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| <b>DELEGATED FILE NOTE</b> |
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**CASE OFFICER:** ...Tabitha Kaye.....

| APPLICATION<br>REFERENCE | BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF<br>DEVELOPMENT                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | APPLICATION SITE                                     |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| 26/00214/FP              | Change of use from HMO to single dwelling and alterations to rear fenestration to include insertion of second floor rear Juliet balcony following removal of redundant escape stair. Installation of solar panels to existing rear elevation roofslope. Provision of two parking spaces and installation of disabled access ramp. | 58 Dacre Road<br>Hitchin<br>Hertfordshire<br>SG5 1QL |

**Submitted Plan Nos**

2288PD01 2288 PD02 Rev B 2288 SV01

**1.0 Policies**

SECN12                      Achieving well-designed places

|        |                                         |
|--------|-----------------------------------------|
| SECN14 | Meeting climate change,coastal,flooding |
| SECN16 | Conserve + enhance historic environment |
| SP9    | Design and Sustainability               |
| SP13   | Historic environment                    |
| D1     | Sustainable design                      |
| D2     | House exts, replcmnt dwellings outbuild |
| D3     | Protecting living conditions            |
| HE3    | Non-designated heritage assets          |
| T2     | Parking                                 |

## 2.0 **Site History**

2.1 No site history.

## 3.0 **Representations**

3.1 **Neighbour Consultation** – No comments received at the time of writing report.

3.2 **NHC Conservation** – No objection (subject to materials and joinery details).

3.3            **NHC Environmental Health** – No objection.

4.0            **Planning Considerations**

4.1            **Site and Surroundings**

4.1.1        The site accommodates an end of terrace, three storey town house situated on Dacre Road, Hitchin. The dwelling is distinctive in its design on the street scene owing to its height and Victorian architectural style. The site benefits from a small rear courtyard which is enclosed by a brick wall to the north boundary, and close boarded fencing to the east and south boundaries. Hard standing for parking features to the east of the courtyard. The courtyard and parking is accessed via a private road.

4.1.2        The site is located within the Hitchin settlement boundary. The site is not within the Hitchin Conservation Area. The site is identified as ‘building of local interest’ by the Hitchin Register of Buildings of Local Interest (2011), cited here as ‘Lopside’. The preamble to Policy HE3 of the NHLP confirms that buildings of local interest are to be considered as non-designated heritage assets.

4.2            **Proposal**

4.2.1        Change of use from HMO to single dwelling and alterations to rear fenestration to include insertion of second floor rear Juliet balcony following removal of redundant escape stair. Installation of solar panels to existing rear elevation roof slope. Provision of two parking spaces and installation of disabled access ramp.

4.3            **Key Issues**

4.3.1        The key issues for consideration are as follows:

- The acceptability of the proposed development in principle;
- The acceptability of the design of the proposed development and its impact on the character and appearance of the area;
- The impact of the proposal upon the historic environment;
- The impact of the proposed development on the living conditions of neighbouring properties;
- Highways and parking matters;
- The impact of the proposed development on the environment.

### Principle of Development

- 4.3.2 The site is located within the settlement boundary of Hitchin, where development is supported in principle.
- 4.3.3 Schedule 2, Part 3, Class L of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 permits the change of use from a House of Multiple Occupation (HMO) (Use Class C4) to a singular dwelling house (Use Class C3) subject to the following requirements:

*Development is not permitted by Class L if it would result in the use—*

*(a) as two or more separate dwellinghouses falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order of any building previously used as a single dwellinghouse falling within Class C4 (houses in multiple occupation) of that Schedule; or*

*(b) as two or more separate dwellinghouses falling within Class C4 (houses in multiple occupation) of that Schedule of any building previously used as a single dwellinghouse falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of that Schedule.*

The change of use would result in the use of a singular dwelling house and is therefore permitted development.

### Design

- 4.3.4 Policies D1 and D2 of the NHLP require that development proposals respond positively to the site's local context and promotes design which increases accessibility. Policy D2 specifies that extensions to houses should be sympathetic to the main dwelling in terms of scale, form and orientation. These policies are broadly consistent with paragraph 135 of the NPPF.
- 4.3.5 To facilitate the transition from HMO to singular dwelling, the application proposes to remove the rear escape stairs and fire exits and replace with a flush glazed Juliette balcony at third floor level, a white uPVC window at second floor level, and a reinstated white uPVC also window at basement level. While the use of balcony glazing and white uPVC is not traditional, the rear elevation is largely screened from public view, and the reinstatement of the rear elevation would restore the domestic character of the rear elevation. The proposed changes to the rear elevation are therefore acceptable in design terms.
- 4.3.6 To improve accessibility, the application proposes to install a disabled access ramp to the rear, as well as 2no. parking spaces (including 1no. accessible space) to the area of existing hardstanding. These elements of the proposal would not significantly alter the existing character of the rear courtyard/parking area, and are a welcome addition in terms of inclusive design.
- 4.3.7 Solar PV panels are proposed to the rear roof slope. The rear slope is largely screened from public view, meaning that the introduction of PV panels would not impact the street character. No alterations are proposed to the principal elevation, meaning that the development will not impact the characteristic front façade of the dwelling and the street character of Dacre Road.

- 4.3.8 The proposal is considered to accord with Policies D1 and D2 of the Local Plan, as well as paragraph 135 of Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

#### Impact on the Historic Environment

- 4.3.9 Policies SP13 and HE3 supports the retention and preservation of non-designated heritage assets in principle. Paragraph 216 of the NPPF states that applications directly impacting non-designated heritage assets (DHA) should consider how the proposal would impact the significance of the heritage asset. The significance of the asset lies primarily in its historic interest and its Victorian architectural interest. The site lies outside of the Hitchin Conservation Area, meaning that the main consideration is the impact of the proposal on the DHA.
- 4.3.10 It is acknowledged that the eastern side of the rear elevation has been significantly altered to accommodate fire exits and escape stairs in the past, meaning that reinstating the rear fenestration is welcomed. Therefore, the introduction of non-traditional features, such as the glazed Juliette balcony and PV panels to the rear roof slope, is supported by the Conservation Officer.
- 4.3.11 As materials have been addressed in the application form, no timber is proposed, and all development would be to the rear, the suggested conditions are not necessary (as confirmed by the Conservation Officer).
- 4.3.12 The site's historic interest was linked to the use of the site as a dwelling for a prominent governess to the Royal Family in the early C20. Therefore, restoring the HMO to a singular dwelling will not have an adverse impact on the site's historic interest.
- 4.3.13 Regarding the impact upon the historic environment, the proposed development accords with the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Policies SP13 and HE3 of the Local Plan, and Section 16 of the NPPF.

#### Impact on Neighbours

- 4.3.14 Policy D3 of the Local Plan permits development that does not result in acceptable harm to 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.
- 4.3.15 The proposed alterations to the rear elevation are not considered to intensify the existing relationship between the dwelling and neighbouring properties by an unacceptable degree. It is considered that no element of the proposal would have an adverse impact on neighbouring dwellings in respect of overlooking, overshadowing or overbearing. The proposal therefore accords with Policy D3 of the Local Plan and Section 12 of the NPPF.

#### Highways and Parking

- 4.3.16 The proposal would not alter existing access arrangements and would retain parking provision to the rear of the site. The proposal therefore complies with Policy T2 of the NHLP.

#### Environmental Impacts

- 4.3.12 Policy D1 of the NHLP outlines the Council's commitment to supporting climate change mitigation through the requirement for schemes to incorporate the principles of 'sustainable design'. Policy D1 is broadly consistent with the aims of Section 14 of the NPPF. Sustainable design, such as the inclusion of renewable energy sources, have been incorporated into the proposal in compliance with Policy D1. There are no other environmental implications as a result of the proposed development.

#### Biodiversity Net Gain

- 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 **GRANTED**.

#### 4.5 **Alternative Options**

- 4.5.1 None.

#### 4.6 **Pre-Commencement Conditions**

- 4.6.1 None.

#### 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.

**Biodiversity Net Gain**

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. Discussion with the applicant to seek an acceptable solution was not necessary in this instance. 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.

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| <p>Signed</p><br><br><br><br><br><br><p>Shaun Greaves<br/>Determining Officer</p> | <p>Development Management<br/>North Hertfordshire District Council<br/>Council Offices<br/>Gernon Road<br/>Letchworth<br/>Herts<br/>SG6 3JF</p> |
| <p><b>Date:</b> 31 March 2026</p>                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                 |