

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

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

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
25/02615/FP	Erection of building for church hall use including car parking, hard and soft landscaping, bin store and air source heat pump enclosure on south-west elevation. Alterations to existing vehicular access. (Amended plan received 05/12/25).	Land Adjacent To 67 Park Lane Knebworth Hertfordshire SG3 6PW

Submitted Plan Nos

827- 03 827- 02C Location Plan

1.0 Policies

D1	Sustainable design
D3	Protecting living conditions
T1	Assessment of transport matters
T2	Parking
NE4	Biodiversity and geological sites
HE1	Designated heritage assets
SECN12	Achieving well-designed places
SECN14	Meeting climate change,coastal,flooding
SECN15	Conserve + enhance natural environment
SECN16	Conserve + enhance historic environment

2.0 **Site History**

2.1 No relevant site history.

3.0 **Representations**

3.1 **Neighbour Consultation** – None received.

3.2 **Parish Council** – Objection:

“Knebworth Parish Council objects to this application as it does not align with the Knebworth Neighbourhood Plan, specifically due to concerns regarding the impact of light pollution from the proposed lighting columns. Objective U of the Neighbourhood Plan is to ‘preserve existing and design integral wildlife corridors and habitats into new developments to improve biodiversity, reducing public lighting to the minimum needed to ensure residents safety where light pollution impacts wildlife’, supported by Policy KBEF1 ‘Biodiversity’. The lighting as proposed does not meet this objective.”

Councillor Ward advised that there was not a request for calling in the application to planning control committee. Councillor Nash did not respond.

3.3 **Highways** –

November 2025 – Recommends refusal. Lack of information relating to opening times, trip rates, extent of uses and associated highways harms from this lack of information.

December 2025 – Does not wish to restrict grant of permission subject to conditions. Recommends inclusion of conditions.

3.4 **Archaeology** – No Comments.

3.5 **Ecology** – No objection. Recommends EEP and BNG gain plan conditions. Also recommends lighting details condition due to potential for harm to bats near to the site.

3.6 **Environmental Health** – Noise – No Objection. Recommends inclusion of Noise Management Plan pre-commencement condition.

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

4.1.1 The application site comprises a parcel of land to the side of No. 67 Park Lane, Knebworth. The site is within the defined settlement boundary of Knebworth, and is outside of the Knebworth Conservation Area. Allocated site KB2 abuts the site to the southern and western sides, and the A1 motorway is set further west.

4.2 **Proposal**

4.2.1 Planning Permission is sought for the erection of a building for use as a church hall. Associated works proposed include the provision of car parking, column lighting, hard and soft landscaping, a bin store, and an air source heat pump enclosure. Alterations are proposed to the existing vehicular access.

4.3 **Key Issues**

4.3.1 The key issues for consideration are as follows:

- The principle of the development.
- 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.

Principle of Development:

- 4.3.2 The site is within the settlement boundary of Knebworth, a village, as defined by Policy SP2 of the Local Plan 2011-2031. This policy advises that housing, along with supporting infrastructure and facilities will be provided within the adjusted settlement boundaries of villages. It is considered that the proposed building and use would comprise a facility, and would provide a service for existing and future residents to Knebworth. Given that it would be within the adjusted boundary of Knebworth, and would comprise a permissible form of development according to this policy, the proposal is considered to be supported in principle. Policy ETC7 permits small-scale local community services in towns and villages, subject to the development being within the defined settlement boundary. The proposal seeks to introduce approximately 115 sqm of floor area, and is therefore below the 280sqm guideline as described in Policy ETC7. The development is therefore in compliance with this policy.

Sustainability:

- 4.3.3 The application site sits at the fringe of Knebworth, at the western point. Footpaths and public transport routes would provide walkable and cyclable connections for patrons to and from the site, with some public transport uses within a 300m walk from the site, along Park Lane. Provision is made, by way of Sheffield loops at the front of the building for secure cycle storage, and this is welcomed. Overall, the location of the site in relation to Knebworth is considered to be a sufficiently sustainable location. Social benefits would arise from the provision of this use for means of socialising and for the religious purposes. This is viewed positively. Economic benefits are likely to arise through the use of local contractors and businesses during construction and when occupied for servicing and maintenance. Overall, the sustainability is considered to be acceptable.

Design and Appearance:

- 4.3.4 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 building 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.

Layout:

- 4.3.5 The layout proposed is for the building to be sited to the southern portion of the site, with a parking court to the side. It would be set further back than No. 67, and would be oriented to present its principal elevation onto the main access. Predominantly, the site would remain free from built form, and is not considered to become overdeveloped, and given the diffuse grain of development along this part of Park Lane, it is not considered to appear out of place in the layout of the area.

Appearance and Built Form:

- 4.3.6 The proposed building would be single storey in height, with a tall gable ended dual-pitch roof. Materials of construction are proposed to be red concrete tiles to the roof, black UPVC rainwater goods, charcoal fibre cement weatherboarding to the walls, with a red brick plinth. Fenestration is proposed to be black aluminium doors and windows. It is considered that the appearance of the proposed building would be of a form expected for use as a community hall/use rather than for residential means. Knebworth Neighbourhood Plan policy KBBE4 emphasises the importance of good design, and it is considered that the proposed traditional materials palette would be suitably in-keeping with local vernacular, and given its set-back location, not result in harm to the character and appearance of the street scene.

Landscaping and Access:

- 4.3.7 Access would be provided from a dedicated driveway splitting from the entrance of No. 67 Park Lane. A tarmac driveway would lead to the building, with a block paving parking court and grass-crete overflow area to their rear for intermittent use. Soft landscaping would be introduced to provide trees, wildflower planting and other foliage to the site. Overall, the proposed landscaping and access are acceptable in design terms. The existing trees surrounding the site would be predominantly unaffected by the proposal, with some new soft landscaping introduced. I consider it is prudent to include tree retention and protection conditions to mitigate harm to these trees to ensure the visual impacts from the development are acceptable.
- 4.3.8 The proposed 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 to Heritage Assets:

- 4.3.9 The application site is in relative proximity to the Deards End Lane Conservation Area, approximately 90m to the east at its closest. Given the screened location, and the distance to the Conservation Area, I do not consider that harm would arise to this heritage asset. There are no Listed Buildings in the immediate vicinity of the site, and therefore do not consider that harm to other heritage assets would arise. Archaeology have made representation and have advised that they have no comments to make on the proposal. Therefore, policy HE1 would be complied with.

Impact on Neighbouring Properties:

- 4.3.10 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.

- 4.3.11 The application building is neighboured to the west by No. 67 Park Lane, with no. 66 to the opposite side of Park Lane, approximately 80m+ from the host building. The siting of the building is not considered to overbear or overshadow this neighbouring occupier, and for this reason, I consider it would not harm the amenities of neighbouring occupiers. Noise generation is acknowledged; however, the use of the building is limited and restricted, and is therefore unlikely to result in late night use, mitigating potential impacts for neighbouring occupiers. A condition from Environmental Health (Noise) is include on the decision, and is considered to be sufficient to mitigate potential amenity issues arising from the proposed building/use. Although the supporting documents advise that noise amplification would not occur within the building, I consider that suitable mitigation measures can be put in place via this condition to control the noise generation from the building when in use.
- 4.3.12 Given the above, it is considered that the proposed development would result 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.

Parking and Highways:

- 4.3.13 The December representation received from Highways has not recommended refusal, and is subject to conditions. They have recommended the restriction of the use of the hall, and the agent has agreed to this restriction of use. The reasoning for this by Highways is to mitigate potential highways conflicts by reducing the likelihood of trip generation to/from the site, concluding that the limited use would reduce any harms to the public highway. I consider that the Highways impacts of using the existing access subject to a limited use would be acceptable for this reason.
- 4.3.14 The Parking at New Developments SPD advises that for places of worship, 1 space is required per every 10 m²gfa. The proposal comprises approximately 115 of GIA, according to the proposed floor plan. Therefore, approximately 12 spaces are required, and these are provided in the main parking area. An additional 8 spaces are provided for occasional use, bringing the total parking space to 20 spaces. Therefore, the requirements of the SPD and Policy T2 are met.

Environmental Implications:

- 4.3.15 The proposed development, by virtue of its limited scale in general terms together with the sustainable location 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.
- 4.3.16 Ecology have not objected to the proposal, but have recommended the inclusion of conditions. The agent has agreed to their inclusion. Given that the development would impact >25sqm of on-site habitat, the development is bound by nationally required BNG. Subject to the implementation of this, I consider that Policy NE4 would be complied with. Lighting pillars have been omitted from the development, and this is considered to be beneficial to the ecological impacts of the development, and would alleviate Parish

Council concerns, resulting in compliance with Policy KBBE1 of the Knebworth Neighbourhood Plan.

4.4 **Conclusion and Planning Balance**

- 4.4.1 The proposed 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 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. Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted the proposed onsite car and cycle parking / servicing / turning /waiting areas shall be laid out, demarcated, levelled, surfaced and drained in accordance with the approved plan and retained thereafter available for that specific use as indicated on the Site & Floor Plans, Elevations, Section Plan (Ref-872-02, Rev-B).

Reason: To ensure construction of a satisfactory development and in the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policy 5 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018)

4. No development shall commence until a Construction Traffic Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the highways and thereafter the construction of the development shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved Plan. The Construction Traffic Management Plan shall include details of:
- a. Construction vehicle numbers, type, routing.
 - b. Access arrangements to the site.
 - c. Measure to minimise dust, noise machinery and traffic noise impacts during construction.
 - d. Screening and hoarding details to protect neighbouring residents.
 - e. Traffic management requirements, including the location of routes and from the site, details of their signing monitoring and enforcement measures.
 - f. Construction and storage compounds (including areas designated for car parking, loading /unloading and turning areas);
 - g. Siting and details of wheel washing facilities.
 - h. Cleaning of site entrances, site tracks and the adjacent public highway including end of day tidying procedures to ensure protection of the site out the hours of construction. The construction activities shall be designed and undertake in accordance with the code of best practice set out in BS 5228 1997 and the agreed details unless otherwise agreed in writing by the LPA and Highways.
 - i. Timing of construction activities (including delivery times and removal of waste) and to avoid school pick up/drop off times.
 - j. Provision of sufficient on-site parking prior to commencement of construction activities.
 - k. Post construction restoration/reinstatement of the working areas and temporary access to the public highway.
 - l. where works cannot be contained wholly within the site a plan should be submitted showing the site layout on the highway including extent of hoarding, pedestrian routes, and remaining road width for vehicle movements.

Reason: In order to protect highway safety and the amenity of other users of the public highway and rights of way in accordance with Policy 12, 17 and 22 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018).

5. The general uses and operation of the development hereby permitted shall be limited to use only for the Holy Communion and prayer meetings, together with occasional gospel preaching's and Bible readings, and shall not be used for any community/social events at all.

Reason: To ensure no significant increase to roadside parking levels, traffic movements and to ensure that vehicles entering and exiting the site do not adversely affect the free and safe flow of traffic on the public highway and safety.

6. No development shall take place until an Ecological Enhancement Plan (EEP) for the creation of new wildlife features such as the inclusion of integrated bird/bat and bee bricks in buildings/structures, and hedgehog holes in fences has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure development is ecologically sensitive and secures biodiversity enhancements in accordance with the North Herts Local Plan policy NE4.

7. Prior to first occupation of the development here permitted, details of lighting shall be submitted which show how and where external lighting will be installed to demonstrate that areas to be lit will not disturb or prevent bats using their territory or having access to their breeding sites and resting places. All external lighting shall be installed in accordance with the specifications and locations set out in the strategy, and these shall be maintained thereafter in accordance with the strategy. Under no circumstances should any other external lighting be installed without prior consent from the local planning authority.

Reason: In the interest of mitigating any impacts to local wildlife, to comply with Local Plan Policy NE4 of the Local Plan 2011-2031.

8. The materials of construction and all landscaping details proposed on document 827-02C - Proposed Site Floor Plan and Elevations shall be implemented on site, prior to first occupation, and shall be retained thereafter unless agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interest of design, to comply with North Herts Local Plan Policies D1, D2 and D3.

9. The approved details of landscaping shall be carried out before the end of the first planting season following either the first occupation of any of the buildings or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner; and any trees or plants which, within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development, die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased, shall be replaced during the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority agrees in writing to vary or dispense with this requirement.

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.

10. No development shall commence until a Noise Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such a management plan shall identify measures to control noise emanating from the hereby permitted facility. Any identified measures shall be implemented in accordance with the approved plan at all times.

Reason: To protect the amenity of neighbouring residents, to comply with Policy D3 of the North Herts Local plan 2011-2031.

11. None of the trees to be retained on the application site shall be felled, lopped, topped, uprooted, removed or otherwise destroyed or killed without the prior written agreement of the Local Planning Authority.

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.

12. The proposed heat pump model installed on site shall be: Aquarea T-Cap Mono-Block J Generation R32 and retained thereafter unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect the amenity of the neighbouring occupiers, to comply with Policy D3 of the Local Plan.

13. Before the commencement of any other works on the site, trees to be retained shall be protected by the erection of temporary chestnut paling or chain link fencing of a minimum height of 1.2 metres on a scaffolding framework, located at the appropriate minimum distance from the tree trunk in accordance with Section 4.6 of BS5837:2012 'Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction - Recommendations, unless in any particular case the Local Planning Authority agrees to dispense with this requirement. The fencing shall be maintained intact for the duration of all engineering and building works. No building materials shall be stacked or mixed within 10 metres of the tree. No fires shall be lit where flames could extend to within 5 metres of the foliage, and no notices shall be attached to trees.

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.

14. Details and/or samples of materials to be used on all external elevations and the roof of the bin store and air source heat pump enclosure indicated on plan 872-02 C hereby permitted shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before the development is commenced and the approved details shall be implemented on site.

Reason: To ensure that the development will have an acceptable appearance which does not detract from the appearance and character of the surrounding area and to comply with Policy D1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 to 2031.

Biodiversity Net Gain

1. The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for the development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition "(the biodiversity gain condition)" that development may not begin unless:
 - (a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and
 - (b) the planning authority has approved the plan.The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan if one is required in respect of this permission would be North Hertfordshire District Council.

There are statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not always apply (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain-exempt-developments>).

Based on the information available this permission is considered to be one which will require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun because none of the statutory exemptions or transitional arrangements are considered to apply.

Proactive Statement:

Planning permission has been granted for this proposal. The Council acted proactively through early engagement with the applicant at the pre-application stage which led to improvements to the scheme. 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.

Informative/s:

1. AN) Obstruction of highway: It is an offence under section 137 of the Highways Act 1980 for any person, without lawful authority or excuse, in any way to wilfully obstruct the free passage along a highway or public right of way. If this development is likely to result in the public highway or public right of way network becoming routinely blocked (fully or partly) the applicant must contact the Highway Authority to obtain their permission and requirements before construction works commence.

Further information is available via the County Council website at: <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/business-licences/business-licences.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

AN) Debris and deposits on the highway: It is an offence under section 148 of the Highways Act 1980 to deposit compost, dung or other material for dressing land, or any rubbish on a made up carriageway, or any or other debris on a highway to the interruption of any highway user. Section 149 of the same Act gives the Highway Authority powers to remove such material at the expense of the party responsible. Therefore, best practical means shall be taken at all times to ensure that all vehicles leaving the site during construction of the development and use thereafter are in a condition such as not to emit dust or deposit mud, slurry or other debris on the highway. Further information is available by telephoning 0300 1234047.

AN) New or amended vehicle crossover access (section 184): Where works are required within the public highway to facilitate a new or amended vehicular access, the Highway Authority require the construction of such works to be undertaken to their satisfaction and specification, and by a contractor who is authorised to work in the public highway. If any of the works associated with the construction of the access affects or requires the removal and/or the relocation of any equipment, apparatus or structures (e.g. street name plates, bus stop signs or shelters, statutory authority equipment etc.) the applicant will be required to bear the cost of such removal or alteration.

Before works commence the applicant will need to apply to the Highway Authority to obtain their permission, requirements and for the work to be carried out on the applicant's behalf. Further information is available via the County Council website at: <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/changes-to-your-road/dropped-kerbs/dropped-kerbs.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

AN) Construction Management Plan (CMP): The purpose of the CMP is to help developers minimise construction impacts and relates to all construction activity both on and off site that impacts on the wider environment. It is intended to be a live document whereby different stages will be completed and submitted for application as the development progresses. A completed and signed CMP must address the way in which any impacts associated with the proposed works, and any cumulative impacts of other nearby construction sites will be mitigated and managed. The level of detail required in a CMP will depend on the scale and nature of development.

The CMP would need to include elements of the Construction Logistics and Community Safety (CLOCS) standards as set out in our Construction Management template, a copy of which is available on the County Council's website at: <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/development-management/highways-development-management.aspx>

Signed  Anne McDonald	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Determining Officer Date: 14 January 2026	