

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...Vicki Wood.....

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
25/01311/FPH	Installation of air conditioning unit to associated rear outbuilding (as amended by Noise Impact Assessment submitted on 22/08/2025).	20 Sollershott West Letchworth Garden City Hertfordshire SG6 3PX

Submitted Plan Nos

8742 - CI 510E 8742 - CI 560D 8742 - CI 575H NIA

1.0 Policies

1.0 **Local and National Policy**

1.1 **National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (NPPF)**

Section 2 – Achieving sustainable development

Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places

Section 14 - Meeting the challenges of climate change, flooding and coastal change

Section 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

1.2 **North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 (NHLP)**

Strategic Policies

Policy SP1 – Sustainable Development in North Hertfordshire

Policy SP2 – Settlement Hierarchy and Spatial Distribution

Policy SP9 – Design and Sustainability

Policy SP13 – Historic environment

Development Management Policies

Policy D1 – Sustainable design

Policy D2 – House extensions, replacement dwellings and outbuildings

Policy D3 – Protecting living conditions

Policy HE1 – Designated heritage assets

2.0 **Relevant Site History**

2.1 25/00107/S73 - Variation of Condition 2 of planning permission 22/03033/FPH granted on 13.02.2023 - addition of canopy over balcony area on rear elevation as shown on plans 8742-300c and 8742-300f. Conditional Permission.

2.2 23/00422/FPH - Single storey detached outbuilding including rooflights, solar panels and associated external works. Conditional Permission.

2.3 22/03033/FPH - Infill extension to existing front elevation, re-position the existing entrance and create front elevation porch together with part single, part two storey rear extension including balcony to first floor level. Conditional Permission.

2.4 99/00753/1HH – Two storey side extension and detached triple garage. Conditional permission 10/09/1999.

2.5 To the west of 20 Sollershott West and within the application site, planning permission exists, though now lapsed for a detached dwelling with triple garage under 02/01495/1.

3.0 **Representations**

3.1 **Press, Site and Neighbour Consultation** – Four objections have been received from nos. 52 Parker Close, 147 High Avenue, 149 High Avenue and 18 Sollershott West, Letchworth which raise the following, summarised concerns:

- ☐ Impact of noise generated from the unit on existing residential amenity.
- ☐ Concern as to compliance with the approved plans and NIA.

3.2 **LGCHF** – Approved.

3.3 **NHC Environmental Health** – Given the findings of the NIA, and albeit no details being submitted regarding the acoustic housing, no objection is raised.

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

4.1.1 Sited on the northwest side of Sollershott West, no.20 is a large, detached two-storey dwelling, with detached triple garage to the front and some outbuildings to the rear. The dwelling has been enlarged in line with the 1999 permission with further extensions to the dwelling being granted under 22/03033/FPH. To the rear of the site are trees covered by TPO refs: 045 and 050 and is within the Letchworth Conservation Area.

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

4.2 **Proposal**

4.2.1 Installation of air conditioning unit to associated rear outbuilding (as amended by Noise Impact Assessment submitted on 22/08/2025).

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 Conservation 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 the environment.

Design

4.3.2 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 131 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 to communities”*. In this regard, Policy D1 and D2 of the Local Plan are consistent with the objectives set out within the NPPF.

- 4.3.3 The proposed A/C unit would be sited on the rear elevation of the outbuilding approved under 23/00422/FPH. The position of the unit would be 1.4 metres above ground level with a height of 0.8 metres, width of 1.0 metres and a projection of 0.3 metres. The findings of the NIA show that the unit would be fitted with an acoustic enclosure though no specific details of this is provided. Noise generated from the plant would be 30dB(a) outside the nearest residential windows which would result in an internal noise level of around 15dB(a) with windows open. NHC Environmental Health have confirmed they are satisfied with the proposal based on the NIA.
- 4.3.4 The proposed A/C unit is of a minor scale in terms of design and appearance and as such I am satisfied that the design of development is acceptable and in accordance with Policy D1 of the Local Plan and Section 12 of the NPPF.

Impact on Heritage Assets

- 4.3.5 Within a Conservation Area, the Council has a duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area, in accordance with Section 72 of the Listed Building and Conservation Areas Act (1990). Furthermore, Section 16 of the NPPF sets out guidance relating to sustaining and enhancing heritage assets. In this regard, Policy HE1 of the Local Plan is consistent with the NPPF.
- 4.3.6 When considering the impact of proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset (such as a Conservation Area), the NPPF notes that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation; the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be.
- 4.3.7 The proposed development would not have any significant impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area. The proposed unit is of a minor scale and there would not be any harm to the heritage significance of the conservation area.
- 4.3.8 I am satisfied that the development is acceptable and in accordance with Policy HE1 of the Local Plan and Section 16 of the NPPF.

Impact on Neighbouring Properties:

- 4.3.9 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 Local Plan.
- 4.3.10 Objections have been received to the proposed siting of a A/C unit however NHC Environmental Health have confirmed no objections in terms of proposed noise output level from the plant and therefore I am satisfied that there would be no significant impact on existing residential amenity.
- 4.3.11 I am satisfied that the proposal is in accordance with Policy D3 of the Local Plan and Section 12 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 Local Plan, which sets out that development proposals 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 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 accordance with Policy D1 of the Local Plan and Section 14 of the NPPF.

4.4 **Conclusion**

- 4.4.1 The proposed development is considered acceptable and in accordance with Policies SP9, SP13, D1, D2, D3 and HE1 of the Local Plan 2011-2031 and Sections 2, 12, 14 and 16 of the NPPF.

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. The proposed air conditioning model installed on site shall not exceed a rating level of 30 dB(A) as measured outside the nearest residential windows as set out in BS4142:2014 and as per the details submitted in the Plant Noise Impact Assessment by NSL Ltd (dated 22nd August 2025) and retained thereafter unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect the amenity of the neighbouring occupiers.

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	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Determining Officer Date: 23 September 2025	