

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...Alex Howard.....

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
25/02530/FP	Minor alterations to existing buildings (Sui Generis - Automotive use), including forming new openings, alterations to fenestration, painting and recladding of existing external elevations, replacement roof to showroom and installation of metal roof over existing workshop roof. Erection of detached valet building.	Letchworth Autoway Centre Ltd Norton Way North Letchworth Garden City Hertfordshire SG6 1BP

Submitted Plan Nos

Location Plan P0010 P0100 P0120 P0150 P0170 P0200 P0220 P0250 01 P0251 02 P0270 01 P0271 02 P1100D P1120B P1150 P1170B P1010F P2120E P2150E 01 P2100F P2171D P3100C P2151D 02 P2170E 01

1.0 Policies

D1	Sustainable design
ETC1	Appropriate uses in Employment Areas
D3	Protecting living conditions
HE1	Designated heritage assets
SECN12	Achieving well-designed places
SECN16	Conserve + enhance historic environment

2.0 **Planning History**

2.1 None relevant to this application.

3.0 **Representations**

3.1 **Site Notice and Neighbour Consultation** – None received.

3.2 **Letchworth Heritage Foundation** – None received.

3.3 **Hertfordshire Highways** – No objection.

3.4 **Environmental Health** – Subject to the applicant reverting back to the original proposed layout with the valet building facing west, no objections to the proposal on noise grounds and subject to a provisional contamination condition.

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

- 4.1.1 The site is Letchworth Autoway Centre, located on the east side of Norton Way North, Letchworth. The site operates as a vehicle sales and repairs/workshop and has been taken over by Volvo.

4.2 **Proposal**

- 4.2.1 Planning permission is sought for minor alterations to existing buildings (Sui Generis - Automotive use), including forming new openings, alterations to fenestration, painting and recladding of existing external elevations, replacement roof to showroom and installation of metal roof over existing workshop roof. Erection of detached valet building.

4.3 **Key Issues**

- 4.3.1 The key considerations are design, impacts on heritage assets, and the impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties.
- 4.3.2 There is no objection in principle, given that this site is within a designated Employment Area in the Local Plan and the use, which is an automotive car sales/repair use, is not changing as a result of this proposal.

Design

- 4.3.3 The proposal seeks to make various alterations to the existing showroom and workshop building. The shopfront glazing will be partially overlined a white render panel to occupiers branded monolith sign, with the remaining walls to the showroom face of the building also in matching render. Frames to retained showroom glazing will be painted silver. The west façade of the workshop building will be overlined with new vertically laid profiled cladding in a grey colour, with the remaining brickwork/masonry will be painted in grey. The proportions and external appearance of the two buildings will largely remain as is existing, save for the modest alterations and external changes required to improve their appearance for the new occupiers, which is acceptable. The new valet building is a modest building and is to be sited in the north-east corner of the site in front of the workshop. It will be a simple monopitch steel structure with vertically laid profiled metal cladding to walls in grey, and composite roof panels. The new sectional doors will match the colour of the wall panel. The new building would be sympathetic to the existing commercial use in character and appearance.
- 4.3.4 The proposal is therefore deemed acceptable in design terms and in accordance with Policy D1 of the Local Plan and Section 12 of the NPPF.

Heritage Impacts

- 4.3.5 The site is adjacent to the Letchworth Conservation Area. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (LBCA Act) requires that in the exercise of planning powers, in conservation areas *“special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area”*.
- 4.3.6 Given the nature, design and scale of the proposal which is largely seeking to make improvements and/or modest changes to existing built form or make modest additions in terms of new development, the proposal will not result in any harm or impact on the

Conservation Area. This is in accordance with Policy HE1 of the Local Plan and Section 16 of the NPPF.

Impact on Neighbours

- 4.3.7 The site, by its nature, is not within close proximity to neighbouring properties and is well enclosed in any case. There is an allocated housing site to the east of the workshop building where the valet building is to be located and, following consultation with the Councils Environmental Health Officer (EHO), the valet building has been re-orientated such that it is not expected to result in any material harm to future occupiers in respect of noise. The proposal will not cause any overdominance, loss of daylight/sunlight or loss of privacy to any neighbours, such that it would not result in any harm to the amenities and reasonable living conditions of neighbouring properties, in line with Policy D3 of the Local Plan.

Contaminated Land

- 4.3.8 Following correspondence with the Council's EHO, a protective condition relating to contaminated land will be enforced on this decision in case any contamination is found during the construction phase, which is considered reasonable.

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 4.3.9 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 to it falling under the scope of the 'de minimis' exemption.

4.4 **Conclusion**

- 4.4.1 The proposal is considered acceptable in planning terms in accordance with the relevant local and national planning policies.

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 **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.

3. The development hereby permitted shall only be finished in the materials as stated on the application form and thereafter shall be retained as such, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the LPA.

Reason: To ensure that the development is in-keeping with the locality and to comply with Policy D1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 to 2031.

4. In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development, it shall be reported in writing immediately to the Local Planning Authority. An investigation and risk assessment shall then be undertaken by a competent person, in accordance with BS10175:2011. A written report of the findings should be forwarded for approval to the Local Planning Authority. Following completion of remedial measures a verification report shall be prepared that demonstrates the effectiveness of the remediation carried out. No part of the development should be occupied until all remedial and validation works are approved in writing.

Reason: To protect human health and to ensure that no future investigation is required under Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

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. The Council acted proactively through positive engagement with the applicant during the determination process which led to improvements to the scheme. 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: 3 December 2025	