

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

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

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
26/00689/FP	Replacement of five rear escape staircases and balustrades following the removal of five rear existing staircases and balustrades	Garrison Court Hollow Lane Hitchin Hertfordshire SG4 9SE

Submitted Plan Nos

2601-0100-AL-001-T01 2601-0100-AL-002-T01 - 2601-0100-AL-003-T01 2601-0100-AL-004-T01 2601-0100-AL-005-T01 2601-0200-AL-001-T01 2601-0200-AL-002-T01 2601-0200-AL-003-T01 2601-0200-AL-004-T01 2601-0200-AL-005-T01 2601-0200-AL-006-T01 2601-0300-AL-001-T01 2601-0300-AL-002-T01 2601-0300-AL-003-T01 2601-0300-AL-004-T01 2601-0300-AL-005-T01

1.0 Policies

D1	Sustainable design
D3	Protecting living conditions
T2	Parking
NE4	Biodiversity and geological sites
SECN12	Achieving well-designed places
SECN14	Meeting climate change,coastal,flooding

2.0 **Site History**

2.1 None relevant.

3.0 **Representations**

3.1 **Neighbour Consultation** – 3x Support:

- Existing stairs and escapes look tired.
- Enhancement of the appearance.
- Existing concrete is in poor condition.

3.2 **Archaeology** – No Comment.

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

4.1.1 The application site comprises the two southern blocks of Garrison Court. This includes the following numbers:

1 to 6 and 7 to 12. 13 to 18, 19 to 24 and 25 to 30.

- 4.1.2 The site is accessed from Mount Garrison and presents onto Hollow Lane. It is close to Hitchin Town Centre and is adjacent to Windmill Hill. The site is not within the Conservation Area, with the limit of this being Queen Street to the west. As existing, the buildings benefit from staircase access providing balcony entrances to the first and second floors of the buildings.

4.2 **Proposal**

- 4.2.1 The application proposes the replacement of five rear escape staircases and balustrades following the removal of five rear existing staircases and balustrades.

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 Hitchin. Policy SP2 advises that 'other development' will be permitted where they are sited within the defined settlement boundary of Hitchin. Given that the site is within the settlement boundary, the proposed development would comply with Policy SP2.

Design and Appearance:

- 4.3.3 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.
- 4.3.4 The submitted planning statement advises that the works are necessary given the age of the existing staircases, and the need to bring them up to a suitable standard to meet present day building regulations. Balustrades also require replacement given their potential for water ingress into the concrete balcony structure. Broadly, the appearance of the staircases would remain consistent with the existing arrangement, though their orientation would be altered and the manner of ascending to the upper floor would be altered by removing the need to walk along the balcony to access the next set of stairs

up. The proposed materials of construction would be zinc galvanized metal, whilst the existing is black painted iron. It is considered that this change in appearance would be acceptable, and whilst utilitarian in appearance would not be detrimental to local character, Furthermore, the staircases are sited within the development and are therefore unlikely to be frequently viewed from public vantage points. Overall, the design impacts would not be unacceptable.

- 4.3.5 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 on Neighbouring Properties:

- 4.3.6 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.
- 4.3.7 The proposed replacement staircases would result in a minor change in bulk and outlook given their altered location and method of ascending the stairs. The vantage point in terms of its height would not be raised and would therefore not allow for unacceptable losses of privacy over and above the existing arrangement. No neighbour objections were received.
- 4.3.8 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.

Environmental Implications:

- 4.3.9 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. It is considered that the development would fall within the 'de minimis' exemption for nationally required BNG given the development would not impact upon >25 sqm of on-site habitat. Given the nature of the works I do not consider it is reasonable to seek enhancements as per Policy NE4. No other ecological impacts are considered to arise.

4.4 Conclusion

- 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.

Biodiversity Net Gain

1. This development is not subject to the statutory Biodiversity Gain Plan condition because it is considered exempt under the statutory exemptions (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain-exempt-developments>) or transitional arrangements in respect of the biodiversity gain condition.

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: 11 May 2026	