

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

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

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
24/02637/FPH	Insertion of ground floor front window following removal of existing garage door to facilitate garage conversion into habitable accommodation	3 Ascot Drive Letchworth Garden City Hertfordshire SG6 1FZ

Submitted Plan Nos

01-03 02-03 03-03

1.0 Policies

D1 Sustainable design

D2	House exts, replcmnt dwellings outbuild
D3	Protecting living conditions
SECN12	Achieving well-designed places
SP1	Sustainable development in North Herts
T2	Parking
SECN6	Building strong, competitive economy

2.0 **Relevant Site History**

2.1 None.

3.0 **Representations**

3.1 **Site and Neighbour Consultation** – None received.

3.2 **Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation** – Objection.

“I confirm that this application would not receive approval under our Design Principles. In this location, for Garage Conversions, we would require that:

The property’s frontage has capacity to provide at least two car parking spaces (standard size 2.4m x 4.8m); and

...there is a pattern of houses with garages and therefore garage doors need to be retained.
[Modern Character Area print version dec.20.pdf](#) pp. 12

In this location, we would look for the garage door to be retained in any conversion of the garage – however, as there is only space for a single off road car parking space to the front of

the Property (with the garage forming the second space), the conversion would not be supported, even if the door were to be retained.”

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

4.1.1 The application site is a semi-detached two storey dwelling on the west side of Ascot Drive in a residential part of Letchworth. The dwelling has a small front garden with a parking space for one vehicle. There is limited on street parking on the street. The dwelling does not benefit from permitted development rights for Class 1, Part A.

4.1.2 The application site is within the settlement boundary for Letchworth where development is generally acceptable subject to policy requirements.

4.2 **Proposal**

4.2.1 Insertion of ground floor front window following removal of existing garage door to facilitate garage conversion into habitable accommodation.

4.2.2 The proposed materials are stated to match the existing.

4.3 **Key Issues**

4.3.1 The key issues for consideration are as follows:

- 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 car parking provision in the area.
- The impact that the proposed development would have on the environment.

Design and Appearance:

4.3.2 Ascot Drive is a relatively mixed character street scene, the dwellings range from 2 to 3 stories with a mixture of white render and brick walls, several of the properties have dormer windows set into the roof slope and due to the limited-on street parking have either integrated ground floor garages or attached side garages. The proposed fenestration and materials would match the existing dwelling and would not be visually harmful to the character and appearance of the dwelling within the street scene.

4.3.3 This proposal therefore complies with Policy D1 of the Local Plan and Section 12 of the NPPF.

Impact on Neighbouring Properties:

4.3.4 A core planning principle set out in the NPPF is to always seek to secure a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings. This principle is reflected in the provisions of Policy D3 of the NHLP.

4.3.5 The proposed works are predominantly internal and would not materially harm neighbouring amenity.

4.3.6 The proposal therefore complies with Policy D3 of the Local Plan.

Highways and Parking:

4.3.7 The proposed development will also reduce the number of parking spaces in the site from two to one. The Council's minimum parking standards are for dwellings with two or more bedrooms to have a minimum of two spaces, as set out in Appendix 4 of the adopted Local Plan. Appendix 4 states:

Reductions from these standards will only be considered where applicants can demonstrate that the accessibility, type, scale, mix and use of the development; the availability of and opportunities for public transport; local car ownership levels; and on-street conditions justify such variations.

4.3.8 The application has not set out justification for the under-provision of parking. Should occupants of the dwelling have two or more cars, it is considered likely that those cars would be parked in the wider Ascot / Wissen Drive. An area which was designed with integrated garages to alleviate on-street parking.

4.3.9 At the time of a site visit on a weekday morning, most of the spaces allocated for dwellings were occupied. A higher proportion of the visitor spaces were occupied. Should the applicant or future occupants have more than one car, it is considered likely they would park in one of the visitor spaces.

4.3.10 A further material consideration is that if permission was granted for this application, it would be difficult to refuse any other applications that may come forwards from the other dwellings with garages in Ascot Drive, therefore setting an adverse cumulative effect.

4.3.11 In this case it is not considered that a reduction in parking provision for the dwelling has been justified, and that the proposal is contrary to Policy T2 of the adopted Local Plan and Section 9 of the NPPF.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

4.3.12 This is a householder application which is exempt from BNG legislation defined under article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

Environmental Implications:

4.3.13 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.

4.3.14 The proposed development, 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 and Policy D1.

4.4 **Conclusion**

4.4.1 The proposed garage conversion, would set a harmful precedent within an area with limited on-street parking that would be contrary to Policy T2 of the NHLP 2011-2031 and Section 12 of the NPPF 2024.

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 **REFUSED** for the following reasons:

1. The proposal would result in the loss of the existing garage serving this dwelling and consequently the property would not meet the Council's adopted parking standards as set out at Appendix 4 of the adopted North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031, which requires a minimum of 2 parking spaces. The applicant has not demonstrated that the accessibility, type, scale mix and use of the development; the availability of opportunities for public transport; local car ownership levels; and on-street conditions justify the loss of existing parking provision. Therefore, the proposal would be contrary to Policy T2 of the adopted Local Plan.

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: 15 January 2025	