

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...Henry Thomas.....

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
25/02040/FP	Erection of No.2 detached four-bed houses with gated vehicular access and parking (amended plans received 20/09/2025).	Land Rear Of 60 Green Street Royston Hertfordshire SG8 7BA

Submitted Plan Nos

Location Plan 2025-094A 2025-095D 2025-096A 2025-105A

1.0 Policies

D1	Sustainable design
D2	House exts, replcmnt dwellings outbuild
D3	Protecting living conditions
SP1	Sustainable development in North Herts
SP2	Settlement Hierarchy and Spatial Distrib

SP9	Design and Sustainability
T1	Assessment of transport matters
T2	Parking
SECN12	Achieving well-designed places
SECN14	Meeting climate change,coastal,flooding

2.0 **Site History**

2.1 None at application site

2.2 Relevant applications at neighbouring site of 52 Green Street:

- 23/01139/FP - Erection of one 2-bed bungalow with associated parking, landscaping and remodelling of existing landscape. Provision of vehicular access onto the highway. **Refused.**
- 20/01347/FP - Erection of two detached 2-bed bungalows with associated parking and landscaping. **Refused, Appeal Dismissed.**

3.0 **Representations**

3.1 **Site Notice and Neighbour Consultation** – 6 representations received, 3 in objection and 3 neutral comments on the following grounds (summary):

Objections:

- Highway concerns; harm to pedestrians and cyclists using Combs Hole
- Limited turning space within the site
- Noise and light pollution to neighbours
- Loss of trees
- Overlooking

Neutral comments:

- Needs inclusion of swift bricks

3.2 **Royston Town Council – Objection**

“The development is backfill and an overdevelopment of the site

Access for vehicles is not on a proper road, being primarily a pedestrian and cyclists route. The only vehicular traffic permitted is to grant access to allotment holders. Increased traffic would lead to conflict between cars and pedestrians.

The planned house B will have windows that would overlook a neighbouring property in Green Street.”

3.3 **NHC Environmental Health – No objection subject to condition.**

3.4 **NHC Ecology – No objection subject to condition.**

3.5 **NHC Waste and Recycling – Objection**

“From a waste management collect and return perspective we would still wish for both properties to present their bins on the boundary with Coombe Hole from the maps we see. Likewise the bin storage shown is now too small considering three containers are now provided as standard to residents in North Herts.”

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

- 4.1.1 The application site is the large rear garden plot of 60 Green Street within a residential part of Royston. The Garden forms an L-shape behind the neighbouring 62 Green Street and providing access from Combes Hole to the east of the site. The site is bordered by allotments to the north, highway to the east, residential dwellings to the south and residential gardens to the west. The site has an existing highway access and dropped kerb from Coombes Hole. Coombes Hole provides pedestrian and cycle access to Burns Road to the North as well as vehicle access to the allotments to the rear of the site.

4.2 **Proposal**

- 4.2.1 Planning permission is sought for the erection of 2 two storey, 4-bedroom dwelling. The dwellings would have kitchen, dining room, lounge, utility room, bathroom, study and hall on ground level and a bathroom, 2 en-suites and 4 bedrooms at first floor level. Plot A would be slightly larger and would have a deeper two storey front projection. The dwellings would be linked attached by a shared garage each for one vehicle. Provision is also made to provide vehicle access to the 60 Green Street.

- 4.2.2 The proposed materials are:

Roof – smooth grey tiles

Windows – white upvc
Walls – shelford cream facing bricks
Doors – white upvc
Boundaries – 1800 high close boarded timber fencing
Vehicle Access – permeable paving

4.2.3 The proposed dimensions are approximately

Plot A: Up to 12.5m deep, 11.25m wide with a gable roof (7.15m to ridge, 5m to eaves).

Plot B: Up to 9.25m deep, 11.25m wide with a gable roof (7.15m to ridge, 5m to eaves).

Garage (combined): 7.5m deep, 6.1m wide with a gable roof (4.75m to ridge, 2.45m to eaves).

4.3 **Key Issues**

4.3.1 The key considerations are:

- ☐ The Principle of Development
- ☐ Design/Impact on the Character of the Area
- ☐ Impact on the Amenities of Neighbouring Properties/Future Occupiers
- ☐ Highways and Parking
- ☐ Landscaping

The Principle of Development

4.3.2 The application site falls within the settlement boundary for Royston where residential development is generally acceptable subject to policy requirements.

Benefits of the Development

4.3.3 The overarching purpose of the planning system is to contribute to achieving sustainable development, as stated in Section 2 of the NPPF. This is considered against the three objectives of sustainable development, the economic, social and environmental objectives.

4.3.4 Firstly, in terms of the economic objective, the proposed development would see the delivery of jobs during the build/construction phase which is a benefit. Secondly, in terms of the social objective, this proposal would add two additional dwellings to the District's housing supply which could be delivered in a relatively short space of time. Lastly, in terms of the environmental objective, the proposal would incorporate some sustainable building features, such as an EV charging point and new landscaping where appropriate.

4.3.5 Overall, on the grounds of sustainability, the economic and social benefits of the proposal are very modest in my opinion, which is relative to the scale of development of two dwellings. Moreover, there would be some environmental benefits through the incorporation of sustainable building features. Overall, moderate weight is attributed to these benefits.

Design/Impact on the Character of the Area

- 4.3.6 Policy D1 of the Local Plan states that planning permission will be granted for development proposals that respond positively to local context and create or enhance the public realm. Policy SP9 of the Local Plan further considers that new development will be supported where it is well designed and located and responds positively to its local context. This is echoed in Section 12 of the NPPF.
- 4.3.7 Whilst there is no explicit Local Plan policy that addresses ‘back land’ development, a common-sense approach must be taken to proposals to ensure that they are appropriate to the local context and that the impacts of such proposals would not cause harm to the wider locality.
- 4.3.8 Within the appeal decision for 20/01347/FP at 52 Green Street, the inspector states that:
- “Green Street is characterised by its enclosure on both sides by an eclectic range of houses which front directly to the street. Though the houses date from different eras and have different typology and stylistic characters, their broad alignments parallel to the street, their long back gardens leading to the allotments, their siting at the front of the plot, and the lateral gaps between them are the common threads of spatial character which tie them together, and which make the street spatially and architecturally distinctive.*
- The truncation of the long back garden behind No52 and No56 would diminish the soft, green character behind the houses on this side of the street, and the contribution their lack of development makes to the spatial character of the area. The plots of the proposed houses would be far shorter and smaller than the prevailing plot size on this side of the street, and their footprint: plot ratios many times greater, breaking from the established pattern of development in this section. More decisively, the introduction of a secondary layer of development behind the houses enclosing the street, which would be visible from surrounding houses and through the broad opening leading from the street, would diminish the strong, linear, single layer of street enclosure on this side. The incompatible siting of the development would undermine the distinctive spatial character of the area.”*
- 4.3.9 I agree with the inspector’s view and consider that the land to the rear of 60 Green Street and the lack of development within in, also contributes to the spatial green character of this area.
- 4.3.10 The two closest backland plots can be seen between Green Street and Melbourne Road (47 Gage Close and 78 Melbourne Road) however I consider that development to the south of Green Street and accessed from other roads, falls under a different character to the plots on the northern side of the road. Given this different context, I do not give weight to any precedent that they may set.
- 4.3.11 Although the application site benefits from a highway running perpendicular providing access. I note that Coombes Hole has no dwellings directly fronting onto it or gaining vehicular access from it. Whilst nos. 7 and 30 Byron Road lie perpendicular with pedestrian access. These

dwelling is set at a lower ground level and thus would be less imposing on the street scene. This road is a clear barrier between the dwellings, therefore I do not consider that any dwelling on the application site would continue an existing staggered building line.

- 4.3.12 Whilst I consider that the proposed materials would be sympathetic to the locality. The development of this site would be contrary to the local spatial character. As such, the urbanisation of this backland plot would result in a contrary form of development which would fail to respond positively to the site's local context and as such would be conflict with Policies SP9 and D1 of the Local Plan and Section 12 of the NPPF.

The Impact on Neighbouring Dwellings/Future Occupiers

- 4.3.13 Policy D1 of the Local Plan also requires that development proposals meet or exceed the nationally described space standards. Policy D3 of the Local Plan states that planning permission will be granted for development proposals which do not cause unacceptable harm to living conditions. These considerations are echoed within Section 12 of the NPPF.

Impact on 62 Green Street

- 4.3.14 The proposed dwelling on plot B would be set off the boundary by between 4.5m (front projection) to 6.5m (main bulk). The distance to the neighbouring dwelling would be approximately 21.8m (from rear extension to front projection) or 25.4m (from main bulk of each dwelling). I consider that the proposed first floor windows of Plot B, facing towards the neighbouring dwelling would be give rise to some overlooking and significant loss privacy within the garden and towards the dwelling itself. I also consider that the height of the dwelling within proximity to the boundary would be considered a dominant overbearing form of development. As such the proposal is considered contrary to Policy D3 of the Local Plan.

Impact to 60 Green Street

- 4.3.14 60 Green Street would be set further from the development than 62 Green Street, I therefore consider that no harm would arise to the host dwelling. The host dwelling would retain a suitable sized garden.

Impact to Coombe Hole / 30 Byron Road

- 4.3.19 The proposed dwelling would be set off the boundary by approximately 1m and from the road itself by 2.5m. The proposal seeks to retain the existing hedgerow which would provide some limited screening. No side windows are proposed.

Impact to 58 Green Street.

- 4.3.15 No side windows are proposed. The front windows of Plot A would be predominantly oriented towards the host dwelling (60 Green Street) but would provide some acute views towards the neighbouring dwelling of 58 Green Street. In my view, the impact to this neighbouring amenity

in terms of actual loss of privacy and perceived overlooking would result in significant harm. I also consider that the height of the dwelling within proximity to the boundary would be considered a dominant overbearing form of development. As such the proposal is considered contrary to Policy D3 of the Local Plan.

Impact to future occupiers

- 4.3.20 The proposed dwelling at approximately 169sqm and 145.34sqm would comply with the minimum nationally described space standards for a 4 bedroom/8-person property (120 sqm), would have a suitable amount of private amenity space, and would see all habitable rooms achieve suitable levels of natural light. It is therefore my view that the proposal would not result in any harm to the reasonable living conditions and well-being of future occupiers.

Highways and Parking

- 4.3.22 The proposal seeks to relocate the existing access from Coombes Hole. The Highway Authority have formally commented on this application, stating no objection with conditions to ensure highway safety. It is considered that two dwellings in this location would not have a significant material impact on traffic and highway safety in this area. The proposal provides adequate space to allow for vehicles to turn and exit the site in forward gear.
- 4.3.23 The provision of 2 parking spaces and a cycle store would satisfy the requirements under Policy T2 of the Local Plan.

Biodiversity and landscaping

- 4.3.18 The proposed development is supported by a biodiversity metric and Preliminary Ecological Appraisal which assures that a 10% biodiversity net gain can be achieved inline with Article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. It is noted that off-site units will be required to achieve these gains. NHC Ecologist has recommended a condition for an Ecological Enhancement Plan to retain biodiversity within the site.

Waste Storage

- 4.3.25 With regards to the comments received from the Waste and Recycling Officer, the scheme has been amended to increase the size of the bin stores to the rear of each dwelling in line with North Herts Council's residential bin requirements. It is considered that the resident will be required to drag the bins to the end of the driveway for collection in line with the neighbouring dwellings.

Sustainability and Environmental Implications

- 4.3.26 Section 14 of the NPPF sets out how the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future. The principles set out in Section 14 are reflected in Policy D1 of the North Herts

Local Plan, which sets out that development proposal should take all reasonable opportunities to reduce energy consumption and waste, retain existing vegetation and propose new appropriate planting, and future proof for changes in technology and lifestyle.

- 4.3.27 The proposed development, would have no significant implications for the local environment in terms of carbon emissions. Objections have been raised in terms of possible flooding issues and foul drainage, neither of which are considered to be significant in terms of the siting of a new dwelling. I am therefore satisfied that the proposal would be generally in compliance with Section 14 of the NPPF and Policy D1 of the Local Plan.

4.4 **Conclusion**

- 4.4.1 Overall, it is acknowledged that the proposed dwelling is located within the settlement of Royston, which is sustainable in accordance with Policy SP2 of the Local Plan. It is further considered that the proposed development would see some modest benefits.
- 4.4.2 The Council cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites – currently estimated between 2.6 and 3.3 years worth of supply – and therefore there is a potential presumption in favour of development as set out in Paragraph 11 of the NPPF. However, the benefit of two additional dwellings to help address the current shortfall of housing in the district is of limited value. The adverse impact of the proposed development in terms of the harm to the spatial character of the area and the poor living conditions that would be experienced by existing occupiers would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal when assessed against the policies in the NPPF as a whole. The proposal would not respond positively to the site's local context. The proposed development would be contrary to Policy SP9 and D1 of the Local Plan, as well as Section 12 of the NPPF.
- 4.4.3 The proposed scheme would result in a dominant, overbearing form of development by virtue of its scale, siting and design it would contribute to significant overlooking and loss of privacy which would not be mitigated by landscaping measures. The proposal would not comply with Policy D3 of the Local Plan.
- 4.4.3 Weighing up the aforementioned matters in the planning balance, it is considered that the relatively modest benefits associated by this proposal, namely the net gain of 2 dwellings towards housing supply, the economic/social/environmental benefits, parking, amenity and landscaping, do not outweigh the material harm to neighbouring amenity or the character and appearance of the area, by virtue of the back-land nature of this proposal that does not respond well to the site's local context and would be contrary to the transferable considerations from the neighbouring appeal decision. It is therefore considered that planning permission should be 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 **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

1. The proposed dwellings, by reason of their location and restricted plot size, would result in unacceptable back land development that is contrary and harmful to the distinctive spatial character of the area. As a result the development is contrary to the provisions of Policies SP9 and D1 of the Local Plan 2011 - 2031 as it would not be sympathetic to the surrounding built environment and fails to improve the character and quality of the area and the way it functions.
2. The proposed development, by reason of the height, scale, siting and design of the proposed dwellings and their close proximity to neighbouring properties, would give rise to an overlooking / loss of privacy, an overbearing impact on and general loss of amenity to neighbouring occupiers to the detriment of their living conditions. The proposal would fail to provide and maintain an adequately high standard of environment resulting in an overdevelopment of the site contrary to the provisions of Policy D3 of the Submission Plan 2011 - 2031.

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 achieve an amended scheme but the 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: 30 January 2026	

