

North Hertfordshire Council

Tree Officer comments

File Ref: 26/01069/FP
Date: 17/06/2026
Planning Officer: Saffron Loasby
Address: Radcliffe House , Tilehouse Street, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG5 2DW
Subject: Full Planning Permission: External alterations to replace windows and doors, roof alterations with installation of rooflights, inset balconies and dormer windows, extend existing entrance ramp, hard and soft landscaping alterations to include a central courtyard to replace existing parking/ hardstanding, and installation of refuse storage and cycle stores and external lighting.

1.0 Policy position: NPPF / Local Plan / Supplementary Planning Document

- 1.1 Paragraph 136 of the Achieving well-designed places chapter in the current Framework, addresses the integration of trees within new development. Draft NPPF Policy N3 (December 2025) proposes that trees in new development is included within the natural environment section to ensure consistency and alignment with wider environmental objectives.
- 1.2 North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 Chapter 11 deals with the natural environment.

Policy NE2: Landscape Planning permission will be granted for development proposals that: a) Respect the sensitivities of the relevant landscape character area and have regard to the guidelines identified for built development and landscape management; b) Do not cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area or the landscape character area in which the site is located, taking account of any suitable mitigation measures necessary to achieve this; c) Are designed and located to ensure the health and future retention of important landscape features; and d) Have considered the long-term management and maintenance of any existing and proposed landscaping

2.0 Observations

- 2.1 The submitted Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment and preliminary Arboricultural Method Statement and draft Tree Protection Plan appear to adequately address the impacts of the proposed development on retained trees at the site. The impacts are deemed low with the removal of a small yew hedge and G2 a group of small insignificant trees/shrubs with minimal public visibility.
- 2.2 The pruning back and root disturbance of T1 and T2 to facilitate the extension of new a hard-surfacing is likely to impact these trees, but the trees are expected to accommodate this disturbance. The impact to T48 Norway Maple is also considered low with only a minor incursion into the RPA. In both cases the impact can be reduced if hand-dig methods and suitable arboricultural supervision is implemented, particularly if roots are encountered.
- 2.3 The landscaping plan looks to improve and enhance the existing environment while providing both shared and private individual space for future residents. The reinstallation of the Italian Garden will be a great asset to improving the amenity of the site. No comprehensive detailed landscape plan has been submitted to date.

3.0 Conclusion

- 3.1 The protection of retained trees during the construction of the proposed development appears to have been considered adequately and there are no arboricultural objections to this development.

4.0 Recommendation

- 4.1 To ensure retained trees are afforded adequate protection during the construction and demolition of the proposed development and given the submitted document is described as preliminary, I recommend the submission for approval by the council of a finalised Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan in accordance with British Standard 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations is secured by condition.

Reason: To prevent damage to or destruction of trees to be retained on the site in the interests of the appearance of the completed development and the visual amenity of the locality, and to comply with Policy NE2 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 to 2031.

- 4.2 I recommend the submission to the council, for approval, of a comprehensive landscaping scheme and management plan, be secured by condition. This should include details of tree/plant species including quantities, densities, sizes, planting locations, planting preparation, planting methodology and an aftercare maintenance plan to be implemented for a minimum of the first 5 years post planting, to ensure successful establishment, which should make provision for the replacement of any plants that succumb within this period.

Reason:

To safeguard and enhance the appearance of the completed development and the visual amenity of the locality, and to comply with Policy NE2 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 to 2031.

Francis Mabbett
Tree and Landscape Officer