



11th February 2026

North Hertfordshire District Council
Development and Conservation
PO Box 10613
Nottingham
NG6 6DH

Dear Sir/Madam

APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION; LISTED BUILDING CONSENT FOR ALTERATIONS, EXTENSION OR DEMOLITION OF A LISTED BUILDING. TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (AS AMENDED); PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS ACT) 1990 (AS AMENDED)

IN RESPECT OF THE CREATION OF A GLAZED WALKWAY LINK BETWEEN THE APPROVED REAR CONSERVATORY AND THE EXISTING HOTEL BUILDING AT MERCURE LETCHWORTH HOTEL, LETCHWORTH LANE, LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY, SG6 3NP

Introduction

CarneySweeney has been instructed by Letchworth Hall Hotel (Trading) Limited ("the Applicant") to submit an application for Full Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent for a minor architectural intervention comprising a secondary glazed link.

Accordingly, the description of the proposed development is for:

"Creation of a glazed walkway link between the approved rear conservatory and the existing hotel building".

This proposal follows the Listed Building Consent (Reference: 23/02632/LBC) and Planning Permission (Reference: 23/02631/FP) granted at the Site in March 2024 for the *"Replacement front conservatory and erection of additional rear linked conservatory. Alterations to façade and replacement windows on the Northwest elevation"*.

The approvals referenced above have established the principle of a new linked conservatory to the rear of the existing hotel. This application seeks a minor refinement to that approved layout.

Site Context & Heritage Significance

Letchworth Hall Hotel is a Grade II* Listed Building, originally a manor house dating back to the early 17th century. The rear of the property has undergone various extensions including two and three storey blocks across the north and western part of the Site. Most recently, a replacement conservatory and a new conservatory/orangery were approved under Listed Building Consent (23/02632/LBC) and Planning Permission (23/02631/FP) in March 2024.

The existing approved scheme included a single walkway link; however, operational use has identified a requirement for an additional link to optimise guest flow and accessibility.

Planning History

The most relevant planning history associated with the Site and pertinent to the proposed development is summarised below.

- **Reference: 23/02631/FP** - Planning permission was granted on 19 March 2024 for the *“Replacement front conservatory and erection of additional rear linked conservatory. Alterations to façade and replacement windows on the Northwest elevation”*.
- **Reference: 23/02632/LBC** - Listed building consent was granted on 19 March 2024 for the *“Replacement front conservatory and erection of additional rear linked conservatory. Alterations to façade and replacement windows on the Northwest elevation”*.

Proposals

The proposal comprises the creation of an additional walkway link between the existing rear conservatory and the main building.

The proposal seeks a small-scale glazed link which will replicate the design and appearance of the glazed link approved under 23/02632/LBC and 23/02631/FP. The link is designed with high-transparency glazing and slimline framing to minimise visual bulk. The use of glass is considered to minimise the impact on the setting of the existing building as it will not obstruct the building but serve as simple yet appropriate element.

The glazing frame will be polyester powder-coated metal (RAL 7016), and the structural glazing will be invisio structural glass system as shown on the submitted drawing ‘Proposed Plans, Elevations & Section 3358_2912’. Please see the submitted architectural drawings prepared by Building Design Group Ltd for full details.

Planning Policy Context

The Application Site falls within the administrative boundary of North Hertfordshire District Council, and the statutory Development Plan comprises of the following documents:

- The North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 (adopted November 2022)

Letchworth Hall itself is a Grade II* Listed Building, and the Site is located within a designated Conservation Area and within the Metropolitan Green Belt, as defined on North Hertfordshire District Council Planning Policy Map (2022).

Material and Other Considerations

The Site does not sit within a Neighbourhood Plan Area and therefore they have not been given further consideration. Other relevant SPDs include the North Hertfordshire District Council's Design SPD (July 2011) and the Letchworth Design Guide (2000).

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPF 2024) is a material consideration. Section 16 deals with conserving and enhancing the historic environment which has been fully considered.

The North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 (Adopted 8th November 2022)

The North Hertfordshire Local Plan (adopted 8th November 2022) sets out the planning framework and long-term vision for the district. It encourages high-quality sustainable design and consideration for the natural environment.

Strategic Policy ECON5 will support and enhance local businesses, services and facilities in urban and rural areas through tourism.



Policy SP5 (Countryside and Green Belt) seeks to support the principles of the Green Belt and will only permit development proposals where they would not result in inappropriate development or where very special circumstances have been demonstrated.

Policy SP13 considers the historic environment and states that *“when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight will be given to the asset’s conservation and the management of its setting”*. The policy will seek a strong presumption in favour of the retention, preservation and enhancement of heritage assets and their settings.

Policy ETC8 (Tourism) will grant planning permission for tourism-related development where it:

- a) *Increases the attractiveness of the District as a tourist destination;*
- b) *Improves visitor accommodation; or*
- c) *Delivers sustainable tourist and visitor attractions in appropriate locations.*

Policy D1 supports proposals which provide sustainable design which responds positively to the site’s local context.

Policy HE1 (Designated heritage assets) requires planning applications relating to Designated heritage assets to be accompanied by a Heritage Assessment that:

- *Assesses the significance of heritage assets, including their setting;*
- *Justifies and details the impacts of any proposal upon the significance of the designated heritage asset(s); and*
- *Informs any necessary measures to minimise or mitigate against any identified harms.*

The policy continues to state that *“Planning permission for development proposals affecting Designated Heritage Assets or their setting will be granted where they:*

- a) *Enable the heritage asset to be used in a manner that secures its conservation and preserves its significance;*
- b) *Incorporate a palette of materials that make a positive contribution to local character or distinctiveness, where it is appropriate and justified; and*
- c) *Will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset, and this harm is outweighed by the public benefits of the development, including securing the asset’s optimum viable use.”*

Policy HE2: (Heritage at Risk) will support planning applications which seek to conserve or provide new uses for designated heritage assets.

The Local Plan acknowledges Letchworth Hall as being part of the ‘old village of Letchworth’ which has been absorbed into the urban area of the garden city. Appendix 5 of the Local Plan sets out Design Principles for development proposals with Letchworth Garden City which includes considering the vista, principles of closure and accents in variations in the building line.

Planning, Heritage and Design Assessment

The proposal comprises minor architectural alterations to improve internal circulation and connectivity between the main hotel guest areas and the rear conservatory which will enhance the guests’ experience of the hotel. The proposals do not seek any other alterations.

The proposed additional glazed link mirrors that approved under the previously granted Listed Building Consent (Ref: 23/02632/LBC) and Planning Permission (Ref: 23/02631/FP) and has been designed in accordance with a ‘light-touch’ philosophy to ensure the significance of the Grade II* listed fabric is preserved. By utilising a structural glass solution with minimal framing, the intervention achieves a high level of transparency, allowing the main building to remain visible through the structure.



The proposal complies with Strategic Policy SP13, which requires that "great weight" be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets. By facilitating the continued viable use of Letchworth Hall (Grade II)*, the proposal adheres to the strong presumption in favour of the retention and enhancement of the historic environment. Furthermore, the design satisfies the requirements of Policy HE1, providing a detailed assessment of significance and ensuring that the intervention remains subservient to the host building's architectural integrity.

In accordance with Policy HE1, the proposed glazed link is a "light-touch" intervention that preserves the host building's significance by maintaining the visibility of the original elevations. By utilising a structural glass solution with minimal framing, the project ensures that the historic fabric remains the dominant visual element, thereby avoiding any "substantial harm" as defined by Policy HE1(c).

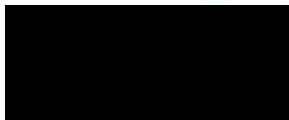
In line with Policy D1 (Sustainable Design) and Policy HE1(b), the proposal utilises a contemporary palette of materials that makes a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness of the Site. The choice of high-transparency glass allows for a clear distinction between the historic Grade II* fabric and the modern addition. The proposal aligns with Strategic Policy ECON5 and Policy ETC8 (Tourism) by enhancing a key visitor facility. As Letchworth Hall serves as a primary tourist destination within the District, the on-going improvements continue to secure the hotel's optimum viable use and ensures that the building remains well-maintained.

Although situated within the context of Policy SP5 (Countryside and Green Belt), the proposal constitutes a minor and appropriate enhancement. The "lightweight" nature of the glazed link ensures that there is no perceived increase in the volume or massing of the building that would impact the openness of the setting.

Conclusion

The proposed additional glazed walkway link represents a sensitive and functional addition to the permitted rear conservatory at Letchworth Hall Hotel. It supports the operational viability of the hotel while respecting the character and appearance of the Grade II* listed setting. We respectfully request that Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent be granted.

Yours sincerely



Gerald Sweeney
Director
CarneySweeney