis-used structurally unsound car park to the rear, formerly accessed from Paynes Park. The emerging scheme for the property is to demolish the existing building and reconstruct a better designed building, retaining retail fronting on the High Street, which could accommodate one or two retailers and approximately 46 one and two bed residential units"*
- 1.7 After feedback from the public and pre-application consultations, the scheme has been appropriately modified in line with the responses received, as outlined in Section 5.

2. PUBLIC CONSULTATION

- 2.1 A public consultation exhibition was held on the 10th April 2024, at which the proposed plans for the redevelopment of 9-10 High Street Hitchin, were shown to the public for their feedback. The consultation was held between 1-8pm in the shop of 10 High Street Hitchin, part of the proposed site for redevelopment. The location of the consultation was chosen as it is easily accessible on a main shopping street in Hitchin, it is owned by the applicant and is the designated site for the plans, so attendees could visualise the proposals. By holding the event between 1-8pm it allowed for the maximum range of people to attend, providing both early and evening hours to fit around differing schedules. The consultation was held on behalf of Bellborough Limited (the applicant) and was attended by members of the client team and professional personnel who discussed plans and answered queries.
- 2.2 Attendance was monitored using an attendance register where attendees could also provide their details if they wished to be contacted about updates on the proposed development plans in the future. All attendees were given the opportunity to submit written feedback using a feedback form that was provided at the consultation, and also could be completed online.

Figure 1: Site Location and Public Exhibition



Invitation to Local Stakeholders

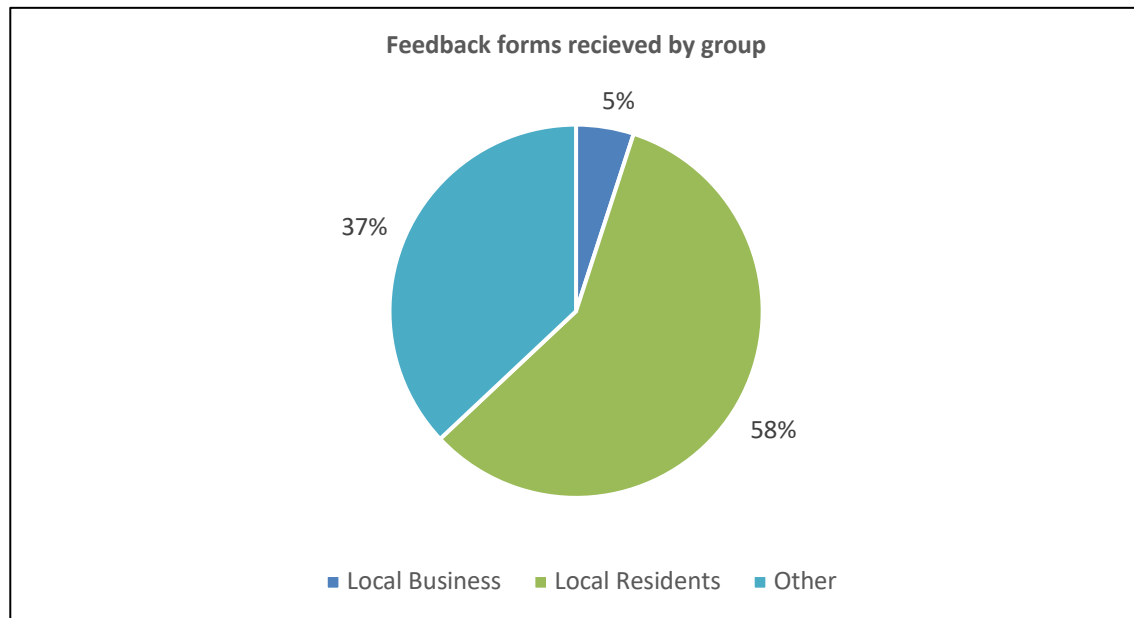
- 2.3 Bellborough Limited gave advanced notice of the public consultation by written invitation to 659 addresses situated near the proposed development site to inform local stakeholders of the public consultation and proposed developments. A copy of the invite letter is included at **Appendix 2**. The invitations were distributed by LBox on the 2nd April 2024 within a local distribution area outlined on a map, providing residents and businesses with a summary of the proposed plans and an opportunity to further discuss the proposals at the public consultation.
- 2.4 Additionally, the invitation letter was uploaded on PowerHaus Consultancy's website from the date of the public consultation (10th April 2024) and for 2 weeks after so that local stakeholders who were unable to attend the public consultation could share their feedback online if they so wished.
- 2.5 Invitations were also sent to the Ward Councillors for Hitchin. Councillors Bhakar, Collins and Hoskins received an email on 3rd April 2024 informing them of the public consultation and the fact local residents and businesses had been invited. The Councillors were also invited to the public consultation, with a letter of invitation attached to the email.

3. FEEDBACK FROM PUBLIC CONSULTATION – APRIL 2024

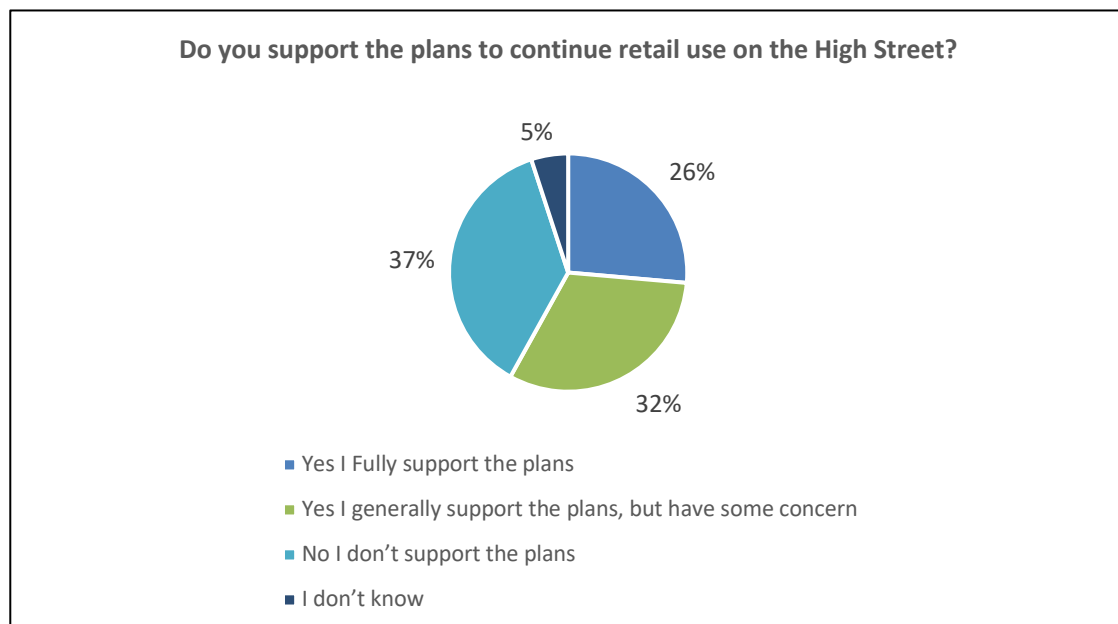
- 3.1 86 people attended the public consultation on the 10th April 2024. 19 feedback forms were received both on the day, by email and by post with the responses analysed below.

Analysis of Public Consultation Responses

- 3.2 The majority of feedback responses were received by local residents (58%), with 5% being received by local businesses, and 37% being identified as other interested parties, including 2 District Councillors for the area.

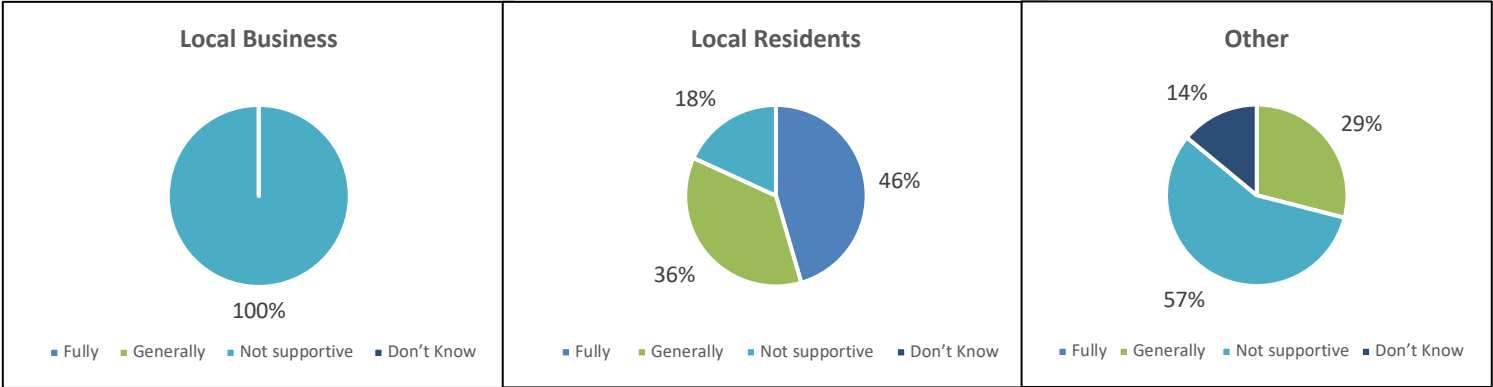


- 3.3 Most feedback responses were in support of the proposals (58%) although 32% of these had some concerns about the proposals, but still supported them overall, with the other 26% fully supporting the plans. 37% did not support the plans.

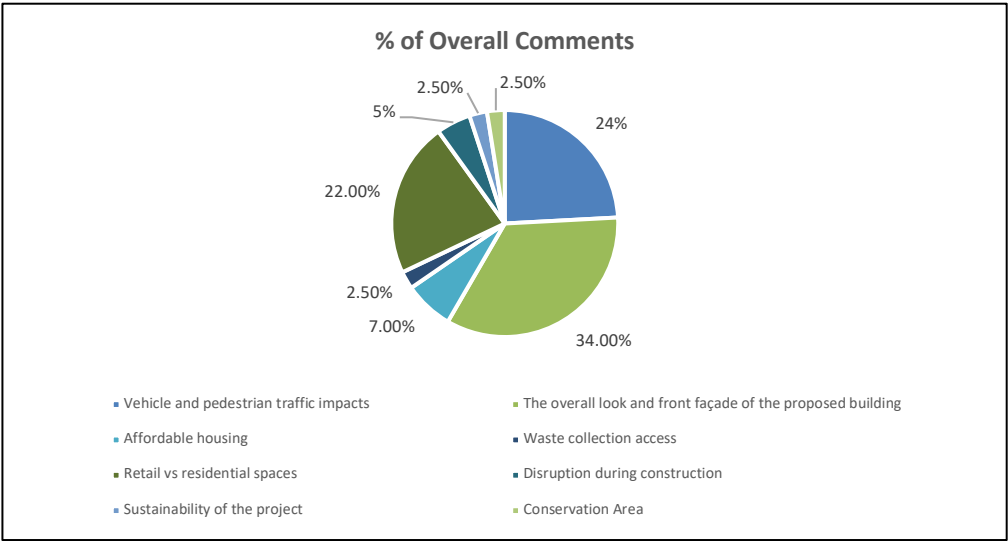


- 3.4 Only one respondent who identified as a local business gave feedback on the proposals, showing that 100% of local businesses do not support the proposals. This is due to concerns about disruption caused by construction and access issues once the construction is finished. However, 17% of feedback came from respondents that identified as both a local business and local

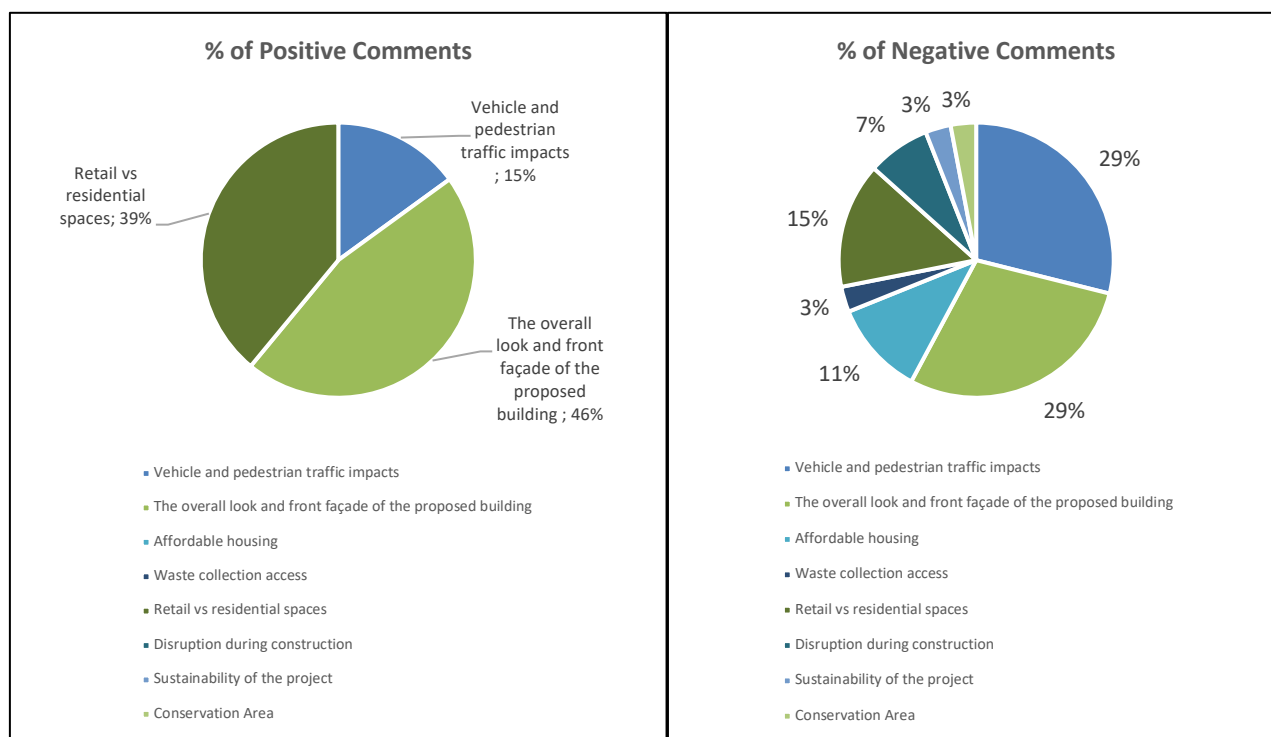
resident, putting them in the ‘other’ category. Local residents were the only group to have a majority supporting the proposals (82%). No other interested parties nor local businesses fully supported the proposals, however 29% in the ‘other’ category generally support them but have some concerns.



3.5 The majority of comments received were concerned about the overall look of the proposed building, particularly the front façade facing the High Street (34%), the impact of the proposal on both vehicle and pedestrian traffic (24%), and the replacement of the existing retail space with a blend of both retail and residential (22%).



- 3.6 Positive reactions were given to the look of the proposal (46%), traffic impacts (15%) and the mix of residential and retail space (39%).
- 3.7 Negative reactions were less focused, and surrounded eight topics. The majority of negative comments received were about traffic impacts (29%) and the look of the proposal (29%), particularly the façade facing the High Street. Affordable housing concerns (11%), and the mix of residential and retail (15%) were also issues that received significant negative feedback.
- 3.8 Traffic impacts, the look of the proposal and the mix of residential and retail space were the three most commented on issues, both positively and negatively.



Summary of Public Consultation Feedback

- 3.9 The positive and negative feedback comments received have been summarised topographically in tables below:

Table 1: Summary of Positive Public Consultation Feedback

Vehicle and Pedestrian Traffic Impacts
Proposed pedestrian access to the flats from the High Street will be a good addition
Pathways connecting Paynes Park, and the High Street supported
The overall look and front façade of the proposed building
Good planned use of brickwork rather than cladding
Open landscaped space used to separate the blocks of housing utilises outdoor space
General support for the design of the buildings, particularly the layout
Thought that the plans fully utilised the space with pedestrian paths, retail space and residential buildings
Architectural design fits well with the existing buildings on the High Street
Affordable Housing
Councillors verbally expressed that North Herts Council has a significant affordable housing requirement and that the Council will require its affordable housing policies to be addressed by the application.
Waste Collection Access
N/A

Retail vs Residential Floorspace
Having residential uses by the High Street will make better use of the land than the disused carpark
Positive use of a vacant lot on the High Street
Good that the plans are adding housing to the centre of Hitchin, may drive much-needed competition for retail space on the High Street
Positive response to the retention of retail space on the ground floor part of the High Street

Table 2: Summary of Negative Public Consultation Feedback

Vehicle and Pedestrian Traffic Impacts
Concerns over the impact of the proposed parking access on the existing pedestrian crossing on Paynes Park
Concerns about the traffic impact on Paynes Park because of required access to the proposed underground car park
Congested area might have to deal with more traffic because of residential buildings increasing the population
Concerns that the residents of the proposed residential buildings will not have anywhere to receive personal deliveries
The number of parking spaces is less than the number of apartments
Lack of existing infrastructure to support the increase in traffic due to influx of residents
Major general concerns about traffic impacts on an already congested route, especially at busy times
The overall look and front façade of the proposed building
Concerns about the details and proportion of the High Street façade in regard to the glazing on the elevation and how this ties into the proposed proportions of the ground floor retail unit
Planned look of the building doesn't fit in with existing nearby buildings
Quality building materials need to be used so the proposed plans are long-standing
Proposed verticality of the façade does not fit in with the rest of the High Street
The High Street façade does not fit in with the typical style of Hitchin town centre: 'Tudor'/'Georgian' and the plans seem too 'modern'
Courtyards should be south-facing instead of north-facing to take full advantage of the sun
Not enough outdoor space for the number of residents
Windows facing the High Street are of poor design and are out of keeping with the rest of the street
Affordable housing
Concerns over a lack of inclusion of affordable housing in the plans
Concerns over the authenticity of Bellborough to follow through with the plans in a way that improves the lives of Hitchin residents. This could be done by offering affordable housing
The proposal doesn't meet the North Hertfordshire Council's affordable housing requirements of 40%

Waste Collection Access
Lack of space for bin storage as Paynes Park already has issues with bins being left out in the street for days
Retail vs Residential Spaces
Loss of retail/leisure space causing concern over the prosperity of Hitchin and its ability to attract tourists
Inclusion of residential spaces in the plans so close to a late license pub may cause noise complaints leading to the pub having to close down, effecting local businesses/leisure spaces
Retail deliveries to the High Street will be disrupted by the construction and when the plans are completed
The proposal is too residentially focused on a retail led street
The owner should be looking for a retail buyer for the space rather than going through with the proposed residential plans
Disruption during construction
Demolition and construction work will cause further delay in Hitchin High Street's shops being occupied, and may stop people from shopping on the High Street
Worries of noise and pollution during construction
Sustainability of the project
Solar panels and heat pumps should be included in the plans to make the proposal more attractive to residents of Hitchin
Conservation area
The plans should seek to enhance and preserve the historic characteristics of Hitchin town centre in line with the surrounding conservation area

Summary of Comments

- 3.10 Overall, the comments received were a mix of both positive and negative, with the majority of positive responses focusing on the overall look of the development, and the mixed use of both retail and residential. The negative responses focused on traffic impacts, along with the design of the front façade and its proposed elevation.
- 3.11 A main concern for local stakeholders was the traffic impacts of the development, particularly on Paynes Park. This was due to the proposed access to the underground car park from Paynes Park raising concerns around congestion and disruption caused by the proximity of access to the site and an existing pedestrian crossing.
- 3.12 Another concern for local stakeholders focused on the proposed design of the front façade on the High Street, and the elevation of this façade. Responses highlighted how the planned design does not fit in with the existing buildings both due to the proposed elevation and the modern design, which is not in keeping with the 'Tudor' style architecture of surrounding buildings. Responses acknowledged that the plans should seek to enhance the historic characteristics of Hitchin in line with the site being situated in a Conservation Area.
- 3.13 Some positive responses were received about the overall look of the development, particularly the layout, and local stakeholders liked the way the plans utilise outdoor space with the connective pedestrian paths and open landscaped space.
- 3.14 Respondents also reacted positively to the redevelopment plans including both retail and residential units, as this is regenerating the High Street whilst also providing new housing.

Post-Public Consultation Feedback

- 3.15 Following the public consultation, a visit to the North Hertfordshire Museum and the site was conducted on 10th May 2024.
- 3.16 Relevant historical photographs of the site were found in the Museum, along with original signage from Perk's Chemist (an original retail occupier at 9-10 High Street), detailing advertisement for lavender distilled products. Historical photographs showed the process of lavender distillation occurring on the site, and the original building with the Samuel Perks shop front.
- 3.17 The staff member in Mr Simms Olde Sweet Shoppe, at 19 High Street opposite the site, gave feedback on the proposed plans, giving full support for the redevelopment based on the need for more housing in Hitchin, and the reopening of the retail unit.

4. PRE-APPLICATION CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Pre-application consultation was sought on the 5th April 2022 on behalf of Bellborough Limited (the applicant). North Hertfordshire District Council were contacted to request a formal pre-application meeting and written advice for the proposed development at 9-10 High Street. The advice was sought on the proposed development works: “*Refurbishment and redevelopment to provide 53 residential apartments, including two Class E units at ground floor level fronting the High Street, landscaping, amenity and associated parking*”. The letter seeking pre-application consultation included a history of the site, with a relevant planning history, and the relevant policy for the proposal. It also includes a review of the North Hertfordshire District Council Local Plan, detailing how the proposed development was in accordance with local policies.
- 4.2 At the time of the pre-application consultation, the applicant was seeking to consider the integration of the adjoining car park site. This has not been possible, and the comments received relating to the Bellborough site only are recorded here, setting aside more detailed comments related to the redevelopment and integration of the adjoining car park site.
- 4.3 Pre-application advice was sought on affordable housing, archaeology, conservation, environmental protection, growth and infrastructure and general planning advice. A summary of these consultations is set out below.

i) Principle of the Development

- 4.4 There is no objection to the site being used for residential redevelopment with the retail use being retained at ground floor level on the High Street as this is a town centre site, and it is in the interest of both national and local planning policies to situate new housing within existing urban areas.
- 4.5 More open and green spaces are encouraged to be added to the development plans, and that the scale and density of the proposed development is concerning as it is not in keeping with the existing character around it. Additionally, the proposed walkway needs to be accessible and attractive to users in accordance with Hertfordshire County Council Highways emphasis on sustainable walking routes.
- 4.6 The Officer advises that there is room to reduce parking standards due to the town centre location, so one parking space per unit with the cycle parking provided would be sufficient.
- 4.7 Mitigation should be considered in order to make a positive contribution to the climate emergency in light of the Climate Emergency motion passed by North Hertfordshire District Council pledging to achieve zero carbon emissions in the County by 2030. This includes the provision of green spaces and increasing sustainability.

ii) Conservation Summary

- 4.8 The Conservation Officer advises that the proposed development needs to make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness, and that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. Due to the height and width of the building, lack of open space and intrusion on nearby listed buildings such as Paynes Park House, the Conservation Officer has concluded that the current development plans will not sufficiently preserve or enhance the character of the Hitchin Conservation Area.
- 4.9 The Officer takes note of the Paynes Park Planning Brief (February 2005). The Brief promotes development of Paynes Park that is attractive, interesting and beneficial to the community, the improvement of the street scene in Paynes Park with an introduction of quality development between Paynes Park and High Street, a pedestrian link between the surrounding streets with access to the Waitrose supermarket, library and museum, and first class cultural and leisure facilities to contribute to the healthy living of all residents. The proposed plans need to reflect these points in order to enhance the character of Paynes Park and the surrounding area. The Conservation Officer highlights how any harm or loss to heritage assets, as set out in the NPPF, requires clear and convincing justification, which the proposed development plans have not offered.

- 4.10 Green Hythe, 2A Paynes Park (Grade II listed, of C17 or early C18 origin) is situated close to the site's northern boundary. The redevelopment plans propose a green space opposite Green Hythe. The Officer suggests that a more significant green space is created opposite Green Hythe in order to reveal more of this heritage asset, in accordance with the NPPF.
- 4.11 The Conservation Officer notes the pedestrian connectivity throughout the proposed development by way of a footpath along the southern boundary. They note that this appears narrow, and the applicant is encouraged to pull the development back so that the walkway becomes more open, with a more meaningful open space created at the centre of the site to signal a clear break in the built form. In line with the Paynes Park Planning Brief, a small square with a café of some sorts could be added here.
- 4.12 The proposed development of the site between High Street and Paynes Park is somewhat in keeping with the existing built form of the area, but the Conservation Officer advises that the scale of the plans is not in keeping with historic character, as Paynes Park has always had an open frontage, and the elevation on the High Street is not in keeping with the existing buildings. The Officer objects to the initial front façade proposals containing dormers and Juliet balconies.

iii) Archaeological Implications Summary

- 4.13 The proposed development site is within an Area of Archaeological Significance (AAS), as identified in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan. Of note is the presence of Late Saxon boundary ditches around 100m south-west of the proposed site, and immediately north of the site. It is likely that these two features are connected sections of the same ditch. The Council's Historic Environment Advisor concludes that this boundary ditch is likely to run underneath the western section of the site, proposed to be developed into a below-ground car park. It would be beneficial for the continued discovery of the history of Anglo-Saxon occupation across Hertfordshire for more information to be found on this feature.
- 4.14 The Historic Environment Advisor recommended that given the location of the proposed development and its proximity to potential archaeological remains, a trial trenching evaluation of the western portion of the proposed development area should be carried out, and the results submitted with any formal planning application, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

iv) Affordable Housing Summary

- 4.15 In accordance with the proposed plans and policies due to the provision of 53 dwellings, the North Hertfordshire Local Plan requires 40% affordable housing provision. The Council's Housing Supply Officer recommended that there is the potential to accommodate affordable housing in a separate block with its own entrance and staircase. There is a block of 14 flats which could accommodate the rented affordable housing with 7 shared ownership flats included within other blocks on the proposed development.
- 4.16 The council's preference is for affordable housing to be delivered on site. There is provision within the (Local Plan) Policy to consider off-site delivery and/ or a commuted sum in lieu of affordable housing, in exceptional circumstances, subject to the required uplift. Issues of viability must be proven with robust documentary evidence using a recognised financial toolkit.

v) Environmental Protection Summary

- 4.17 In accordance with the North Hertfordshire Air Quality Planning Guidance, mitigation for the emissions from construction and the subsequent operation of the development is required. The Environmental Protection Officer made no objection to the current proposed development plans at this stage. However, they advise that a number of assessments are required in support of the application so that a full local air quality consideration can be made, as outlined in the NHDC Air Quality Planning Guidance.
- 4.18 The Environmental Protection Officer advises that the level of mitigation needed for the proposed development plans is likely to fall into the medium or major development class. The mitigation

required for a medium scale development requires a Transport Assessment, Detailed Travel Plan and Electric Vehicle Charging. The Officer also advises that due to the site being located on a town centre street, any application should be accompanied by a Construction and Demolition Management Plan, to be approved by the Local Authority.

vi) **Growth and Infrastructure Summary**

- 4.19 Based on the 53 new dwellings proposed in the development plans, Hertfordshire County Council's Growth and Infrastructure Unit would seek financial contributions towards projects to minimise the impact of development on Hertfordshire County Council Services for the local community. The Growth and Infrastructure Officer has listed the current projects as primary education, secondary education, special educational needs and disabilities, library service, and youth service. There are also monitoring fees charged by HCC for each legal agreement. Due to the impact of the proposed development plans on the local community, HCC justify the financial contributions as the services impacted will be used by new tenants of the dwellings, in accordance with the NPPF statement that financial contributions to local community projects can make otherwise unacceptable development acceptable. The financial contributions have been calculated according to the size, type and tenure of each individual dwelling.

5. RESPONSES TO PRE-APPLICATION CONSULTATION AND PUBLIC CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

- 5.1 Significant comments, concerns and detailed responses have been received over the pre-application and public consultation period for the preparation of the 9-10 High Street application. To ensure equal consideration of all comments from the public and the Council, the issues raised are grouped under 8 headings and addressed in tables displaying the issue next to the applicant's response and amendments that have been incorporated in the final design for the planning application.

Table 3: Traffic and Access Impacts

Issue:	Applicant's Response:
Access to the site from Paynes Park creates congestion issues relating to the existing pedestrian crossing	The site access has been moved north, further away from the crossing to minimise disruption on Paynes Park.
Number of parking spaces is not enough for the number of residents	There will be 32 parking spaces for 44 units, in line with the town centre location of the site and access to sufficient transport links and is supported by sustainable transport policies
Increase in congestion particularly on Paynes Park due to influx of residents	The Transport Statement assesses the development impacts with a peak hour two-way flow of circa 10 vehicles. The impact on the nearby roads is considered to be negligible.
Concerns that residents will not have a space to receive deliveries	Deliveries to residents would largely comprise of internet shopping and food supermarket purchases, which would utilise transit vans. These deliveries would occur in a service area located at ground floor level and accessed from Paynes Park.
Concerns that retail units on the High Street will lose their delivery access	Deliveries to the proposed retail unit would use the existing loading bays provided along the High Street, in line with neighbouring retail units.

Table 4: The Overall Look and Front Façade of The Proposed Building

Issue:	Response:
Design of High Street façade does not fit in with surrounding buildings in terms of style and verticality	The façade has been redesigned to mirror the surrounding buildings more. The ground floor retail unit now uses carriageway-shaped doors and windows to suggest historical carriageways that were prominent on the High Street. The third floor roof been set back with dormers and the banding lowered to match the rest of the street and reduce the perceived verticality of the building. The floors above the residential entrance have been stepped back to reduce massing appearance, making the proposal more appealing in terms of verticality, mass and historical character.
Direction of courtyards not making the most of the sun	There are multiple outside areas, courtyards and pathways facing both north and southwards for both shaded and sunny aspect.

Not enough outdoor space for the number of residents	41/44 units have private amenity space and there is ample communal outdoor areas for residents
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Table 5: Affordable Housing

Issue:	Response:
Lack of affordable housing included in the plans	The FVA demonstrates that the proposed development is unable to viably support any affordable housing. The main reasons are the strong Existing Use Value as well as the relatively modest residential sale values that are achievable in Hitchin

Table 6: Waste Collection Access

Issue:	Response:
Lack of bin storage as Paynes Park already has issues with bins being left out in the street for days	The bin stores are internal within the site rather than on Paynes Park. There are 3 bin stores on the ground floor of the site and collection sites for each bin store. The waste collection of the proposed site will not add any bins to Paynes Park on collection day.

Table 7: Retail vs Residential Spaces

Issue:	Response:
Loss of retail space on a High Street in the town centre	No retailers identified despite two years of active marketing. Existing units too large for modern retailers requirements. The development includes a retail unit that can be split into 2 units serving modern retailers requirements and contributing to the vitality and viability of the High Street.
The site is in close proximity to a late license pub which may cause noise complaints resulting in local business closing down	The residential units are design in cognisance of existing town centre location. There are already many town centre residents with the Council enforcing licensing controls to create a balanced environment for residents and businesses.

Table 8: Disruption during construction

Issue:	Response:
Demolition and ongoing construction works will pollute the area and stop people from shopping on the High Street	Construction does cause temporary disruption. The Council will enforce an agreed Construction Management Plan to control hours of construction, noise, dust and traffic during this time.
How will emissions from construction be mitigated?	The contractor will have policies in place on site to minimise air and water pollution from site-based activities. Resource usage will be monitored to

	encourage responsible resource usage and consumption reduction where possible.
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Table 9: Sustainability of the Project

Issue:	Response:
Solar panels and heat pumps should be implemented	The proposal will use air source heat pumps (ASHP) as the heating technology and Photovoltaic (PV) Panels on the roof to provide solar energy.
Concerns over how a positive contribution to the climate emergency will be achieved in light of NHDC's Climate Emergency Motion	A Sustainability Strategy has been developed so that the design complies with the NPPF and the North Hertfordshire Local Plan. This includes reductions in portable water use, resource efficiency and pollution through construction and post-occupation. The design includes open green spaces throughout the development to provide resident's with sustainable amenity and increase biodiversity.

Table 10: Conservation Area

Issue:	Response:
The plans should seek to enhance and preserve the historic characteristics of Hitchin town centre in line with the surrounding conservation area	The scheme has been redesigned to address pre-application and public consultation responses and is considered to make a positive and lasting contribution to the conservation area.
Lack of green space and narrow pedestrian paths	The new plans incorporate wider pathways and more open, green space.
The proposed development does not adhere to the established open frontage on Paynes Park	The residential buildings are now set back from the road, with an access route added between the development and Paynes Park allowing for minimal intrusion on nearby listed buildings and keeping the relatively open frontage of Paynes Park

6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The applicant has proactively engaged in consultation with Council officers concerning technical issues and design considerations associated with the proposed redevelopment of 9-10 High Street Hitchin. A public consultation event was held and was well attended by the local community with positive and constructive feedback received both for and against the proposals as they stood in April 2024.
- 6.2 The applicant has positively responded to the feedback received and made changes to the scheme including:
- 6.3 Reduction in scale:
- 6.4 The front façade and residential blocks have been reduced in height in response to the feedback received. The front façade height has been reduced and the roof set back so that it mirrors the existing character of the High Street. The residential blocks height has been reduced in appearance as the clay tiles continue down the side elevations.
- 6.5 Reduction in number of units:
- 6.6 The applicant has reduced the number of units from the originally proposed 53 to 44 in response to feedback. This allows for more residential amenity space, particularly communal outdoor amenity and better parking access for residents.
- 6.7 Paynes Park access:
- 6.8 Addressing concerns about the proximity of the pedestrian crossing on Paynes Park to the site access, the applicant has set back the development, providing space for the access to be changed so that there is more distance from the pedestrian crossing.
- 6.9 Off-street waiting space and a signal light system to control traffic to the car park from Paynes Park has also been added.
- 6.10 Sustainability of the proposal:
- 6.11 In order to increase the sustainability of the proposal PV panels have been incorporated into the sustainability design which improves the site's environmental credentials.
- 6.12 Bee-friendly plant species and bee-bricks have been added to the landscaping design to encourage wildlife and increase biodiversity in response to local ecological society comments. Local plants have been incorporated into the courtyard areas for the benefit of both wildlife and residents.
- 6.13 It is considered that the proposed redevelopment of 9-10 High Street Hitchin has been improved by the changes that respond to the feedback received. The applicant considers that the scheme is now fully in accord with the relevant planning and design policies of the Local Plan and National Government and the planning application should therefore be approved.

Signed

On behalf PowerHaus Consultancy

Date: 25 June 2024

7. APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1:
Site Location Plan

APPENDIX 2:
Invitation Letter to Consultation for Local Stakeholders

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Dear Resident or Business

Date: 28th March 2024

Your Ref:

Our Ref: 003

**Redevelopment of 9 – 10 High Street Hitchin, SG5 1BH
Public Consultation**

We write to invite you to attend a public exhibition to view the emerging proposals for a pending planning application for the redevelopment of 9-10 High Street, Hitchin on behalf of Bellborough Limited.

The existing site comprises two shops with storage and offices above and a dis-used structurally unsound car park to the rear, formerly accessed from Paynes Park. The emerging scheme for the property is to demolish the existing building and reconstruct a better designed building, retaining retail fronting the High Street, which could accommodate one or two retailers and approximately 46 one and two bed residential units.

The owners have had pre-application advice from North Herts Council and the exhibition material responds to the feedback received from the Council and Conservation Area officer.

The public exhibition will be held on the 10th April 2024 in the shop of 10 High Street Hitchin, SG5 1BH.

- **The consultation on Wednesday 10th April will take place between 1pm to 8pm.**

You can view scheme proposals online at www.powerhausconsultancy.co.uk from the opening of the consultation on 10th April. Click on the Consultation tab at the top of the page. The consultation will be open until 24th April 2024. From here, if you are unable to attend the event in person, you can see the presentation material and download a feedback form and email this back to us at mp@powerhausconsultancy.co.uk.

Please do come along to the consultation. There will be professional personnel, coordinating the application to discuss the plans and answer questions.

We look forward to welcoming you to.

Should you have any queries, please contact Mary Power (07496 611110 or mp@powerhausconsultancy.co.uk).

Yours faithfully,

PowerHaus Consultancy

PowerHaus Consultancy

On Behalf of Bellborough Limited