

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...William Thompson.....

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
26/01607/FPH	Single storey front infill extension, front porch extension and insertion of ground floor side window. Alterations to existing detached double garage to include insertion of rooflight and alterations to fenestration following removal of existing garage door to facilitate conversion of garage into habitable accommodation.	Hitchwood Cottage Hitchwood Lane Preston Hitchin Hertfordshire SG4 7RY

Submitted Plan Nos

26038 - 001 - Existing Floor Plans 26038 - 002 - Existing Elevations 26038 - 003 - Existing Garage Elevations 26038 - 004 - Existing Site Plan and Location Plan 26038 - 010 -Proposed Floor Plans 26038 - 011 - Proposed Elevations 26038 - 012 - Proposed Garage Elevations 038 - 013 - Proposed Site Plan.

1.0 Policies

D1	Sustainable design
D2	House exts, replcmnt dwellings outbuild
D3	Protecting living conditions
T2	Parking
HS6	Relatives and dependents accommodation
SP5	Countryside and Green Belt
SECN5	Meeting the challenge of Climate Change
SECN13	Protecting Green Belt Land
SECN14	Achieving well-designed places

2.0 **Relevant Site History**

2.1 None relevant

3.0 **Representations**

3.1 **Neighbour Consultation** – None received.

3.2 **Preston Parish Council** – None received.

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

4.1.1 The application site accommodates a detached, two-storey dwelling situated on Hitchwood Lane, Preston. The application site benefits from a generous plot with multiple outbuildings, including the existing garage for conversion to an annexe.

4.2 **Proposal**

4.2.1 Single storey front infill extension, front porch extension and insertion of ground floor side window. Alterations to existing detached double garage to include insertion of rooflight and alterations to fenestration following removal of existing garage door to facilitate conversion of garage into habitable accommodation.

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 conversion of detached garage to an annexe.
- The acceptability of the design of the proposed development and its impact on the character and appearance of the area.
- The impact of the proposed development on the living conditions of neighbouring properties.
- Access and parking matters.
- The impact of the proposed development on the environment.

Principle

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.”

- 4.3.3 The applicant has advised that the annexe is needed for the accommodation of elderly family members associated with the main household. I consider that this is suitable to meet a). As the garage is existing and not proposed to increase in size, b) and c) are considered to be complied with. Should permission be granted, d) would be complied with.
- 4.3.4 Given the layout of the dwelling, it does not appear as though the main dwelling is suitable for conversion or for partition to create an annexe.
- 4.3.5 Given that the building is freestanding, and due to the second matter regarding the suitability for conversion of the main dwelling, I consider that there is suitable justification for the conversion to an annexe. Subject to the acceptability of design, Policy HS6 is considered to be complied with.

Green Belt:

- 4.3.6 The site is within the Green Belt as allocated within the Local Plan. Policy GB6 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. Policy GB7 of the NPPF advises on the categories of development deemed not inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exception b) advises *“The reuse, extension, alteration or replacement of an existing building, provided that the existing building is of permanent and substantial construction, is lawful in planning terms, and any extension or alteration will not result in a disproportionate increase in size compared to the original building. In the case of proposals for a replacement building, it should be for the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;”*.
- 4.3.7 Given the additional floorspace area from the extension and porch, the proposal would present an extension to an existing building that would not result in a disproportionate addition over the original building, by virtue of its form, layout and quantum of floorspace in relation to the original dwelling. The development would not constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
- 4.3.8 Policy GB2 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:

- 4.3.9 Policy D1 of the Local Plan requires that development proposals respond positively to the site's local context. Policy D2 of the Local Plan requires extensions to houses and outbuildings to incorporate a 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 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 4.3.10 The proposed front infill and porch extension would be a modest increase over existing and the proposed external materials are set to match existing. The proposal includes an additional ground floor window. The design is considered acceptable.
- 4.3.11 The alterations to the garage to accommodate the conversion to an annexe include 1no. additional first floor window, 1no. ground floor window to replace a garage door, 2no. rooflights and the relocation of an external door. The proposed external materials are set to match existing. The design is considered acceptable.
- 4.3.12 The development is therefore considered to be in compliance with Policies D1, D2 and HS6 of the Local Plan and the core principles set out within Section 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Impact on Neighbouring Properties:

- 4.3.13 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 NHLP.
- 4.3.14 The use of the garage as an annexe is not considered to amount to an increase in noise generation when compared to the prior use. The lack of enlargement of the garage is not considered to harm the amenities of neighbouring occupants. Given the appropriate siting and scale of the extensions, it is not considered that the proposed development causes such harm to neighbour amenity as to be objectionable in terms of over-dominance, shading or loss of privacy.
- 4.3.15 This development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy D3 of the NHLP and Section 14 of the NPPF.

Highways and Parking:

- 4.3.16 Application seeks to increase the number of bedrooms from 3no in the main dwelling to 3no. in the main dwelling and 1no. in the annexe. The application site would retain a minimum of 2no. parking spaces. Therefore, with regard to Policy T2 of the NHLP, no parking issues should arise from the proposal.

Environmental Implications

- 4.3.17 The proposed development is not large enough in scale to cause significant implications for the local environment in terms of carbon emissions and therefore would be generally in compliance with Section 14 of the NPPF.

Biodiversity Net Gain:

- 4.3.18 This is a form of development which is exempt from BNG Legislation, defined under article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 due it falling under the scope of the 'de minimis' exemption.

4.4 **Conclusion**

- 4.4.1 In the absence of material planning reasons to the contrary it is my view that planning permission is **GRANTED**.

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 extension(s) hereby permitted shall be built in external materials to match the existing dwellinghouse unless otherwise agreed in writing by the LPA.

Reason: To protect the visual amenities of the locality and to comply with Policies D1 and D2 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 to 2031.

4. 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 Hitchwood Cottage.

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 and to comply with Policy HS6 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 to 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  Sarah Kasparian	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Determining Officer Date: 5 October 2026	