

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

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

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
25/01200/FPH	Change of use of existing detached outbuilding to one self-contained annexe ancillary to main dwelling. (Development already carried out).	Hawthorns Bedford Road Holwell Hitchin Hertfordshire SG5 3RX

Submitted Plan Nos

K1822-01 K1822-02 K1822-03 K1822-04.

1.0 Policies

HS6	Relatives and dependents accommodation
SP5	Countryside and Green Belt
D1	Sustainable design
D2	House exts, replcmnt dwellings outbuild
D3	Protecting living conditions
T2	Parking
SECN12	Achieving well-designed places
SECN13	Protecting Green Belt Land

2.0 **Site History**

2.1 Various applications to erect dwellings, but none for the erection of this building.

3.0 **Representations**

3.1 **Neighbour Consultation** – 1x Support:

“Regarding the planning application reference 25/01200/FPH for the change of use of an existing detached outbuilding to one self-contained annexe ancillary to the main dwelling at Hawthorns, Bedford Road, Holwell, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG5 3RX, the National Annexe Planning Consultancy (NAPC) wishes to express its support for this proposal.

The NAPC recognises the importance of ancillary and modular developments in making efficient use of existing residential plots. This proposal aligns with our national position by supporting flexible living arrangements, including multigenerational living, and offering a sustainable response to housing and care pressures without necessitating large-scale new developments. The ancillary nature of the annexe ensures it remains an integral part of the main dwelling, enhancing the residential utility of the property.

While the development has already been carried out, it is crucial to ensure that the use, scale, layout, and access of the annexe remain consistent with planning policies to prevent any risk of separation from the main dwelling. We encourage the applicant to contact NAPC for expert advice on policy compliance and to secure long-term peace of mind. Our expertise in ancillary accommodation can provide valuable insights into maintaining the integrity and functionality of such developments.

We also urge the North Hertfordshire Council to consider the benefits of supportive annexe policies in future iterations of their local plan. Ancillary accommodation has shown positive impacts in regions such as Ireland and California, where it effectively alleviates housing pressures. By adopting similar supportive measures, the council can enhance housing flexibility and sustainability within the community.

For further information on how NAPC can assist in ensuring policy compliance and optimising the benefits of ancillary developments, please visit our website at <https://napc.uk/annexe-support/>."

3.2 **Parish Council** – No objection.

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

4.1.1 The site comprises an existing building at Hawthorns, a dwelling within a group of properties off Bedford Road, south of Lower Stondon. The site is within the Green Belt.

4.2 **Proposal**

4.2.1 Planning Permission is sought for the conversion of the building into a residential annexe. The development has already commenced.

4.3 **Key Issues**

4.3.1 The key issues for consideration are as follows:

- The principle of the development in the Green Belt and to erect a residential annexe.
- The acceptability of the design of the development and its resultant impact on the character and appearance of the area.
- The impact that the development has on the living conditions of neighbouring properties.
- The impact that the development has on car parking provision in the area.
- The impact that the development has on the environment.

Principle of Development:

Annexe

- 4.3.2 Policy HS6 of the Local Plan 2011-2031 sets out the requirements for introducing residential annexes. These criteria advise that permission will be granted provided:

*“a) a genuine need for the accommodation is demonstrated;
b) the annex is subordinate to the main dwelling and designed in such a way that it can be easily (re-)incorporated into the main house if use as an annex ceases;
c) any development would not exceed the size of extensions that would otherwise normally be acceptable; and
d) the occupation of the accommodation is restricted by condition.*

Free standing annexes will be allowed where the above criteria are met and it can be demonstrated that adaptation or extension of the main house is not possible.”

The applicant has advised that the annexe is needed and has been used for the accommodation of friends and family associated with the main household. I consider that this is suitable to meet a). The scale of the building is considered to be subordinate to the main dwelling by virtue of its size and position within the site, and consider that it can be easily returned to its previous ancillary office use for the occupants of Hawthorns. Matters of the acceptability of the scale of the building will be considered in the design section of this report. b) and c) are considered to be complied with subject to with, with the latter subject to its design being acceptable. Should permission be granted, d) would be complied with.

The applicant has advised that the existing nature of the annexe, and the cost to undo the works are prohibitive. They have also advised that the main dwelling is open plan and is not suitable for conversion or for partition to create an annexe.

Given that the building was freestanding, and due to the second matter regarding the internal layout of the dwelling, I consider that there is suitable justification for the siting of the annexe. Policy HS5 is therefore considered to be complied with.

Green Belt:

- 4.3.3 The site is within the Green Belt as allocated within the Local Plan. Paragraph 153 of the NPPF advises that significant weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt that arises from development unless Very Special Circumstances can be demonstrated to outweigh this harm. Paragraph 154 of the NPPF advises that the erection of new buildings should be regarded as inappropriate development unless the development comprises one of the exceptions listed under this section. Exception c) advises *“the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;”*.
- 4.3.4 It is considered that the building conversion falls within the scope of exception c). The development does not result in the enlargement of the built form of the building and dwelling, and therefore does not result in disproportionate additions over the original building. The development would not constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

- 4.3.5 Paragraph 143 of the NPPF states the five purposes of the Green Belt. In my opinion, the development does not contradict with any of the five purposes. Given the above, the proposal is not inappropriate development in accordance with Section 13 of the NPPF and is therefore compliant with Policy SP5 of the Local Plan.

Design and Appearance:

- 4.3.6 Policy 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. Policy D2 of the Local Plan requires extensions to houses and the erection or replacement of buildings to incorporate design that is sympathetic to the main dwelling in terms of its scale, form and orientation and does not harm the character and appearance of the locality around the site. These policies are broadly consistent with Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 4.3.7 No external changes have occurred to enable the conversion of the building. Its use would be consistent with the residential use of the main dwelling. No objections in design terms.
- 4.3.8 The development is therefore considered to be in compliance with Policies D1 and D2 of the Local Plan and the core principles set out within Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The design and appearance are therefore acceptable.

Impact on Neighbouring Properties:

- 4.3.9 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.
- 4.3.10 The use of the building as an annexe is not considered to amount to an increase in noise generation when compared to the prior use, for an office to serve the needs of the occupants of the dwelling. The lack of enlargement of the building is not considered to have harmed the amenities of neighbouring occupants. No neighbour objections were received.
- 4.3.11 Given the above, it is considered that the development results 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.

Highways and Parking:

- 4.3.12 The development is served by a minimum of two parking spaces that are off-street, therefore impacts to parking provision locally is not harmful.

Environmental Implications:

- 4.3.13 The development, by virtue of its limited scale in general terms together with the sustainable location has no significant implications for the local environment in terms of carbon emissions and therefore is generally in compliance with Section 14 of the NPPF.

Biodiversity Net Gain:

- 4.3.14 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.

4.4 **Conclusion**

- 4.4.1 The 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 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.

2. The residential annexe hereby permitted shall not be occupied at any time other than for purposes ancillary to the residential use of the dwellinghouse known as Hawthorns.

Reason: To avoid the creation of a new dwelling contrary to the planning policies applicable to the area and to avoid the occupation of two separate dwellings by persons unconnected with each other as this would result in an unsatisfactory relationship and inadequate standard of amenity for both properties. To comply with Policy HS6 of the Local Plan 2011-2031.

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  Anne McDonald Determining Officer	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Date: 1 July 2025	