

**Unit 59-63, Bury Mead Road,
Hitchin, SG5 1RT**

Planning Statement

December 2025



WARNER

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1 Introduction

This Planning Statement is submitted by Warner Planning on behalf of the applicant D&A Engineering. This application seeks retrospective consent for two small side extensions to unit 59-63, Bury Mead Road, Hitchin.

The following documents support the application:

- ✳ Location Plan;
- ✳ Existing and proposed site plan
- ✳ Existing and proposed elevations and floor plans
- ✳ This Planning Statement
- ✳ Noise Survey

This Planning Statement sets out the background relevant to the determination of the application, by describing the site and its general locality, before setting out details of the proposed development. The statement provides an overview of the planning policy context against which the development is assessed, followed by a detailed consideration of the development proposals against this policy context and all other relevant material considerations.

In making this planning application, it is our submission that the application proposes a high quality, sustainable development that will complement the immediate locality, and the wider area.

There are significant benefits to be delivered by the development. It is considered that there are compelling grounds to grant planning permission for the proposed development, with these set out as follows:

- ✳ The regularisation of two modest and subordinate side extensions
- ✳ The continued lawful and established use on site
- ✳ The continuation and use of existing parking and access arrangements
- ✳ A development upon hard surfaced land with no ecological impacts
- ✳ A design in keeping with the established employment and industrial context of Bury Mead Road
- ✳ Efficient use of the existing building footprint, supporting long-term operational viability of the business
- ✳ No change of use or intensification of onsite activity

The applicant constructed the extensions in the genuine and reasonable belief that they fell within the scope of permitted development. Class H of the Town and Country Planning



(General Permitted Development) (England) Order allows for small ancillary extensions to buildings within residential or commercial curtilages, and the scale and positioning of the works undertaken appeared to the applicant to comply with these tolerances. The extensions were therefore built on the understanding that formal planning permission was not required. Once it became clear that the Council considered the works to fall outside permitted development, the applicant acted promptly and transparently by submitting this retrospective application to regularise the development. This included commissioning the requested noise report.

This Planning Statement should be read in conjunction with the supporting documents, existing and proposed plans, submitted to accompany this planning application.



2 The site and surrounding area

The application site is located on Bury Mead Road, in the north-western part of Hitchin. Bury Mead Road lies within an established industrial and employment area, situated approximately three-quarters of a mile to the north of Hitchin town centre. Hitchin's mainline railway station is approximately one mile away, providing frequent rail connections into London. Vehicular access is good: the site benefits from its proximity to the A505, which connects Hitchin to the A1(M) and other key transport corridors.

The area is dominated by industrial, warehouse, and light-industrial premises. According to the North Hertfordshire Employment Land Review, the Bury Mead Road employment site spans about 7.31 hectares, with a mix of lower-grade industrial activities and some office facilities.

The industrial character is reinforced by a range of modern and older units. Some newer units along Bury Mead Road have been built for flexible use in B1 (office), B2 (industrial), and B8 (storage/distribution) classes. There are also larger portal-frame warehouse buildings dating from the 1970s, reflecting the long-standing industrial function of the area. Within the employment area there are also ancillary uses, such as surface storage yards.

Although the site is primarily industrial, the surrounding context is not exclusively so. To the south and east of the industrial estate lies more urban, residential Hitchin, including historic and suburban neighbourhoods. Hitchin itself is a market town with a rich historic character, but the Bury Mead Road employment area is physically separated from the town centre by railway lines and road infrastructure, helping to buffer the industrial operations from more sensitive uses.

In summary, the application site sits within a well-established industrial employment area. The character of the immediate locality is strongly industrial, with a mix of manufacturing, repair, storage, and office uses. Its location benefits from good transport links – both by road and by rail – and while it is close to the town centre, it is sufficiently separated from residential and historic parts of Hitchin to maintain its primary role as a business and industrial zone.



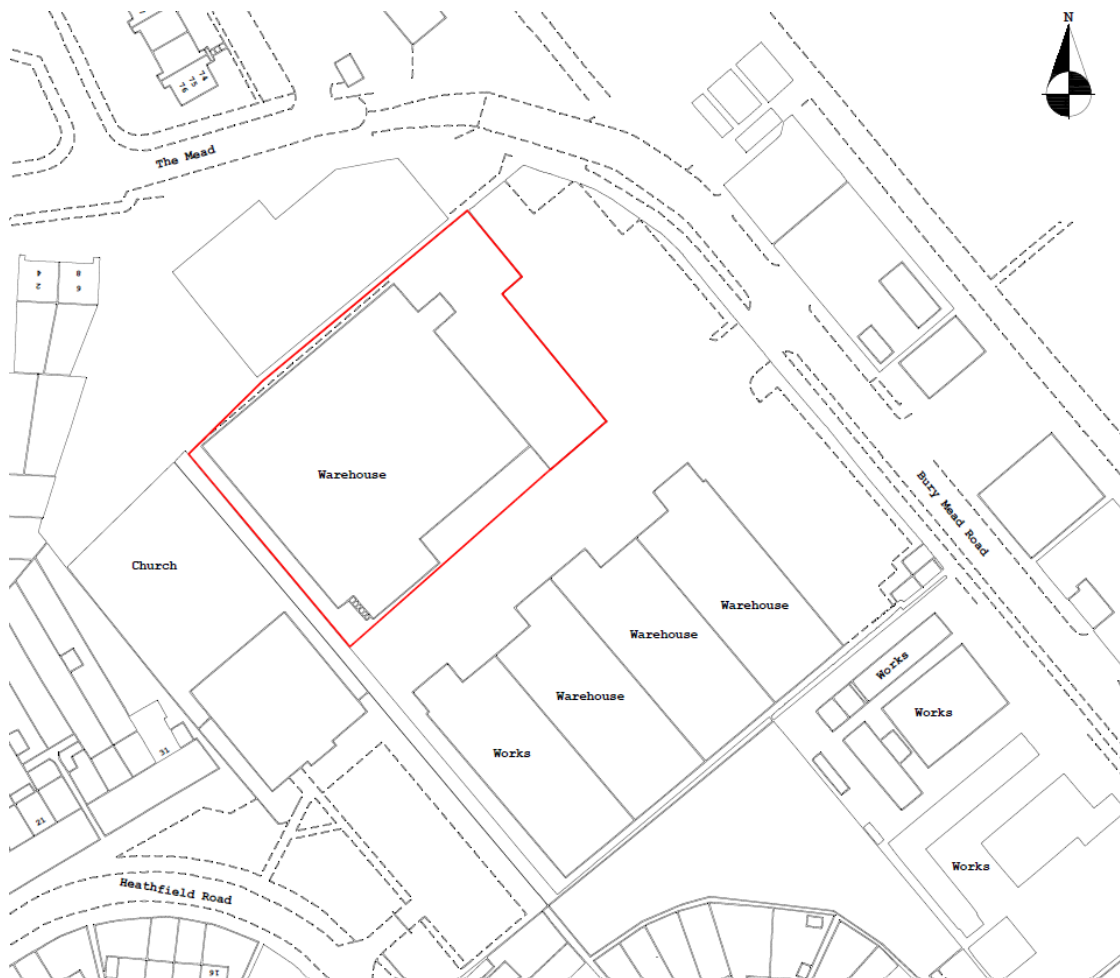


Figure 1: Location Plan



Figure 2: Site Location



Planning History

A search of the North Herts Council planning register revealed the following planning history upon the application site.

Reference	Address	Proposal	Status
93/00121/1A	Unit 5 Bury Mead Road Hitchin SG5 1RT	Non-illuminated logo sign.	Conditional Permission
91/00048/1	Unit 5 Bury Mead Road Hitchin SG5 1RT	Erection of security fence to enclose car park area.	Conditional Permission
90/00797/1	Bury Mead Industrial Estate Bury Mead Road Hitchin SG5 1TE	Retention of diesel tank	Conditional permission
78/00929/1	Unit 5 Bury Mead Road Hitchin SG5 1RT	Installation of two liquid petroleum gas storage tanks for fuel supply to delivery vehicles	Conditional permission
74/01003/1	Unit 5 Bury Mead Road Hitchin SG5 1RT	Additional use of 6,400 sq. Ft. of building for storage purposes	Withdrawn

Table 1: Site Planning History



Site Attributes and Constraints

Attribute / Constraint	Applicability
Green Belt	The site is located within the Green Belt.
Area Of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)	The site is not located within an AONB
Conservation Area	The site is not located within a conservation area
Listed Buildings	There are no listed buildings upon the site or within the immediate area surrounding the site.
Flood Zone	The site is located within Flood Zone 1 from fluvial sources, and the majority of the site is not at risk from surface water flooding, although there is a small area at risk to the east of the eastern barn on the site.
Environmental Designation (such as SPA/ SANG/ Wildlife Site)	There are no known environmental designations upon the site. However, the application site is directly adjacent to designated ancient woodland. The site is also located within close proximity to a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest.
Public Rights of Way	There are no public rights of way upon the site



3 Proposed Development

This section outlines the proposal and seeks to discuss the potential for retrospective consent for two side extensions to units 59-63, Bury Mead Road, Hitchin.

The proposal consists of the following:

- ⊗ Retrospective consent for a side extension (East)
- ⊗ Retrospective consent for a side extension (West)
- ⊗ Use of in keeping materials which match the host built form
- ⊗ The retention and reuse of existing parking arrangements
- ⊗ The retention and reuse of existing bin storage

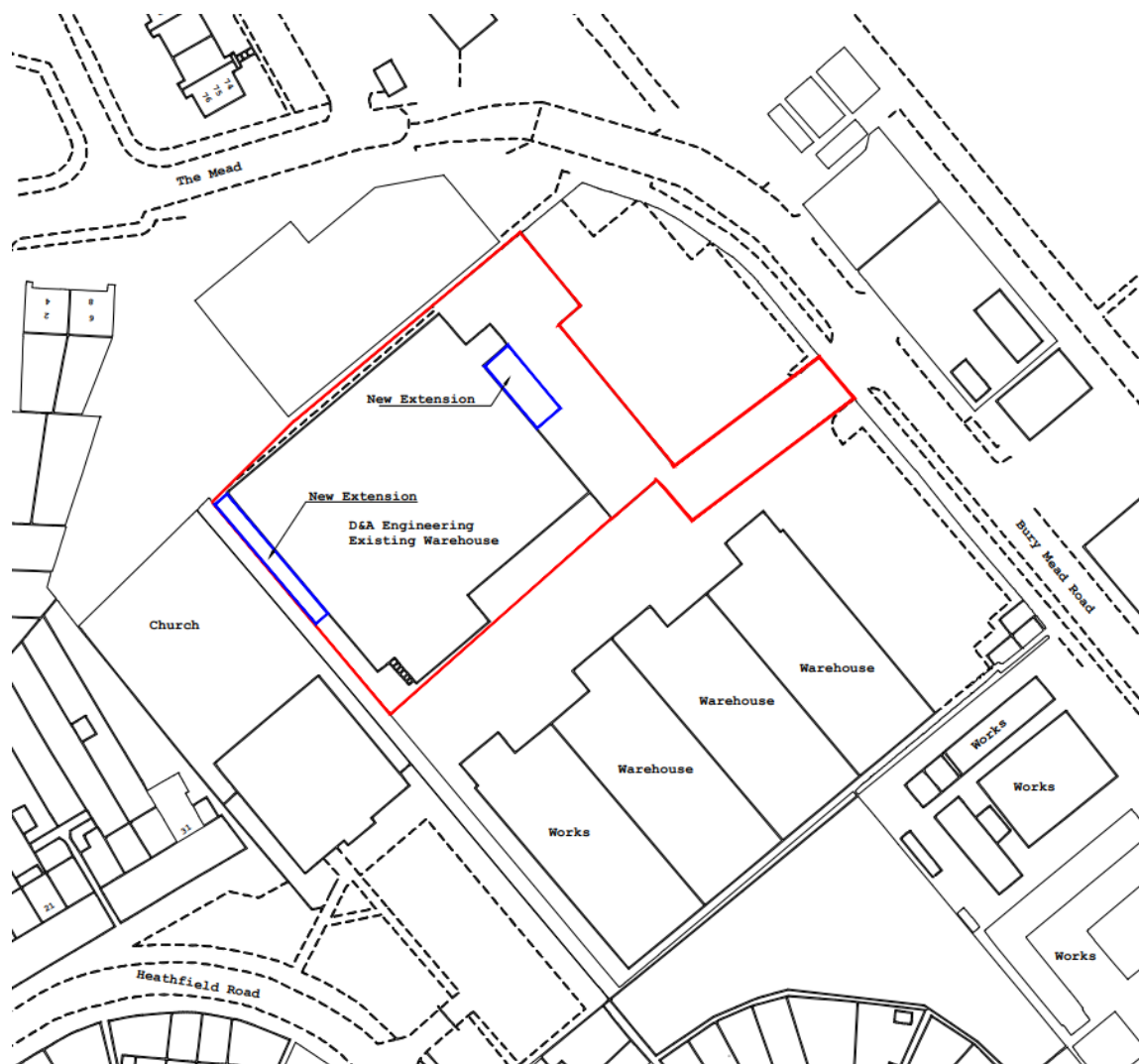


Figure 3: Site Plan



The proposed works have been designed to integrate seamlessly with the existing building, with all external materials chosen to match the current palette in colour, texture and appearance. The scheme retains the existing parking provision on site with no loss of spaces, ensuring the current access and circulation arrangements are unchanged. The existing bin store is also to be retained in its current location and configuration, maintaining the established refuse collection arrangements.



Planning Policy Context

The planning policy context relating to the application site is formed through:

- ✿ National Planning Policy
- ✿ Local Planning Policy

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan material for this proposal comprises:

- ✿ North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031

Other material considerations include:

- ✿ Planning Obligations SPD
- ✿ Sustainability SPD

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally prepared plans for housing, and other development can be produced.

Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework must be considered in preparing the development plan and is a material consideration in planning decisions. Planning policies and decisions must also reflect relevant international obligations and statutory requirements.

At the heart of the Framework is a "presumption in favour of sustainable development". Therefore, where there are no relevant development plan policies or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of-date, planning permission should be granted unless: i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

Chapter 2 of the NPPF sets out guidance towards achieving sustainable development. The guidance emphasises that achieving sustainable development should be supported by the provision of economic, social, and environmental objectives. The guidance states that;



"The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, including the provision of homes, commercial development, and supporting infrastructure in a sustainable manner. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"

Chapter 6 of the NPPF sets out guidance towards building a strong, competitive economy. The guidance states that:

"Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand, and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, considering both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future. This is particularly important where Britain can be a global leader in driving innovation, and in areas with high levels of productivity, which should be able to capitalise on their performance and potential."

This is furthered in paragraph 88 where it specifically states the following:

"Planning policies and decisions should enable:

- a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed, beautiful new buildings;*
- b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;*
- c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and*
- d) the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship"*

Paragraph 115 of the NPPF states that:

"Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe."

Chapter 11 of the NPPF sets out guidance towards making effective use of land. Paragraph 123 of the NPF states that:



“Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously developed or ‘brownfield’ land.”

This is furthered in paragraph 124 (d):

“Planning policies and decisions should:

...

d) promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively (for example converting space above shops, and building on or above service yards, car parks, lock-ups and railway infrastructure) ...”

Chapter 12 of the NPPF sets out guidance towards achieving well designed and beautiful places. Paragraph 131 specifically states that:

“The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. 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. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.”

North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031

Strategic Objectives:

ENV4

Mitigate the effects of climate change by encouraging the use of sustainable construction techniques, the appropriate use of renewable energy technologies and reducing the risk of flooding.

ECON1

Support a vibrant, diverse and competitive local economy that provides a range of job opportunities enabling new and existing businesses to grow and thrive.



ECON2

Ensure an adequate supply of employment land, office accommodation and support facilities to meet the needs of new and existing businesses within our urban and rural areas.

ECON8

Ensure all development is supported by the necessary provision of, or improvements to infrastructure, services and facilities in an effective and timely manner to make development sustainable and minimise its effect upon existing communities

Policy SP1 – Sustainable Development in North Hertfordshire

This Plan supports the principles of sustainable development within North Hertfordshire. We will:

- ✿ Maintain the role of key settlements within and adjoining the district as the main focus for housing, employment and new development making use of previously developed land where possible;
- ✿ Ensure the long-term vitality of the district's villages by supporting growth which provides opportunities for existing and new residents and sustains key facilities;
- ✿ Grant planning permission for proposals that, individually or cumulatively:
 - delivers an appropriate mix of homes, jobs and facilities that contribute towards the targets and aspirations in this Plan;
 - create high-quality developments that respect and improve their surroundings and provide opportunities for healthy lifestyle choices;
 - provide the necessary infrastructure required to support an increasing population;
 - protect key elements of North Hertfordshire's environment including biodiversity, important landscapes, heritage assets and green infrastructure (including the water environment); and
- ✿ secures any necessary mitigation measures that reduce the impact of development, including on climate change; and Support neighbourhood plans and other local planning initiatives where they are in general conformity with the strategic policies of this Local Plan.

Policy SP3 – Employment

The Council will proactively encourage sustainable economic growth, support new and existing businesses, and seek to build on the district's strengths, location and offer. We will

- ✿ Allocate an adequate supply of employment land to meet the needs of the Functional Economic Market Area over the plan period to 2031. The allocations as shown on the Policies Map are:



- east of Baldock BA10 (19.6ha); and
- west of Royston RY9 (10.9ha);
- ✿ Safeguard Employment Areas within the District's main settlements, as shown on the Policies Map, to enhance and protect their employment potential;
- ✿ Work with landowners, developers and, for sites on the edge of the district, adjoining authorities to identify an appropriate amount of employment land to be included through the master planning process in strategic housing sites;
- ✿ Permit an appropriate range of offices, research, and development, light industrial or B class employment uses within these areas;
- ✿ Promote and support the expansion of the knowledge-based economy in the district. Proposals for the redevelopment of existing employment sites and the development of new employment sites which increase the level of knowledge-intensive employment will be supported in principle.
- ✿ Support offices, research and development, light industrial and B class uses in appropriate locations outside of designated employment areas, including offices in main town centres and concentrations of these employment uses in certain villages; and
- ✿ Ensure relevant policies of this Plan recognise the contribution of sectors other than B Class uses and offices, research and development and light industrial uses, including tourism, to the provision of jobs.

Policy SP9 – Design and Sustainability

The Council considers good design to be a key aspect of sustainable development. We will:

- a) Support new development where it is well designed and located and responds positively to its local context;
- b) Require Strategic Masterplans to be produced for Strategic Housing Sites and other significant development. Significant development generally comprises residential development of 100 dwellings or more. Exceptionally, developments under 100 dwellings will be considered significant if there are site specific complexities and sensitivities that require a masterplan-led approach. In some circumstances a Strategic Masterplan may also be required to consider the cumulative impact of more than one site to support a co-ordinated and integrated approach to place-making and design.
- c) Require Strategic Masterplans and planning applications for Strategic Housing Sites and significant development to (as applicable):
 - i. create buildings, spaces and streets which positively reflect and respond to the local landscape, townscape and historic character
 - ii. create integrated, accessible and sustainable transport systems with walking, cycling and public transport designed to be the most attractive forms of transport and effectively linking into the surrounding areas;



- iii. provide a clear structure and hierarchy of pedestrian friendly streets and well-connected footpaths and cycleways integrate with the wider built and natural environment and communities;
- iv. plan for integrated and mixed-use communities with walkable locally accessible community, employment and retail facilities;
- v. positively integrate with adjacent rural and urban communities and positively contribute to their character and the way the area functions, including addressing cumulative, cross boundary planning and infrastructure matters;
- vi. create and accessible multi-functional green infrastructure network that provides:
 - a key structuring and functional place-making feature supporting healthy lifestyles, sport, play and recreation linking into the wider Green Infrastructure Network; and
 - a high-quality integrated network to support ecological connectivity, biodiversity net gain, climate adaptation and mitigation linking into the wider Ecological Network
- vii. ensure the effective use of sustainable urban drainage and sustainable water management;
- viii. ensure a hierarchy of linked, high quality and attractive public spaces and public realm that is safe, attractive and supports social interaction for all age groups; and
- ix. design to last with a clear stewardship, management and maintenance strategy

d) Ensure Strategic Masterplans are informed by a technical and design evidence base and include the following for Strategic Housing Sites and where applicable for other significant development:

- i. site specific vision and place-making principles
- ii. Masterplan setting out the quantum, scale, type, mix and distribution of land uses, housing and community facilities;
- iii. Green Infrastructure Framework identifying the scale, distribution, type and design of green spaces, biodiversity net gain, strategic drainage and on and off-site linkages:
- iv. Movement Framework setting out the key access points, strategic highways, street hierarchy and footways and cycleways (on and off site)
- v. Urban Design Framework and design principles identifying how the site responds to local character and context and key structuring elements and layout principles (including heights and densities)
- vi. Sustainability & Energy Framework identifying site-wide and building scale opportunities for low and zero carbon
- vii. Illustrative Masterplan Layout
- viii. Infrastructure Delivery, Phasing & Management Strategy

e) Encourage the submission of Strategic Masterplans for the Council's consideration and agreement before the submission of a planning application. We will also confirm the scope and contents of individual Strategic Masterplans with applicants in pre-application discussions. Planning applications must be accompanied by a Strategic Masterplan. Where applications have already been submitted to the Council a Strategic Masterplan should be agreed with the Council prior to or as part of the grant of planning permission. Adherence to the Strategic Masterplan



will be secured through planning conditions and/or legal agreement.

f) Assess proposals against detailed policy requirements set out in this Plan and have regard to the Design SPD; and

g) Adopt the Government's additional technical standards for the size of new homes, water efficiency and, in specified circumstances, accessibility.

Development Management Policies (North Herts Local Plan)

Policy ETC1 – Appropriate use in Employment Areas

Within the safeguarded Employment Areas, and the Employment Allocations (BA10 and RY9), as shown on the Policies Map, planning permission will be granted for office, research and development, industrial processes, industrial and storage and distribution uses provided:

a) For allocated sites any relevant site-specific criteria are met; and

b) Any Use Class B8 development is easily accessible from the primary road network.

Planning permission for other uses will be granted as an exception to the above criteria provided they are:

i. Ancillary to the above uses; ii. Essential to the continued operation of an established premises;

iii. Would bring comparable benefits to office, research and development, industrial processes, industrial and storage and distribution uses in the same location; or

iv. Would make use of a site that would otherwise be likely to become or remain vacant for an extended period of time.

Conditions and legal agreements will be used to limit uses to ensure that development meets, and will continue to meet, identified employment needs

Policy T1 – Assessment of Transport Matters

Planning permission will be granted provided that:

a) Development would not lead to highway safety problems or cause unacceptable impacts upon the highway network;

b) Mechanisms to secure any necessary sustainable transport measures and / or improvements to the existing highway network are secured in accordance with Policy SP7;

c) Suitable Transport Statements, Transport Assessments and / or Travel Plans along with supporting documents are provided where required; and



- d) For major developments, applicants demonstrate (as far as is practicable) how:
- i. the proposed scheme would be served by public transport;
 - ii. safe, direct and convenient routes for pedestrians and cyclists will be provided; and
 - iii. comprehensive integration into the existing pedestrian and cycle, public transport and road networks will be secured.

Policy T2- Parking

Planning permission will be granted provided that:

- ✿ Parking for non-residential development is provided having regard to the standards for non-residential development set out in the relevant Supplementary Planning Document;
- ✿ Proposals have regard to relevant Supplementary Planning Documents, strategies, or advice and;
- ✿ Applicants clearly identify how they provide for all types of parking demand and demonstrate that parking will be safe and of a design and layout that will function satisfactorily.

Variations from these standards will only be considered where applicants can demonstrate that the accessibility, type, scale, mix and use of the development; the availability of and opportunities for public transport; local car ownership levels; and on-street conditions justify such variations.

Policy D1 – Sustainable Design

Planning permission will be granted provided that development proposals:

- a) Respond positively to the site's local context;
- b) Take all reasonable opportunities, consistent with the nature and scale of the scheme, to:
 - i. create or enhance public realm;
 - ii. optimise the potential of the site by incorporating Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS);
 - iii. reduce energy consumption and waste;
 - iv. retain existing vegetation and propose appropriate new planting;
 - v. maximise accessibility, legibility and physical and social connectivity both internally and with neighbouring areas;
 - vi. future proof for changes in technology and lifestyle;
 - vii. design-out opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour; and
 - viii. minimise the visual impact of street furniture and parking provision;



- c) Have regard to the Design SPD, and any other relevant guidance;
- d) Within Letchworth Garden City have regard to the Letchworth Garden City Design Principles contained in Appendix 5; and
- e) For residential schemes, meet or exceed the nationally described space standards and optional water efficiency standards.

Supplementary Planning Documents

Planning Obligations SPD

The Planning Obligations SPD outlines the overarching approach to planning obligations and aligns these to the Council's priorities and objectives.

The PSD sets out its main aims as stated below:

“Set out the requirements for planning obligations to ensure that the additional demands upon infrastructure, services and facilities arising from new development are provided for and are put in place at the right time;

Meet the relevant sustainability objectives contained within the Sustainability Appraisal to ensure that existing communities are not significantly harmed as a result of new development and prevention, compensation or mitigation measures are secured where it is necessary to protect or enhance the natural, built and historic environment;

Ensure the Council provides a more consistent, transparent, practical and streamlined approach to the negotiations of planning obligations in accordance with Circular 05/2005: Planning Obligations; and

Contribute towards achieving the District’s vision and the Council’s mission and strategic objectives as set out in the Corporate Plan (2005 – 2015) (see paragraph 2.7.9)”

Sustainability SPD

The newly adopted sustainability SPD sets out the North Herts priority to create sustainable communities. The SPD looks to achieve sustainable development through prioritising the provision of high-quality sustainable design, appropriate location for development, active travel opportunities and enhancing the natural environment.

The SPD reflects on national and international climate agendas and aims to align North Herts to



these.



5 Analysis

An assessment of the proposed development has been undertaken against the relevant planning policy framework for the site, and other material considerations in accordance with Section 38 (6) of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act. The Assessment considers the following matters:

- ✿ Principle of Development
- ✿ Design
- ✿ Flood Risk and Drainage
- ✿ Ecology and Biodiversity
- ✿ Parking and Highways
- ✿ Amenity and Noise
- ✿ Sustainability

Principle of Development

This retrospective application submission follows proactive and positive interactions with the Council and seeks to regularise the introduction of the built additions at the application site.

The overarching principle of development for this application is underpinned by local and national policy and focuses on the regularisation of the side extensions to the existing built form at 59-63 Bury Mead Road, Hitchin.

The site is located within an established and designated employment area. The site is surrounded by a mixed use of office, storage, commercial and light industrial facilities within the immediate site locality with some residential properties to the north of the site. Typically small scale extensions such as this are acceptable under permitted development. Albeit, as a B2 use, an element of control is required by the Council.

The principle of the retrospective extensions is considered acceptable due to the existing built form on the site already reflecting the functional requirements of the longstanding operation, and the two side extensions represent modest subordinate additions that remain well within the scale and character of the established warehouse complex.

The extensions do not introduce a new or more intensive land use, but instead serve to support and enhance the operational efficiency of the existing lawful use. Their purpose is to provide additional ancillary floor area required for the ongoing functioning of the business, enabling improved internal layout, storage capacity and workflow without materially altering the nature of activities on the site. As such, the development aligns with national and local planning policy objectives that seek to safeguard and encourage sustainable economic activity, optimise the



use of previously-developed land, and support the growth and adaptation of existing employment uses.

Given the site's established commercial/light-industrial context, the subordinate scale of the extensions and their role in facilitating the continued operation of the existing use, the principle of development is considered acceptable. The retrospective works remain compatible with the character and function of the wider area and do not give rise to any land-use conflicts. Accordingly, the development accords with the overarching policy framework that supports incremental improvements to established employment sites.

Design

This retrospective application seeks to regularise built elements on-site. The built elements on site comprise the list below:

-  The erection of a single storey side extension to the East side of the existing warehouse
-  The erection of a single storey side extension to the West side of the existing warehouse

Both extensions have been designed and constructed to integrate seamlessly with the established warehouse building. Their form, scale and external appearance reflect the character typical of commercial/light-industrial premises within this part of Bury Mead Road. The materials, roof profile and elevational treatment match the host structure, ensuring that the additions read as subordinate components of the overall building rather than visually assertive standalone elements.

The surrounding context is defined by a mix of industrial units, commercial workshops and storage buildings of varying ages and architectural quality. These structures collectively establish a clear industrial vernacular and provide a strong design precedent for simple and practical built form. The retrospective extensions respond directly to this context, matching the established warehouse and reinforcing the coherent industrial character of the wider employment area.

In design terms, the extensions represent modest, proportionate additions that maintain the integrity of the original building. Their subordinate height and footprint ensure that the massing and scale of the warehouse remain largely unchanged. The development also avoids any harmful visual impact when viewed from Bury Mead Road or adjacent industrial plots, continuing to present a consistent and functional frontage that is characteristic of this commercial environment.

The built form accords with the principles of Local Plan Policy SP9, which seeks high-quality design that is appropriately located and responds positively to local surroundings. The



extensions meet these objectives by respecting the existing warehouse structure, reinforcing the site's established industrial use and maintaining the visual continuity of the employment area.

Furthermore, the proposal aligns with the aims of Chapter 12 of the NPPF, which requires development to achieve good design, be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, and contribute positively to local character. The retrospective works achieve these aims through their sympathetic integration with the host building and their unobtrusive contribution to the wider industrial setting.

Overall, the design of the extensions is considered appropriate, proportionate and fully in keeping with the established commercial/light-industrial character of the site and its surroundings.

Flood Risk and Drainage

The application site is located within Flood Zone 1, representing the area of lowest probability of fluvial and tidal flooding, in accordance with the Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning. The site is also identified as being at low risk of surface water flooding.

Given this low-risk context, the retrospective extensions do not introduce any material increase in vulnerability to flooding. The additions comprise modest single-storey structures positioned on previously developed hardstanding within the established commercial curtilage. As such, the development does not result in the loss of permeable land, nor does it alter the existing topography in a manner that could increase flood risk either on-site or to neighbouring properties.

Surface water from the extensions continues to be managed in the same manner as the existing building, using the established drainage arrangements serving the warehouse and wider employment area. The scale and footprint of the extensions are minor relative to the overall site area, and there is no evidence to suggest that the completed works have resulted in any drainage or run-off issues. The existing drainage infrastructure has continued to operate satisfactorily since construction.

In line with the NPPF, which requires development in areas of low flood risk to ensure flood risk is not increased elsewhere, the proposal is considered to meet this requirement. The extensions do not introduce any form of development that would be classified as vulnerable or non-compatible within Flood Zone 1, and they represent a low-impact form of intensification within an established industrial setting.

Accordingly, the retrospective extensions raise no issues in respect of flood risk or drainage and fully accord with the requirements of the NPPF and Local Plan policy. The development is



appropriately located within Flood Zone 1, does not materially alter surface water flow characteristics, and continues to rely on suitable existing drainage provision without giving rise to flood risk concerns for the site or its surroundings. The proposal is suitably and sustainably located, and overall, it meets NE7 of the development plan.



Ecology and Biodiversity

The site is an established commercial/light-industrial premises characterised entirely by built form and hardstanding. The retrospective extensions have been constructed on areas previously occupied by existing hard surfacing and operational yard space. As such, the development did not involve the removal of vegetation, soft landscaping, or any other features of ecological value.

Publicly available mapping and local environmental data indicate no priority habitats, protected species designations, or notable ecological constraints within or immediately adjacent to the site. The surrounding area is predominantly industrial in character, with limited opportunities for habitats or species of ecological significance. Accordingly, the potential for ecological impact associated with the modest built additions is considered to be negligible.

Given the absence of habitat loss, the nature and scale of the works, and the industrial context, the development falls within the exemptions to mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements. Under the relevant Regulations and guidance, BNG does not apply where:

- The development does not impact any on-site habitat, such as cases where works occur entirely on existing hardstanding or buildings; and/or



- The application is retrospective, which is explicitly recognised as an exemption category.

This proposal meets both criteria. The site consisted solely of previously developed, low-value hardstanding at the time the extensions were erected, and no habitat capable of generating a measurable biodiversity unit score has been affected. As such, no BNG metric calculation is required to support this application.

In ecological terms, the completed extensions are minor in scale, fully integrated within an existing operational industrial site, and have no reasonable likelihood of affecting protected species, habitats, or ecological networks. No lighting, operational changes, or external works have been introduced that would give rise to ecological effects.

Overall, the development is acceptable in ecology and biodiversity terms. The retrospective additions have not resulted in any loss of habitat, do not give rise to ecological harm, and fall within the exemptions from mandatory BNG requirements. The proposal complies to Policy NE4 of the North Herts Local Plan and aligns with the aims and objectives of this Local Plan Policy.

Parking and Highways

The principle of vehicular access, parking and on-site circulation is long established on the application site, which has operated as a commercial/light-industrial warehouse for many years. The site benefits from an existing access arrangement from Bury Mead Road, along with established areas for vehicle manoeuvring, loading, and staff/visitor parking. These arrangements remain unchanged and continue to function effectively.

The retrospective extensions comprise modest, single-storey additions to the east and west elevations of the existing warehouse and do not introduce any new or intensified use of the site. The purpose of the extensions is to support the efficient operation of the existing lawful business rather than to expand its capacity or increase staffing levels. Accordingly, the development does not generate any additional traffic movements beyond those already associated with the established use.

No alterations have been made to the site's access points, internal circulation, or parking layout as a result of the works. Sufficient parking provision continues to be available, and the retrospective development does not give rise to any requirement for additional parking spaces. The existing access remains safe, suitable and compliant with the needs of a commercial/light-industrial facility.

Given that the development neither affects the established site operations nor results in any intensification of use, it is considered that there are no highways or parking impacts arising from the retrospective proposals. The local highway network is fully capable of accommodating the existing level of activity, and the extensions have no bearing on highway safety, visibility,



servicing arrangements or vehicle movements.

Overall, the retrospective development is acceptable in highways and parking terms. It maintains established access and parking arrangements, does not create additional demand for parking or generate increased traffic, and therefore accords with the requirements of the NPPF and relevant Local Plan policies relating to transport and highway safety.

Amenity and Noise

The two single-storey side extensions are modest in scale and utilise materials that match the existing warehouse, ensuring no adverse impact on the visual amenity of nearby residential properties. Their height, massing and siting in relation to the site boundaries prevent any issues of overlooking, overshadowing or loss of outlook.

This retrospective application follows an enforcement enquiry. In response, the applicant commissioned a professional Noise Assessment to address the concerns raised. To address these concerns, a professional Noise Assessment has been undertaken by NSL Consultants and submitted in support of the application. The assessment identifies that noise levels associated with the existing commercial light-industrial operations—including activity within the extended areas—are only marginally above North Herts Council's policy-compliant threshold, by approximately 4dB. The report makes clear that this is a minor exceedance that can be readily and effectively mitigated through the installation of sound-insulating plasterboard within the extension areas.

With this mitigation in place, noise emissions will fall within acceptable limits and residential amenity can be safeguarded appropriately. Accordingly, the retrospective extensions are considered acceptable in amenity terms and do not result in significant or unacceptable noise impacts on surrounding properties.

Sustainability

Paragraph 8 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the overarching purpose of sustainable development and the three interconnected objectives—economic, social and environmental. The retrospective extensions appropriately support these aims, as outlined below:

Economic – The proposal reinforces the economic objective of sustainable development by supporting the continued efficient operation of an established commercial/light-industrial business. The modest extensions provide necessary ancillary floor space to enable improved functionality, storage and workflow within the existing operation. By supporting the viability and productivity of the business, the development contributes to a strong and competitive local economy and maintains ongoing employment and business-rate contributions.



Social – The scheme aligns with the social objectives of the NPPF by safeguarding existing jobs and providing an enhanced working environment for employees. Improved operational efficiency can support job retention and potential future employment within the locality. The extensions integrate into the existing built form without adverse impact on neighbouring uses, thereby continuing to provide a well-functioning and safe setting for those working on and visiting the site.

Environmental – The additions comprise modest, subordinate extensions to an established warehouse on previously developed land. The works have been undertaken within the footprint of an existing commercial site. No significant environmental constraints are affected, and the completed works respect the character and operational nature of the surrounding industrial setting.

The site occupies a sustainable location with good access to local services, the transport network and key employment areas, as set out earlier in this statement and well established through the employment designation within the Local Plan.

Overall, the retrospective extensions accord with the sustainable development principles of the NPPF and comply with the relevant local planning policies, including Policies SP1 and SP9 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan.



6 Conclusion

This Planning Statement is submitted by Warner Planning on behalf of the applicant D&A Engineering. This retrospective application seeks permission for the extension of the existing commercial unit at 59-63 Bury Mead Road, Hitchin.

It is considered that there are compelling grounds to support the proposed development, including:

- ✿ The regularisation of two modest and subordinate side extensions
- ✿ The continued lawful and established use on site
- ✿ The continuation and use of existing parking and access arrangements
- ✿ A development upon hard surfaced land with no ecological impacts
- ✿ A design in keeping with the established employment and industrial context of Bury Mead Road
- ✿ Efficient use of the existing building footprint, supporting long-term operational viability of the business
- ✿ No change of use or intensification of on site activity

The application is supported by a noise report, and with the proposed mitigation, the extension will have no undue impact on neighbouring properties.

In conclusion, the retrospective extensions at Bury Mead represent a modest, proportionate and policy-compliant form of development that supports the continued operation of an established and lawful commercial use. The works have been carefully assessed against the relevant policies of the National Planning Policy Framework and the North Hertfordshire Local Plan, and it is demonstrated that they do not result in material harm to the character, appearance or openness of the surrounding area.

The extensions are small in scale, well-related to the host building, and subordinate in massing. They retain the functional appearance of the unit and do not alter the established pattern of development along Bury Mead Road. Their siting away from sensitive boundaries ensures that there is no unacceptable impact on neighbouring amenity, with no loss of light, privacy or outlook for surrounding occupiers. The submitted Noise Assessment confirms that any minor exceedances can be effectively mitigated, and the applicant is committed to implementing mitigation measures immediately upon approval.

The applicant acted in good faith when constructing the extensions, believing them to fall within the scope of permitted development under Class H, which allows for small ancillary additions



of a similar nature. As soon as the Council advised otherwise, the applicant proactively submitted this application to regularise the development and ensure full compliance with planning controls.

The applicant is committed to working with the Council and is happy to meet with the Council to discuss the application and consider any amendments where appropriate.

In view of the above information contained within this report, and the supporting plans and statements, we respectfully invite the Council to approve this application.

