DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...Tom Donovan.....

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
18/01292/FP	Erection of one 2-bed dwelling and conversion of existing garage/storage building to provide one 3-bed flat.	2 Walsworth Road Hitchin Hertfordshire SG4 9SP

Submitted Plan Nos

2PL01 2PL02 2PL03 2PL04 2PL05 2PL06 2PL07 2PL08 2PL09

1.0 Policies

1.1 **North Hertfordshire District Local Plan No.2 with Alterations**

Policy 8 - Development in Towns
Policy 55 - Car Parking Standards
Policy 57 – Residential Guidelines and Standards

1.2 **National Planning Policy Framework.**

Section 7 - Requiring good design
Section 11 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
Section 12 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

1.3 **Emerging Local Plan 2011-2031 (Approved by Full Council 11th April 2017).**

Strategic Policies
SP1 – Sustainable Development in North Herts
SP2 – Settlement Hierarchy
SP9 – Sustainable Design
SP13 – Historic Environment

Development Management Policies
D1 - Sustainable Design;
D3 – Protecting living conditions;
T2 - Parking
HE1 - Designated Heritage Assets

1.4 **Supplementary Planning Document**

Vehicle Parking at New Development September 2011

2.0 **Site History**

2.1 None relevant.

3.0 **Representations**

3.1 **Public Notice/ local residents**
Mr and Mrs Ridout
Concerns relating to the landscaping adjacent to the boundary and the re-location of the commercial waste bin.

3.2 **Environmental Health (noise and other nuisances)**
No response.

3.3 **Environmental Protection**
No objection subject to conditions.

3.4 **HCC Highways**
No objection subject to conditions.

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

4.1.1 The application site is located to the south-west end of Walsworth Road near to the edge of the town centre. The main building fronts Walsworth Road with the main vehicular access being located at the front. Further vehicular access and car parking can be found to the rear via Whinbush Road. The main building is a Building of Local Interest although it has been extended quite significantly to the side and rear in a manner perhaps not altogether that sympathetic. The front portion of the overall site is in the Hitchin Conservation Area although the application site itself falls mainly beyond the boundary of the CA.

4.2 **Proposal**

4.2.1 Erection of a detached two storey dwelling and conversion of existing garage/store to provide an additional single dwelling. The detached dwelling would front the road

4.3 **Key Issues**

4.3.1 The key issues for consideration are as follows:
--The acceptability of the principle of the change of use to residential.
--The acceptability of the design and whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Hitchin Conservation Area.
--The effect on the living conditions of neighbouring properties.
--Whether the proposal would provide an acceptable standard of accommodation.
--The effect on highway safety and car parking in the area.
--The effect on the archaeological record.
--Any other material planning considerations.

4.3.2 Principle
The principle of residential development in this location is acceptable subject to the detail.

4.3.3 Design/ impact on the conservation area
Building types and sizes in the immediate vicinity of the site are quite varied. In my view the proposed single dwelling would have an acceptable design that would relate to the built form in the immediate vicinity. It would continue the building-line of the properties on that side of the road although it would be slightly smaller than the larger properties to the north and would therefore sit reasonably comfortably within the fairly limited plot size. Some of the detailing is not particularly ideal but I am satisfied that the general design and the majority of the detailing is acceptable.

4.3.4 I do not have any particular comments about the design of the ground floor conversion as the external alterations are fairly minor.

4.3.5 The rear of the site is currently used as a car park in association with the office use of the main building. As such, the site does not look particularly attractive and moreover this exposes the slightly poor rear elevation of no.2 Walsworth Road. The proposal would improve the appearance of the site in my view without over-developing the site. Half of the frontage would remain open with a small car parking area (three spaces) and some soft and hard landscaping. Overall I believe that the Whinbush Road elevation would be much improved compared to the current situation.

4.3.6 The conservation area boundary is in a slightly strange location as it cuts through the site. As such, the car park is excluded from the conservation area but the main building is contained within it. Moreover, the main building (no.2 Walsworth Road) is

a BLI. However, the BLI has been extended rather poorly to the rear and as such the quality of the BLI can only really be appreciated to the Walsworth Road elevation. As such, I do not consider that the re-development of the rear of the site would cause harm to the setting of the BLI and that the proposal would at least preserve the character and appearance of the Hitchin Conservation Area. As an additional point I consider that the proximity of the adjacent listed building is such that the proposal would not cause harm to the setting of the listed building.

4.3.7 Impact on the living conditions of neighbouring properties

In my view the proposed development would have a limited impact on the living conditions of any of the neighbouring properties.

4.3.8 Standard of accommodation

In my opinion the proposed units would provide an acceptable standard of living. Plot 2 is a reasonable unit with ample floor space for a two-bedroom unit and dual-aspect for most rooms. Plot 1 is not quite such a good unit as it is at the rear of the office building with only windows on the rear-facing elevation at ground floor level. However, given the fall-back position of an office-to-residential change of use I do not consider that the Council has very strong grounds to object to this application. External private amenity areas are smaller than would normally be permitted but my view is that this development is tantamount to a flatted development and given the proximity to the town centre I am happy to accept a reduced allotment.

4.3.9 Impact on highway safety

Hertfordshire County Council Highways have considered the proposed development and raised no objection. However, several conditions have been recommended relating to the implementation of the access.

4.3.10 Car parking

The development is for two 2-bedroom dwellings and therefore the Council's Car Parking Standards require a total of four car parking spaces to be provided within the application site. However, the proposal includes parking for only three cars and therefore the Council is being asked to consider a slight reduction to the usually accepted standard.

4.3.11 In this case I believe that the Council should accept a reduction due to the following two main reasons:

1) The site is near to Hitchin Town Centre and there are ample options for parking either on or around Whinbush Road or publicly run car-parks, the closest being Woodside which is located within an approximately 2m walk from the site.
2) The site is constrained and it is not feasible or perhaps even desirable to force more car parking spaces into the site. In my opinion, the layout works with three spaces but four or more would complicate the matter and cause other issues.

4.3.12 In light of the considerations in paras. 4.3.7-4.3.8 I am satisfied that a slight reduction in car parking can be justified and is acceptable in this case.

4.3.13 Waste

Waste collections would easily be able to occur from the edge of Whinbush Road in addition to the existing collections that take place on the street.

4.4 **Conclusion**

4.4.1 In the absence of material planning reasons to the contrary it is my view that planning permission should be **GRANTED**.

4.5 **Alternative options**

4.5.1 Not applicable.

5.0 **Recommendation**

5.1 That planning permission is **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. Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted the vehicular access shall be provided and thereafter retained at the position shown on the approved plan drawing number 2PL 02. Arrangement shall be made for a hard surfaced material for the shared private access and for surface water drainage to be intercepted and disposed of separately so that it does not discharge from or onto the highway carriageway.

   Reason: To ensure satisfactory access into the site and avoid carriage of extraneous material or surface water from or onto the highway.

4. Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted the width of the access no longer required shall be permanently closed, and the footway shall be reinstated in accordance with a detailed scheme to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority, concurrently with the bringing into use of the new access.

   Reason: In the interests of highway safety and amenity.

5. The development shall not begin until full details of all proposed construction vehicle access, movements, parking arrangements and wheel washing facilities have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The relevant details should be submitted in the form of a Construction Management Plan and the

approved details are to be implemented throughout the construction programme.

Reason: To minimise danger, obstruction and inconvenience to users of the highway.

6. Before the occupation of either of the dwellings hereby permitted, the car parking facilities shown on approved plan 2PL02 shall be marked out and made available, and shall thereafter be kept available solely for the parking of motor vehicles.

Reason: To ensure the provision of satisfactory car parking facilities clear of the public highway to meet the needs of the development.

7. (a) No development approved by this permission shall be commenced prior to the submission to, and agreement of the Local Planning Authority of a written preliminary environmental risk assessment (Phase I) report containing a Conceptual Site Model that indicates sources, pathways and receptors. It should identify the current and past land uses of this site (and adjacent sites) with view to determining the presence of contamination likely to be harmful to human health and the built and natural environment.

(b) If the Local Planning Authority is of the opinion that the report which discharges condition (a), above, indicates a reasonable likelihood of harmful contamination then no development approved by this permission shall be commenced until a Site Investigation (Phase II environmental risk assessment) report has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority which includes:
(i) A full identification of the location and concentration of all pollutants on this site and the presence of relevant receptors, and;
(ii) The results from the application of an appropriate risk assessment Methodology

(c) No development approved by this permission (other than that necessary for the discharge of this condition) shall be commenced until a Remediation Method Statement report; if required as a result of (b), above; has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

(d) This site shall not be occupied, or brought into use, until:
(i) All works which form part of the Remediation Method Statement report pursuant to the discharge of condition (c) above have been fully completed and if required a formal agreement is submitted that commits to ongoing monitoring and/or maintenance of the remediation scheme.
(ii) A Remediation Verification Report confirming that the site is suitable for use has been submitted to, and agreed by, the Local Planning Authority.

(e) Any contamination, other than that reported by virtue of condition (a) and (b), encountered during the development of this site shall be brought to the attention of the Local Planning Authority as soon as practically possible; a scheme to render this contamination harmless shall be submitted to and agreed by, the Local Planning Authority and subsequently fully implemented prior to the occupation of this site.

Reason: To ensure that any contamination affecting the site is dealt with in a manner that safeguards human health, the built and natural environment and controlled waters.

8. Prior to occupation, Plot 2 shall incorporate an Electric Vehicle (EV) ready domestic charging point.

Reason: To contribute to the objective of providing a sustainable transport network and to provide the necessary infrastructure to help off-set the adverse impact of the operational phase of the development on local air quality.

9. Details of materials to be used on all external elevations and the roof of the development hereby permitted shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before the development is commenced and the approved details shall be implemented on site.

Reason: To ensure that the development will have an acceptable appearance which does not detract from the appearance and character of the surrounding area.

10. The landscape details to be submitted shall include the following:

a) which, if any, of the existing vegetation is to be removed and which is to be retained;
b) what new trees, shrubs, hedges and grassed areas are to be planted, together with the species proposed and the size and density of planting;
c) the location and type of any new walls, fences or other means of enclosure and any hardscaping proposed;
d) details of any earthworks proposed;

Reason: To ensure the submitted details are sufficiently comprehensive to enable proper consideration to be be given to the appearance of the completed development.

11. The approved details of landscaping shall be carried out before the end of the first planting season following either the first occupation of any of the buildings or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner; and any trees or plants which, within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development, die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased, shall be replaced during the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority agrees in writing to vary or dispense with this requirement.

Reason: To safeguard and enhance the appearance of the completed development and the visual amenity of the locality.

Proactive Statement:

Planning permission has been granted for this proposal. The Council acted proactively through early engagement with the applicant at the pre-application stage which led to improvements to the scheme. The Council has therefore acted proactively in line with the requirements of the Framework (paragraphs 186 and 187) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

Informative/s:

Informatives:

1) Construction standards for works within the highway:
The applicant is advised that in order to comply with this permission it will be necessary for the developer of the site to enter into an agreement with Hertfordshire County

Council as Highway Authority under Section 278 of the Highways Act 1980 to ensure the satisfactory completion of the access and associated road improvements. The construction of such works must be undertaken to the satisfaction and specification of the Highway Authority, and by a contractor who is authorised to work in the public highway. Before works commence the applicant will need to apply to the Highway Authority to obtain their permission and requirements. Further information is available via the website https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/development-management/highways-development-management.aspx or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

2) Storage of materials:
The applicant is advised that the storage of materials associated with the construction of this development should be provided within the site on land which is not public highway, and the use of such areas must not interfere with the public highway. If this is not possible, authorisation should be sought from the Highway Authority before construction works commence. Further information is available via the website https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/business-licences/business-licences.aspxor by telephoning 0300 1234047

3) Hours of construction:
Construction operations related to the development should occur only between the following hours: 0800-1800 Monday to Friday, 0800-1300 on Saturdays, no working on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

4) EV Charging Point Specification:
The charging point shall be installed by an appropriately certified electrician/electrical contractor in accordance with the following specification. The necessary certification of electrical installation should be submitted as evidence of appropriate installation to meet the requirements of Part P of the most current Building Regulations.

Cable and circuitry ratings should be of adequate size to ensure a minimum continuous current demand for the vehicle of 16A and a maximum demand of 32A (which is recommended for Eco developments)

o A separate dedicated circuit protected by an RBCO should be provided from the main distribution board, to a suitably enclosed termination point within a garage or an accessible enclosed termination point for future connection to an external charge point.
o The electrical circuit shall comply with the Electrical requirements of BS7671: 2008 as well as conform to the IET code of practice on Electric Vehicle Charging Equipment installation 2012 ISBN 978-1-84919-515-7 (PDF).
o If installed in a garage all conductive surfaces should be protected by supplementary protective equipotential bonding. For vehicle connecting points installed such that the vehicle can only be charged within the building, e.g. in a garage with a (non-extended) tethered lead, the PME earth may be used. For external installations the risk assessment outlined in the IET code of practice must be adopted, and may require additional earth stake or mat for the EV charging circuit. This should be installed as part of the EV ready installation to avoid significant on cost later.
o A list of authorised installers (for the Government's Electric Vehicle Homecharge Scheme) can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/office-for-low-emission-vehicles

5) Contamination:
The Environmental Protection Team has a web-page that aims to provide advice to potential developers, which includes a copy of a Planning Advice Note on

"Development on Potentially Contaminated Land and/or for a Sensitive Land Use" in use across Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire. This can be found on www.north-herts.gov.uk by searching for contaminated land and I would be grateful if this fact could be passed on to the applicants.

Signed  Simon Ellis Determining Officer	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Date: 3 July 2018	