

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...Tabitha Kaye.....

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
26/01730/S73	Variation of Condition 2 (Replace approved drawings LD665-P01A, LD665-P02A, LD665-P03A, LD665-P04A, LD665-P05 and LD665-P06 with PL-01, PL-02, PL-03, PL-04, PL-05A and PL-06A) of planning permission reference 23/01807/FP granted on 17.11.2023 for Erection of one detached 4-bed dwelling with integral garage and creation of vehicular access off Ashwell Road (as amended by plans received 23/10/2023).	Coker Cottage Ashwell Road Newnham Baldock Hertfordshire SG7 5JX

Submitted Plan Nos

PL-01 PL-02 PL-03 PL-04 PL-05A PL-06A

1.0 Policies

SECN14	Achieving well-designed places
SECN20	Conserving+enhancing historic environmnt
SP9	Design and Sustainability
SP13	Historic environment
D1	Sustainable design
D3	Protecting living conditions
HE1	Designated heritage assets
HE3	Non-designated heritage assets
T2	Parking
SECN5	Meeting the challenge of Climate Change

2.0 Relevant Site History

- 2.1 **26/02025/DOC:** Drawing CO-01A - Landscape Plan, Drawing CO-02A - Landscape Details. **Refused.**
- 2.2 **25/01027/DOC:** Details reserved by condition 3 (Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation) of planning permission reference no 23/01807/FP granted 17.11.2023. **Approval of Details.**
- 2.3 **23/01807/FP:** Erection of one detached 4-bed dwelling with integral garage and creation of vehicular access off Ashwell Road (as amended by plans received 23/10/2023). **Conditional Permission.**

3.0 **Representations**

- 3.1 **Site Notice and Neighbour Consultation** – No comments received.
- 3.2 **Caldecote And Newnham Parish Council** – No comments received.
- 3.3 **Archaeology** – No objection.
- 3.4 **Conservation** – Objection – revised front elevation design would occasion harm to the significance of the Newnham Conservation Area and neighbouring heritage assets.
- 3.5 **Environmental Health** – No objection, subject to informatives and undischarged conditions of 23/01807/FP being retained.
- 3.6 **Highways** – No objection.
- 3.7 **Waste and Recycling** – No comments received.

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

- 4.1.1 The site is part of the large rear garden of Coker Cottage, which is a detached dwelling located on the east side of Ashwell Road, Newnham. Coker Cottage is a Building of Local Interest (BLI) and is situated opposite three Grade II listed thatched vernacular cottages on Ashwell Road. The site is within the Newnham Conservation Area and the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt (RABGB).

4.2 **Proposal**

- 4.2.1 The application seeks to vary Condition 2 (approved plans) of permission 23/01807/FP. The proposed amendment concerns replacing the approved front porch and roof light with a two-storey gable projection. The amendments also propose a ground floor rear extension, to include increased glazing at ground floor level and solar panels to the rear roof slope.

4.3 **Key Issues**

- 4.3.1 The key issues for consideration are as follows:

- Design and impact on the historic environment;
- Impact on neighbour amenity;
- Highways and parking matters;
- Impact on the environment;
- Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).

Design and Impact on the Historic Environment

- 4.3.2 Policies SP9 and D1 of the North Herts Local Plan 2011-2031 (NHLP) states that proposals should respond positively to the character of the locality. Policies HE1 and 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. These policies comply with the LPA's statutory duty under sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. These policies are broadly commensurate with Policy HS6 of the NPPF. Policy HE3 of the NHLP states the importance of safeguarding the significance of non-designated heritage assets, which is supported by Policy HS7 of the NPPF.
- 4.3.3 The site is within a historically sensitive area within the Newnham Conservation Area, as well as the setting of a BLI (Coker Cottage) and Grade II listed buildings along Ashwell Road. Accordingly, the design of the front elevation of the dwelling permitted under 23/01807/FP was negotiated carefully to safeguard these assets. The front elevation is to face Ashwell Road, with the first-floor level being visible from the street.
- 4.3.4 The rear single storey extension with increased glazing, the first-floor Juliette balcony, and solar panels to the rear roof slope, would have limited visibility from public vantage points. Given that this level of glazing and the solar panels would be rear facing, and therefore not overly dominant in the street scene, the amendments to the rear are unobjectionable.

- 4.3.5 To the front elevation, the application proposes replacing the approved porch and roof light with a two-storey gable projection. The Conservation Officer has submitted the following comments in response to the proposal (my emphasis in bold):

Located in the Newnham Conservation Area, the site sits directly opposite one of three grade II listed thatched vernacular cottages located in a row on the north side of Ashwell Road. The scheme approved under 23/01807/FP has the attributes of a modest house with integral double garage and would make a relatively passive contribution to the appearance of the NCA without occasioning harm thereto. (...)

*However, the combination of red brick soldier courses in place of what was anticipated to be bell-drip details over window openings together with the contemporary looking glazed front gable (with its primary role simply to provide a double entrance lobby) **would create a less restrained composition that would have a more assertive and unwelcome presence in the streetscene** **The changes to the front elevation would occasion harm to the appearance of the NCA and the wider setting to nearby listed buildings.***

- 4.3.6 As outlined by the Conservation Officer, the revised front elevation design would detract from the otherwise ‘passive’ presence of the dwelling in a highly constrained heritage context. The two-storey gable extension would be highly visible from Ashwell Road and would contrast with the modest, traditional frontages of neighbouring dwellings; notably, the grade II listed thatched cottages situated opposite the site. The dominance of the front extension would be accentuated by the introduction of red brick soldier courses, high level glazing, and replacement of the modest porch with an integrated structure.
- 4.3.7 For the reasons outlined above, I am in agreement with the Conservation Officer that the revised front elevation design would occasion harm to the character of the Newnham Conservation Area and the wider setting of the neighbouring Grade II listed thatched cottages. Policy HE6 of the NPPF states that “where a development proposal would harm the significance of a designated heritage asset the effect on the asset and its significance should be weighed against any public benefits resulting from the proposal.” There are no identified public benefits that would outweigh the harm.
- 4.3.8 Therefore, I find that the proposal is contrary to the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Policies SP9, SP13, HE1, HE3 and D1 of the NHLP, and Chapters 14 and 20 of the NPPF.

Impact on Neighbours

- 4.3.9 Policy D3 of the Local Plan permits development which would not harm the amenity of neighbouring occupiers and encourages the use of mitigation measures where necessary. Policy D3 is generally reflected by the provisions of the NPPF.

- 4.3.10 The amendments would not intensify the relationship between the dwelling and neighbouring properties over and above what was permitted under 23/01807/FP. The proposal therefore accords with Policy D3 of the NHLP.

Highways and Parking

- 4.3.11 The amendments would not impact the parking and access arrangements on site, as approved under 23/01807/FP.

Climate Change

- 4.3.12 Policy D1 of the NHLP outlines the Council's commitment to supporting climate change mitigation. The proposal is not large enough in scale to cause significant implications for the local environment in terms of carbon emissions and therefore complies with Policy D1 of the NHLP and Section 14 of the NPPF.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

- 4.3.15 This is a form of development which is exempt from BNG Legislation, defined under article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 due it falling under the scope of the 'de minimis' exemption.

4.4 **Conclusion**

- 4.4.1 In the absence of material planning reasons to the contrary it is my view that planning permission is **REFUSED**.

4.5 **Alternative Options**

- 4.5.1 None applicable.

5.0 **Recommendation**

- 5.1 That planning permission be **REFUSED** for the following reason(s):

1. The revised front elevation design would be highly visible from Ashwell Road and would be incongruous with the established modest and traditional character of the locality. The proposal would therefore cause harm to the character and appearance of the Newnham Conservation Area and the wider setting of the neighbouring Grade II listed buildings. No public benefits have been identified that would outweigh this harm. As a result, the proposal is not considered to comply with Policies SP9, SP13, HE1, HE3 and D1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 and Chapters 14 and 20 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2026.

Proactive Statement:

Planning permission has been refused for this proposal for the clear reasons set out in this decision notice. The Council has not acted proactively through positive engagement with the applicant as in the Council's view the proposal is unacceptable in principle and the fundamental objections cannot be overcome through dialogue. Since no solutions can be found the Council has complied 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: 22 September 2026	