

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

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

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
26/00338/FP	Replacement of existing external heating, ventilation, and air conditioning equipment at ground and first floor.	5 - 6 High Street Hitchin Hertfordshire SG5 1BH

Submitted Plan Nos

18864-DB3-S01-XX-DR-A-90001_ 18864 DB3 B01 XX DR A 20700 18864 DB3 B01 XX DR A 20701

1.0 Policies

D1 Sustainable design

D3	Protecting living conditions
HE1	Designated heritage assets
SP9	Design and Sustainability
SP2	Settlement Hierarchy and Spatial Distrib
SECN12	Achieving well-designed places
SECN14	Meeting climate change,coastal,flooding
SECN16	Conserve + enhance historic environment

2.0 **Site History**

- 2.1 25/03024/FP - Existing ATM lowered in height. Replacement of the existing automated front entrance door.– Conditional Permission
- 2.2 25/03025/AD - Existing ATM lowered in height with illuminated collar surround. Installation of externally illuminated fascia panel (with LED lighting bar) externally illuminated Barclays branded Eagle /text signage and externally illuminated projecting Barclays branded Eagle signage. – Conditional Consent
- 2.3 26/00339/LBC - Replacement of existing external heating, ventilation, and air conditioning equipment at ground and first floor. – Pending

3.0 **Representations**

- 3.1 **Neighbour Consultation** – None received.
- 3.2 **Environmental Health** - No Objection. Recommends condition limiting noise ratings. Existing mitigation measures are noted and also required as per the noise assessment.
- 3.3 **Conservation Officer:**

“There are no objections the proposal as it will not see the loss of historic fabric and the proposal seeks to upgrade to a new condensing unit using the existing acoustic structure.

Impact on character and appearance of the conservation area – These are considered to be negligible as the majority of the works is to take place to the rear.”

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

- 4.1.1 The application site comprises 5-6 High Street, Hitchin. The use of the ground floor is for a bank. The building is Grade II Listed, and it is within the Hitchin Conservation Area. The list entry reads as follows:

“1. 5255 HIGH STREET (West Side) Nos 5 & 6. TL 1829 SW 1/99 II GV

2. Mid C19 in Italianate style. Impressive stucco building with careful details. Modillion cornice to hipped Welsh slated roof. 3 storeys, quoins, vermiculated ground floor. 3 storeys, 2nd floor architrave surrounds, first floor eared architrave surrounds, pediments. Slightly recessed wings. 1 window on left, 2 storeys on right.

Nos 1 to 6 (consec) form a group with No 33 Market Place.”

4.2 **Proposal**

- 4.2.1 Planning Permission is sought for the replacement of existing external heating, ventilation, and air conditioning equipment at ground and first floor.

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.
- 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. Within which, policy SP2 supports other development, including the provision of this plant equipment. The development would not interact with the shopping frontage onto the main High Street thoroughfares or designations. Therefore, the principle development is supported.

Design and Appearance:

- 4.3.3 Policies SP9 and 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. 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 Listed Building, 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.

- 4.3.4 The proposed development is sited to the rear of the unit, within a servicing yard. Existing plant equipment is located here, and following the site visit, it is evident that members of the public are unlikely to enter this area. Public vantage points are unlikely to allow for views towards this part of the site, or to result in noticeable and objectionable harms to local character. It is noted that the council Conservation Officer has not objected, and has not considered it necessary to require any conditions. It is therefore considered that the development is unlikely to harm the appearance of the area, or harm the settings of the Conservation Area and the Listed Building and surrounding Listed Buildings. The design is therefore acceptable.
- 4.3.5 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in compliance with Policies D1 and SP9 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 and Listed Building 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.

Impact on Neighbouring Properties:

- 4.3.6 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.
- 4.3.7 The replacement and introduction of these units is unlikely to be dominating for neighbouring units and occupants. The existing area benefits from plant equipment, and therefore, the introduction of built form is not considered to cause harm by reason of a loss of light or from dominance. Turning to noise, Environmental Health have not objected, noting the observations within the noise assessment. Their representation advises that the outlined noise levels are acceptable but consider that a condition requiring the noise limits must not exceed the noise report is acceptable. I consider that this condition is reasonable to mitigate harms. Noise mitigation is also discussed, and shall be maintained and retained when the plant is in use. I also considered that this is reasonable. No neighbour objections were received.
- 4.3.8 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.

Environmental Implications:

- 4.3.9 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. The development would fall into the de minimis exemption for BNG, and I do not consider it is reasonable to deliver BNG as per Policy NE4 given the nature of the development and its location.

4.4 **Conclusion and Planning Balance**

- 4.4.1 The Conservation Officer has not objected, and has concluded that no unacceptable harm would arise to the setting of this Heritage Asset, the Listed Building and Conservation Area.
- 4.4.2 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. Noise from any plant, machinery or equipment installed in accordance with this permission shall not exceed the noise rating levels as set out in the submitted Hann Tucker Associates noise report dated 5th February 2026 (Ref: 32822/PNA1). Any mitigation used to achieve these noise limits shall be maintained and retained at all times when the plant is in use.

Reason: In the interest of mitigating noise levels to preserve the amenities of neighbouring occupiers to comply with Policy D3 of the 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. 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.

Signed  Shaun Greaves Determining Officer	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Date: 25 March 2026	