

North Hertfordshire Council

Tree Officer comments

File Ref: 26/01070/FP
Date: 17/06/2026
Planning Officer: Saffron Loasby
Address: Pease House , Tilehouse Street, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG5 2DX
Subject: Full Planning Permission : External alterations to windows and doors, roof alterations with installation of inset balconies and dormer windows, hard and soft landscaping alterations to include replacing existing grassed area with rear terrace and installation of steps, installation of side terraced area and installation of refuse storage and cycle stores and installation of 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, in the main, appear to adequately address the impacts the proposed development will have on trees at the site. With the exception of T34 Lime the impacts are on the whole deemed low, with the only tree removal being two short lengths of yew hedge.
- 2.2 There is concern for the impact of the surface water diversion wall located within the RPA of T34 as a standard wall foundation construction here is likely to have a significant impact on the Lime tree's root system. Further details will need to be submitted as stated in the report, to ensure that the installation of this is not detrimental to the long-term retention of the tree. If a suitable design solution is not achievable then this would be objectionable for reasons that it would be detrimental to the health and long-term retention of a large Cat B tree of reasonable form and high amenity value. However further internal decay detection as recommended in the report may find the tree condemned.
- 2.3 The incursion into the RPA of T26 London Plane by 2.4% for the new consolidated store is considered minimal and is unlikely to have significant impact on the overall health and long-term retention of this tree and is considered acceptable.

3.0 Conclusion

- 3.1 The protection of retained trees during the construction of the proposed development appears to have been considered adequately. However, there is the potential for objection to the surface water diversion wall within the RPA of T34 Lime as insufficient information has been supplied on its design and construction to be able to fully assess and give an opinion on the likely impacts to this tree.

4.0 Recommendation

- 4.1 Prior to determination I recommend further details are requested with regards the design of the surface water diversion wall within the RPA of T34 Lime or details of alternative solutions provided if this is unachievable without having significant impact on the root system. Any results of further investigation into the tree's condition should be supplied if found to be

significant. Due the absence and uncertainty of an obvious design solution I do not believe this can necessarily be secured by a suitably worded 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