

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...Thomas Howe.....

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
25/01097/FP	Change of use of first and second floor from C3 maisonette flat into C4 (small HMO) containing 4 bedsit rooms. Alterations to fenestration. (amended plans received 27.10.2025)	8a Bucklersbury Hitchin Hertfordshire SG5 1BB

Submitted Plan Nos

0936-NLA-A6-XX-DR-A-00001-D-No8a 0936-NLA-A6-XX-DR-A-00002-D-No8a 0936-NLA-A6-XX-DR-A-00003-D-No8a 0936-NLA-A6-XX-DR-A-00004-D-No8a 0936-NLA-A6-ZZ-DR-A-00104-F-No.8a 936-NLA-A6-ZZ-DR-A-00101-I-No.8a 936-NLA-A6-ZZ-DR-A-00102-K-No.8a 936-NLA-A6-ZZ-DR-A-00103-F-No.8a 936-NLA-A6-ZZ-DR-A-00105-F-No.8a 0936-CYA-A6-XX-DR-A-00005-C-

1.0 Policies

D1	Sustainable design
D3	Protecting living conditions
HE1	Designated heritage assets

T2 Parking

SECN12 Achieving well-designed places

SECN14 Meeting climate change,coastal,flooding

SECN16 Conserve + enhance historic environment

2.0 **Site History**

2.1 Various applications relating to the former Hawkins Department Store.

2.2 22/02962/LBC - Installation of an internal stud wall partition for WC facilities to facilitate the change of use from class E to class E/Sui Generis of ground floor to tasting room and off-licence. – Conditional Consent

2.3 22/00452/FP - Subdivision of existing two storey maisonette flat into two self-contained studio flats (as amended by drawing nos. 0936 CYA A6 ZZ DR A 00101 Ref F; - 00102 Rev G & - 00103 Rev D received on 27/05/2022 and 27/07/2022). – Conditional Permission

2.4 22/00453/LBC - Internal and external repairs and alterations to facilitate subdivision of existing two storey maisonette flat into two self-contained studio flats (as amended by drawing nos. 0936 CYA A6 ZZ DR A 00101 Ref F; - 00102 Rev G & - 00103 Rev D received on 27/05/2022 and 28/07/2022). – Conditional Consent

3.0 **Representations**

3.1 **Neighbour Consultation** – None received.

3.2 **Environmental Health** – Objection, lack of a noise assessment resulting in a possible conflict between residents and nearby businesses.

July 2026 – Following the provision of plans detailing secondary glazing a means of noise mitigation to the bedrooms, the standard of amenity would be acceptable.

3.3 **Conservation Officer** – No Objection:

“Impact on listed building’s special character – The proposed works will alter the floorplan, but they are considered reversible and therefore there is negligible harm. Impact on character and appearance of the conservation area – None as the work is internal. Impact on setting of heritage assets and how this affects significance – The proposed work will have a low level of impact on the floorplan and other interventions are no considered to cause harm.

Does the proposal occasion harm – The proposed is considered not to cause harm for the reasons stated above.

The applicant subsequently proposed acoustic trickle vents as recommended by Environmental Health, however, the Conservation Officer objected to this given the site's prominent location. Secondary glazing was subsequently proposed and was not considered to be objectionable.

- 3.4 **Highways Authority** – Does not wish to restrict grant of permission subject to conditions.

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

- 4.1.1 The application site comprises No. 8a Bucklersbury, a maisonette/flat on Bucklersbury, Hitchin. The site is brushed over by the Hitchin Conservation Area, and is within a Grade II Listed Building, with its listing entry reading as follows:

II GV 2. Early C19. Red brick, Welsh slated roof with wide eaves. 3 storeys, 3 sash windows with glazing bars in reveals under flat arches. Modern shop windows of inoffensive design. Included for group value.

Nos 7 to 13 (consec) form a group.

4.2 **Proposal**

- 4.2.1 Planning Permission is sought for the Change of use of first and second floor from C3 maisonette flat into C4 (small HMO) containing 4 bedsit rooms. Alterations to fenestration.

4.3 **Key Issues**

- 4.3.1 The key issues for consideration are as follows:

- The principle of the development.
- The acceptability of the design of the proposed development and its resultant impact on the character and appearance of the area and the Listed Building/Conservation Area.
- The impact that the proposed development would have on the living conditions of neighbouring properties.
- The impact that the proposed development would have on the environment.

Principle of Development:

- 4.3.2 The site is within the built core of Hitchin, wherein Policy SP2 permits general development. Given that this comprises general development and the site is within Hitchin's settlement boundary, SP2 supports this development. The site is within a Secondary Shopping Frontage, as designated by the Local Plan 2011-2031, therefore triggering Policy SP5. Policy SP5 restricts the development of units within this frontage at ground floor level. Given that the proposal is at first and second floor level, the proposal is acceptable in principle in this location.

Sustainability:

- 4.3.3 Given the central location, I consider the site to be a sustainable location that is unlikely to be reliant upon the use of a private vehicle for access to shops and other amenities. Public transport links are found a short walk from the site and provide links

to the wider North Herts-Luton-Stevenage area. Social benefits would arise owing to the proposal introducing 4 No. bedrooms/residential units within this windfall site, I consider that favourable weight should be assigned to this. Local contractors and businesses are likely to experience an uplift during construction and occupation, providing some economic benefits when occupied and in use. I consider that these benefits would be modest.

Impacts to Listed Building and Conservation Area:

- 4.3.4 Policy D1 of the Local Plan states that development will be granted provided the design of the development appropriately and positively responds to the site's local context together with other criteria to encourage a positive and sustainable form of development. This policy is broadly consistent with Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework. Policy HE1 emphasises how permission will be refused where proposals would cause substantial harm or a loss of significance to a Heritage Asset, in this case, the Conservation Area, and permission should be refused unless it can be demonstrated that the proposal is necessary to deliver considerable public benefits to outweigh this harm or loss. Policy SP13 emphasises how great weight will be given to the potential harms to the significance of heritage assets, seeking their conservation and management of their setting. This policy is broadly consistent with Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework. Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) act 1990 emphasises that development should seek to the preservation or enhancement of the Conservation Area.
- 4.3.5 The Council's Conservation Officer has not objected to the proposed development. Their comments touch on the ability to reverse these works, and do not consider that harm to the conservation area would arise due to the lack of external alterations from the works. Overall, it is considered that negligible harm would arise. I consider that this would equate to the lower end of the spectrum of less than substantial harm. Given the reversibility of the works, and the vacant nature of the existing unit, I consider that a proposal to bring this back into residential use and to occupy and improve the long-term retention of the building should be viewed favourably. I welcome the change from UPVC windows to timber windows to the principal elevation, a move in keeping fenestration choice for a Listed Building in the conservation area. Secondary glazing would limit external visual impacts and would not harm the character of the Listed Building or Conservation Area.
- 4.3.6 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in compliance with Policies D1 and D2 of the Local Plan and the core principles set out within Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The potential impacts to the surrounding Conservation Area are considered to be acceptable, and the significance of this heritage asset will not be unacceptably harmed. Policies HE1 and SP13 of the Local Plan 2011-2031 and Section 16 of the NPPF are considered to be complied with. The development is considered to comply with Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) act 1990. The design and appearance are therefore acceptable.

Design and Appearance:

- 4.3.7 Policy D1 of the Local Plan states that development will be granted provided the design of the development appropriately and positively responds to the site's local context together with other criteria to encourage a positive and sustainable form of development. These policies are broadly consistent with Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 4.3.8 The proposed conversion of the maisonette to create an HMO featuring 4 No. bedsit rooms would not result in any external alterations to the building (other than fenestration) and would instead require internal modifications to create these individual sleeping spaces where presently a single C3 residential unit is found. It is not considered that there would be to the appearance or character of the building and street scene owing to the works being predominantly confined to the internal layout. The changes to the fenestration would be visible, and I welcome these changes given their change from modern UPVC to traditional timber window units. Given that this is a residential use in a presently residential unit, I do not consider that it would be out of place. Local character is therefore not considered to be harmed. The access to the property would be through an existing staircase to the rear of Bucklersbury, accessed off a parking court, and I consider that this would continue to be acceptable in design terms.
- 4.3.9 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in compliance with Policies D1 and D2 of the Local Plan and the core principles set out within Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The design and appearance are therefore acceptable.

Impact on Neighbouring Properties:

- 4.3.10 Policy D3 of the Local Plan permits development that does not result in unacceptable harm to the amenity of neighbouring occupiers and where necessary encourages the use of mitigation measures to reduce these impacts. This is generally reflected by the provisions within the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 4.3.11 I do not consider that the intensification of residential use would be harmful to neighbouring occupiers given the existing residential use within this property, and the busy, town centre location. No enlargement of window openings is proposed, and therefore, dominance, light loss and losses of privacy are not considered to be objectionable.
- 4.3.12 Given the above, it is considered that the proposed development would result in no unacceptable detrimental impact upon neighbouring occupiers and is therefore compliant with Policy D3 of the local plan and the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Quality of Accommodation for Future Occupants:

- 4.3.13 The four number bedsits would provide accommodation for up to 6 people, wherein there would be 2 No. single bedrooms, and 2 No. double bedrooms. The 6 occupants would share 2 No. bathrooms on the second floor and a kitchen space on the first floor. The site itself does not benefit from communal outdoor amenity space, but is in a town centre location with access to various amenities including parks, shops, and a public square in short walking distance. I consider that in isolation this is acceptable. Bedrooms would be served by windows, with outlook onto the rear square or the road on Bucklersbury, receiving daylight and some degree of outlook. The number of residents to share each bathroom would be between 2 and 3, and I do not consider that this would be an oversubscription of these facilities. In terms of national space standards, HMOs are governed under housing legislation but as a general rule are shown to require a minimum of 6.51m² for one person and 10.22 m² for two people. All of the proposed bedrooms meet the required space standard for two people. Overall, the conversion offers adequate communal space with a functional layout and all rooms would benefit from natural light.

- 4.3.14 I note the initial objection from Environmental Health, owing to the lack of a noise assessment for the proposed replacement windows, detailing their acoustic qualities and ability. Lack of such information is likely to result in conflict between new occupiers and the present operators of nearby business including pubs and bars as well as vehicle users on Bucklersbury. Following the submission of details pertaining to the provision of secondary glazing, Environmental Health considered that any element of enhancement would be welcomed and acceptable and is therefore acceptable.

Environmental Implications:

- 4.3.15 The proposed development, by virtue of its limited scale in general terms together with the sustainable location would have no significant implications for the local environment in terms of carbon emissions and therefore would be generally in compliance with Section 14 of the NPPF.
- 4.3.16 The proposal would fall within an exemption for delivering 10% BNG given that it would not be detracting from on-site habitat.

4.4 **Conclusion**

- 4.4.1 The proposed development is considered acceptable and is considered to comply with the necessary provisions of the Local Plan policies and the National Planning Policy Framework. Grant conditional permission.

4.5 **Alternative Options**

- 4.5.1 None applicable.

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. No development shall commence until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, including

elements of the CLOCS standards as set out in the Highway Authority's Construction Management template. Thereafter the construction of the development shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved Plan: The Construction Method Statement shall include details of: Access arrangements to the site. Traffic management requirements. Construction and storage compounds (including areas designated for car parking, loading / unloading and turning areas). Cleaning of site entrances, site tracks and the adjacent public highway. Timing of construction activities (including delivery times and removal of waste) and to avoid school pick up/drop off times. Provision of sufficient on-site parking prior to commencement of construction activities. Where works cannot be contained wholly within the site a plan should be submitted showing the site layout on the highway including extent of hoarding which must be kept within the site boundary, pedestrian routes and remaining road width for vehicle movements

Reason: In order to protect highway safety and the amenity of other users of the public highway and rights of way in accordance with Policies 5, 12, 17 and 22 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018).

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.

Informative/s:

1. AN1) 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 County Council website at: <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/business-licences/business-licences.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.
AN2) Obstruction of highway: It is an offence under section 137 of the Highways Act 1980 for any person, without lawful authority or excuse, in any way to wilfully obstruct the free passage along a highway or public right of way. If this development is likely to result in the public highway or public right of way network becoming routinely blocked (fully or partly) the applicant must contact the Highway Authority to obtain their

permission and requirements before construction works commence. Further information is available via the County Council website at: <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/business-licences/business-licences.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

AN3) Debris and deposits on the highway: It is an offence under section 148 of the Highways Act 1980 to deposit compost, dung or other material for dressing land, or any rubbish on a made up carriageway, or any or other debris on a highway to the interruption of any highway user. Section 149 of the same Act gives the Highway Authority powers to remove such material at the expense of the party responsible. Therefore, best practical means shall be taken at all times to ensure that all vehicles leaving the site during construction of the development and use thereafter are in a condition such as not to emit dust or deposit mud, slurry or other debris on the highway. Further information is available by telephoning 0300 1234047.

Signed	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Determining Officer	
Date: 17 July 2026	