

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...Henry Thomas.....

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
24/02478/FP	Change of use of first floor from use class E to use class C3 for use as two studio apartments to include installation of a front door, entrance corridor and stair connecting to the apartments.	4A Kneesworth Street Royston Hertfordshire SG8 5AA
<u>Submitted Plan Nos</u>		
Location Plan ROY-00100 P01 663ROY-GDA-XXX-000-DR-A-01200 663ROY-GDA-XXX-000-DR-A-01303 663ROY-GDA-XXX-100-DR-A-01201 663ROY-GDA-XXX-100-DR-A-01315 663ROY-GDA-XXX-ZZZ-DR-A-02200 663ROY-GDA-XXX-ZZZ-DR-A-02201		

1.0 **Policies**

SP9 Design and Sustainability

D1	Sustainable design
D3	Protecting living conditions
SP1	Sustainable development in North Herts
SP8	Housing
SP6	Sustainable transport
HE1	Designated heritage assets
HS3	Housing mix
T1	Assessment of transport matters
T2	Parking
SECN12	Achieving well-designed places
SECN5	Delivering sufficient supply of homes
SECN14	Meeting climate change,coastal,flooding

2.0 **Relevant Site History**

- 2.1 **10/01024/1** - Change of use from A1 (retail) to A2 (Financial and Professional Services). Replacement shop front. Infilling of rear ground floor window and doorway.
Conditional Permission.

3.0 **Representations**

- 3.1 **Site Notice and Neighbour Notification** – None received.
- 3.2 **HCC Archaeology** – No comments to make.
- 3.3 **Royston Town Council** – No objection.
- 3.4 **NHC Ecology** – No comments to make, BNG not required.
- 3.5 **NHC Environmental Health** – No objection subject to conditions.
- 3.6 **HCC Highways** – No objection with recommended informatives.
- 3.7 **NHC Waste and Recycling** – Require further information.

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

- 4.1.1 The site consists of a terraced two storey building on the east side of Kneesworth Street within the Royston Town Centre. The site is located within the Royston Conservation Area. The site is also subject to the Royston Article 4 Direction. The building is served by a

4.2 **Proposal**

- 4.2.1 The proposal seeks to convert the existing first floor office from use Class E into two studio apartments under use Class C3.

4.3 **Key Issues**

- The acceptability of the design of the proposed development and its resultant impact on the character and appearance of the locality.
- The impact that the proposed development would have on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers.
- The impact that the proposed development would have on car parking provision in the area.
- The impact that the development would have on the environment.

Principle for Development

- 4.3.2 In terms of the principle of residential accommodation, it will be noted that the site is within a sustainable location being in the centre of Royston where there are a large number of local services and facilities. Policy SP1 of the Local Plan supports the principles of sustainable development and to maintain the role of key settlements within and adjoining the District as the main focus for housing, employment and new development making use of previously developed land. The proposal would be consistent with this policy as well as Policy SP2 which identifies Royston as one of the key settlements where up to 80% of the districts development needs will be met over the Plan period.
- 4.3.3 Policy SP9 of the Local Plan supports new development where it is well designed and located and responds to its local context. I consider that the proposal will, having

regard to the particular design and layout of the scheme (see detailed comments below) and the character of the area, will be broadly consistent with Policy SP9 of the Local Plan.

- 4.3.4 The NPPF is clear at paragraph 86, part a) that in town centre locations such as Royston Town Centre, there should be a suitable mix of uses including housing.
- 4.3.5 It is worth noting that the site falls within Royston Town Centre and Policies SP3 and ETC4 also apply to the land in question. I can see no conflicts with these policies, especially given that the Primary Shopping Frontage applies to ground floor only.

Design and Appearance:

- 4.3.13 The objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include those seeking to secure the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings, and places (Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places). Paragraph 126 of the NPPF states that “*Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable communities*”. In this regard, Policy D1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan are consistent with the objectives set out within the NPPF.
- 4.3.14 The proposed works are predominantly internal, however would require the insertion of a door within the front elevation to the serve the residential flats. In my view a door in the position would be a sympathetic addition to the building and would not have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the building and therefore would not result in any adverse harm to the street scene or the conservation area.
- 4.3.15 This is considered in line with Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Policies D1, D3 and HE1 of the Local Plan.

Impact on Neighbouring Occupiers and living conditions of future occupiers:

- 4.3.16 The objectives of the NPPF seek to ensure that developments secure a high standard of amenity for existing and future occupiers (Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places). This principle is reflected in the provisions set out in Policy D3 of the North Herts Local Plan.
- 4.3.17 Policy D3 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan sets out that planning permission will be granted for developments proposals which do not cause unacceptable harm to living conditions.
- 4.3.18 Given the change from office to residential, the new use is unlikely to differ to any noticeable extent. The impact of the change of use would mean that there would be an increase in the use of the proposed space in that the previous use largely relates to weekdays and daytime activities. With regard to noise ingress, a town centre location with a mixture of uses is considered to produce more noise than a predominantly residential location, however, this noise is restricted through hours of operations. The flats would be small but the proposed floorspace meets the 39 sq. m minimum space standard for a 1-person unit. The concurrent application for the ground floor unit will therefore be limited to reasonable hours to allow for this. In terms of increased noise level from the proposed use, as far as I am aware, the neighbouring units are under commercial usage and therefore would not be affected by noise from a residential unit, regardless I do not consider the noise level associated with a two-bedroomed property to be significant. I am satisfied that the proposed development will not significantly impact on the existing amenity of the neighbouring properties and is acceptable.

Highways and Parking:

- 4.3.19 Policy T1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan states that “*planning permission will be granted provided that... development would not lead to highway safety problems or cause unacceptable impacts upon the highway network*”.
- 4.3.20 Policy T2 states that “*planning permission will be granted provided that... proposal have regard to relevant Supplementary Planning Documents*”.
- 4.3.21 The site does not benefit from any parking provision. Given the sustainability of a town centre location within close distance to multiple bus stops and the train station. Therefore, it is considered that the scheme is unobjectionable in this respect and the omission of parking is not weighty enough to warrant an objection.

Environmental Implications:

- 4.3.22 Section 14 of the NPPF sets out how the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future. The principles set out in Section 14 are reflected in Policy D1 of the North Herts Local Plan, which sets out that development proposal should take all reasonable opportunities to reduce energy consumption and waste, retain existing vegetation and propose new appropriate planting, and future proof for changes in technology and lifestyle.
- 4.3.23 The proposed development is the conversion of an existing building and is predominantly hardstanding. As such it is exempt from BNG Legislation defined under article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. In my view, the proposed development would be unlikely to have any significant implications for the local environment in terms of carbon emissions and therefore would be generally in compliance with Section 14 of the NPPF and Policy D1 and NE4 of the Local Plan.

Waste

- 4.3.24 The unit is currently served by a bin storage area to the rear of the property. The current bin storage area is sufficient to accommodate the required residential bins.

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 4.3.25 The proposed development is considered ‘de minimis’ and would not exceed the threshold of 25 sqm of on-site habitat, or and/ less than 5 meters of linear habitats. This application is therefore exempt from BNG legislation defined under article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

4.4 Conclusion

- 4.4.1 The proposed development is considered acceptable and in accordance with Policies SP1, SP6, SP8, SP9, D1, D3, HE1, HS3, T1 and T2 of the NHLP 2011-2031 and Sections 2, 5, 12 and 14 of the NPPF 2023.

4.5 Alternative Options

- 4.5.1 N/A

4.6 **Pre-Commencement Conditions**

4.6.1 N/A

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 take place until a scheme for protecting the proposed dwellings from noise from road traffic and ground floor commercial units has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall be in accordance with the recommendations identified in the RBA Acoustics report (Ref: 13932.RP01.NIA.1) dated 16th October 2024. None of the dwellings shall be occupied until the scheme has been implemented in accordance with the approved details and it shall be retained in accordance with those details thereafter.

4. Details and/or samples of materials to be used on all external elevations including the front door of the development hereby permitted shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before the development is commenced and the approved details shall be implemented on site.

Reason: To ensure that the development will have an acceptable appearance which does not detract from the appearance and character of the surrounding area and to comply with Policy D1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 to 2031.

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.

Informative/s:

1. 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.

2. 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.

Signed  Shaun Greaves Determining Officer	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Date: 21 January 2025	