

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...Melissa Tyler.....

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
24/01279/FP	Conversion of roof space to create one 2-bed flat including insertion of No.3 front dormer windows, No.1 rear dormer window and No.4 rear rooflights.	Former Hsbc Bank Station Place Letchworth Garden City Hertfordshire SG6 3EU

Submitted Plan Nos

23 HSBC EX11 B 23 HSBC EX12 A 23 HSBC PE11 D 23 HSBC PE12 C 23 HSBC SL01

1.0 Policies

D1 Sustainable design

D3	Protecting living conditions
HE1	Designated heritage assets
SECN12	Achieving well-designed places
SECN14	Meeting climate change,coastal,flooding
SECN16	Conserve + enhance historic environment
SECN11	Making effective use of land
SECN5	Delivering sufficient supply of homes
SECN9	Promoting sustainable transport
SECN8	Promoting healthy and safe communities
SP1	Sustainable development in North Herts
SP10	Healthy Communities
SP13	Historic environment
SP2	Settlement Hierarchy and Spatial Distrib
SP4	Town Centres,Local Centres,CommunityShop

SP8	Housing
SP9	Design and Sustainability
SPDDS	Design Supplementary Planning Document
SPDVP	Vehicle Parking at New Development
T2	Parking

2.0 **Site History**

- 2.1 24/01087/PNG Mixed used development comprising of commercial use (ground floor) and residential use (first floor) - to provide 1 x 1-bed flat and 1 x 2-bed flat. **Granted**
- 2.2 23/02466/PRE Part change of use consisting of 2no one-bedroom flats to first floor with rear balcony and conversion of loft space to include extension of rear gable and insertion of three front dormer windows to facilitate the creation of a further 2no one-bedroom flats

3.0 **Representations**

- 3.1 **Letchworth Heritage Foundation** – *From the viewpoint of the Heritage Foundation the proposed dormers to the front elevation would not be supported. Dormer windows are generally only allowed on buildings where there is evidence that they were an original feature. This is a landmark building within the town centre and the dormer windows would weaken the overall appearance of the building. There would however be no objections to the proposed rear dormer and rooflights to the rear elevation although the Foundation would require 1:20 drawings of the dormer as well as a specification for conservation rooflights as part of any application for Landlords Consent.*
- 3.2 **Site Notice and Neighbour Consultation** – None received.
- 3.3 **Environmental Health** – No objection

As detailed in the accompanying Planning statement, the proposed conversion should be suitably insulated from external and internally generated noise sources from the floors below to achieve internal average noise levels of:

Room	LAeq, dB
Bedroom	30
Living area	35
Kitchen	45-50

3.4 Conservation Officer - I raise **NO OBJECTION** on the basis that the scheme satisfies Sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (LB & CA) Act 1990, the aims of Section 16 of the NPPF and Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 – 2031.

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

4.1.1 The former Hsbc Bank, Station Place is an unlisted building located within Letchworth Conservation Area. At 3.13 of the Letchworth Conservation Area Character Statement dated 18 December 2001 it states the following: *The HSBC Bank occupies a prominent site, on a triangular plot on the corner of Leys Avenue and Station Road, facing into Station Place opposite the train station, providing a strong linkage between the two roads and the central space.*

4.2 **Proposal**

4.2.1 Planning permission is sought for the conversion of roof space to create one 2-bed flat including insertion of No.3 front dormer windows, No.1 rear dormer window and No.4 rear rooflights.

4.3 **Key Issues**

4.3.1 The key considerations are the principle of development, design, the impact on the Conservation Area, the impact on the amenities of future occupiers/neighbouring properties and parking.

Principle of Development

4.3.2 Policy SP2 of the Local Plan states that the majority of the district's new housing will be focused in towns, which is echoed in Policy SP8. The site is located in the middle of Letchworth Town Centre, which is an urban and sustainable area within close proximity to a variety of shops, schools and public transport links. It is well known that other upper floor units in Letchworth Town Centre have been converted into residential use.

4.3.3 Therefore, in my opinion, given the surrounding pattern of development of residential units within in upper floors above commercial units and the sites location in a sustainable urban area, the principle of development is acceptable and in accordance with Policy SP2 and SP8 of the Local Plan.

Design

4.3.4 Policy D1 of the Local Plan states that planning permission will be granted provided that development responds positively to the site's local context in addition to other criteria. Policy D2 of the Local Plan states that planning permission for extensions will be granted if the extension is sympathetic to the existing in height, form, proportions, roof type, window details, materials. These considerations are echoed in Section 12 of the NPPF.

- 4.3.5 Following amendments to the scheme since the PRE APP submission taking into account comments made in regard to the design of the proposed dormer windows on the front and rear elevations, and the reduction to one residential unit the proposed development is considered acceptable that would not result in any unacceptable harm and remain sympathetic to the local character of the area. The proposal complies with Policies SP9, SP13, D1, HE1 of the Local Plan; and Sections 12 and 16 of the NPPF.

Impact on the Conservation Area

- 4.3.6 Within a Conservation Area, the Council has a duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area, in accordance with Section 72 of the Listed Building and Conservation Areas Act (1990). Furthermore, Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out guidance relating to sustaining and enhancing heritage assets.
- 4.3.7 When considering the impact of proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset (such as a Conservation Area or Listed Building), the NPPF notes that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation; the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be.
- 4.3.8 Following consultation with the Conservation Officer whom raised no objection subject to a condition in regards to the details of the proposed windows and following amendments to the scheme since PRE APP advice in lines with the reduction in size and form of the proposed front and rear dormer windows I do not consider that the proposal will cause any level of harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. This is in line with Policy HE1 of the Local Plan and Section 16 of the NPPF.

Impact on Future Occupiers/Neighbours

- 4.3.9 The proposed unit will be accessed via an existing pedestrian access off Station Road, which is appropriate in my view. The unit have been designed to meet and exceed the nationally described space standards for 2-bedroom flat, with the requirement being 70 sqm + 2sqm for storage. The Flat is 77.3 sqm. Therefore, it is considered that the unit will be suitable to provide a good standard of amenity to potential future occupiers.
- 4.3.10 Environmental Health (Noise) has expressed no objection over the proposed residential use with respect to noise/nuisances as the accompanying Planning Statement proposes suitable insulation to meet the required levels.
- 4.3.11 In my view, given the upper floor nature of the proposed unit and the Town Centre location, the proposal is unlikely to result in any material harm upon neighbouring properties.
- 4.3.12 As such, the proposal is deemed compliant with Policy D1 and D3 of the Local Plan and Section 12 of the NPPF.

Parking

- 4.3.13 The proposed development does not look to provide any parking spaces, which is contrary to Policy T2 of the Local Plan and the Vehicle Parking at New Developments SPD. However, the site is located within close proximity to a number of public transport links, including Letchworth Train Station. Therefore, I do not consider it appropriate to object to this proposal on the grounds of its lack of parking provision, as this site is

within a very sustainable location. There is secure cycle parking shown on the ground floor lobby area.

4.4 **Conclusion**

- 4.4.1 The proposal is considered acceptable in planning terms and in accordance with Policies SP2, SP8, D1, D3 and HE1 of the Local Plan, as well as Section 12 and 16 of the NPPF.

4.5 **Alternative Options**

- 4.5.1 N/A

4.6 **Pre-Commencement Conditions**

- 4.6.1 The agent is in agreement to the proposed pre-commencement condition.

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. Before the development hereby permitted is commenced, approval of the details of the siting, design and external appearance of the development, the means of access thereto and the landscaping of the site (hereinafter called "the reserved matters") shall be obtained in writing from the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To comply with the provisions of Article 3 of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995 as amended.

3. Full metric scale details of the 3no. front and 1no. rear dormer windows including window joinery and a 1:1 section detail of the glazing system including the glazing bar profile, shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the formation of the dormers. Thereafter, the dormers shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to protecting the special architectural and historic interest and integrity of the grade II listed building under Section 16(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031.

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 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 (paragraph 38) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

Signed  Sam Dicocco	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Determining Officer Date: 3 September 2024	