

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

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

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
25/02330/FP	Change of use of existing offices into 6 bed HMO (Class C4), insertion of rooflight and 2No. roof vents (as amended by plans received 9th March 2026).	1 John Street Royston Hertfordshire SG8 9BE

Submitted Plan Nos

0987 102 Rev D AC20182AS.01.01 Location Plan Block Plan

1.0 Policies

1.0 **Local and National Policy**

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

Section 2 – Achieving sustainable development
Section 5 – Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
Section 7 – Ensuring the vitality of town centres
Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places
Section 14 - Meeting the challenges of climate change, flooding and coastal change
Section 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

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

Strategic Policies

Policy SP1 – Sustainable Development in North Hertfordshire
Policy SP2 – Settlement Hierarchy and Spatial Distribution
Policy SP4 – Town Centres, Local Centres and Community Shops
Policy SP9 – Design and Sustainability
Policy SP13 – Historic environment

Development Management Policies

Policy ETC4 – Primary Shopping Frontages
Policy D1 – Sustainable design
Policy D3 – Protecting living conditions
Policy HE1 – Designated heritage assets
Policy HE4 – Archaeology

1.3 **Supplementary Planning Design (SPD)**

NHC Sustainability (2024)

2.0 **Relevant Site History**

2.1 25/02331/LBC - Internal alterations to facilitate change of use of existing offices into 6 bed HMO (Class C4), insertion of rooflight, secondary glazing, internal ventilation system and 2NO roof vents (as amended by plans received 9th March 2026). Decision Pending.

3.0 **Representations**

3.1 **Press, Site and Neighbour Consultation** – One objection has been received from no.24 Garden Lane, Royston raising the following concern:

- Objects to the property being turned into flats.

3.2 **Royston Council** – None received.

3.3 **NHC Conservation Officer** – Unobjectionable subject to conditions.

3.4 **NHC Environmental Health (Noise & Nuisance)** – No objection subject to compliance with NIA ref: AC20182AS.01.01 received on 16th January 2026.

3.5 **NHC Environmental Health (Contaminated Land)** – No objection.

3.6 **NHC Environmental Health (Air Quality)** – No objection.

3.5 **NHC waste & Recycling** – No objection.

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

4.1.1 The site is located on the north side of John Street and comprises of a three-storey, grade II listed building within the Royston Conservation Area. The existing use of the building is known to be Class E (commercial, business and service). Nos.28 High Street, also a grade II listed building lies to the west and Roysia House to the east.

4.1.2 For planning policy purposes, the site lies within the settlement boundary, the town centre boundary and is identified as having a prime shopping frontage.

4.2 **Proposal**

4.2.1 Change of use of existing offices into 6 bed HMO (Class C4), insertion of rooflight and 2No. roof vents (as amended by plans received 9th March 2026).

4.2.2 The application is accompanied by a Heritage Statement and a Noise Impact Assessment.

4.3 **Key Issues**

4.3.1 The key issues for consideration are as follows:

- The acceptability of the design of the proposed development and its resultant impact on the listed building and character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- The impact of the proposed use on the primary shopping frontage and wider town centre.
- 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.

Proposed Use & Layout

4.3.2 The objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include those seeking to secure the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places (Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places). Paragraph 131 of the NPPF states that “Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities”. Section 5 (Delivering a sufficient supply of housing) of the NPPF provides for wider housing offering accommodation for specific groups of people such as students, young professionals and those on low incomes though are not counted as part of housing need and do not affect the Council’s 5-year land supply. In this regard,

Policy D1 and D2 of the Local Plan are consistent with the objectives set out within the NPPF.

- 4.3.3 The development would see an existing office use converted to a small house in multiple occupation (HMO) which falls under use Class C4 and provides for up to six people living together as one household. Internal reconfiguration provides for two office rooms, small kitchen, boardroom, 2 x WC's and service areas including laundry room and bin and cycle storage at ground floor level. At first floor level there would be a large kitchen, communal space and bathroom along with two bedrooms and the installation of a double glazed clear fixed circular dome providing a degree of natural light to the bin and cycle store space directly below at ground floor level. At second floor level a further bathroom and 4 x bedrooms are proposed one with en-suite. At roof level 2 x tile ventilators are proposed to the rear roof slope. Minor internal alterations are proposed to facilitate the development, with no alterations to the external façade of the building. In terms of national space standards, HMO's are governed under housing legislation but as a general rule are shown to require a minimum of 6.51m² for one person and 10.22 m² for two people. All of the proposed bedrooms meet the required space standard for two people. Overall, the conversion offers adequate communal space with a functional layout and all rooms benefit from natural light.

Impact of the Use on the Town Centre

- 4.3.4 Section 7 (Ensuring the vitality of town centres) of the NPPF seeks to define the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas and recognises that residential development can play a part in ensuring the vitality of centres and encourages residential development on appropriate sites. Policy ETC4 supports development which does not, individually or cumulatively, undermine the retail function of the centre in the daytime or detract from the centre's vitality and viability. In this regard Policy ETC4 is consistent with the NPPF.
- 4.3.5 The proposed use retains office space at ground floor level whilst bringing upper floors of the building back into use, thereby increasing the amount of footfall into the area which in turn supports town centre shopping and other services provided within the town centre.
- 4.3.6 In this regard, I am satisfied that the use of the building as offices and a HMO is acceptable and in accordance with Policy ETC4 of the Local Plan.

Impact on Heritage Assets

- 4.3.7 Within a Conservation Area, the Council has a duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area, in accordance with Section 72 of the Listed Building and Conservation Areas Act (1990). Furthermore, Section 16 of the NPPF sets out guidance relating to sustaining and enhancing heritage assets. In this regard, Policy HE1 of the Local Plan is consistent with the NPPF.
- 4.3.8 When considering the impact of proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset (such as a listed building and Conservation Area), the NPPF notes that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation; the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be.
- 4.3.9 The proposed development would not have any significant impact on the listed building and would result in a low level of less than substantial harm. Given there are no changes to the external façade of the building, no harm would occur to the character

and appearance of the conservation area and a change of use of the upper floors would ensure a viable use is introduced.

- 4.3.10 I am satisfied that the proposed development would preserve the significance of the listed building and the character and appearance of the conservation area, resulting in no heritage harm and is acceptable and in accordance with Policy HE1 of the Local Plan and Section 16 of the NPPF.

Archaeology

- 4.3.11 No excavations are proposed and therefore there are no archaeological implications to consider.

Impact on Neighbouring Properties:

- 4.3.12 A core planning principle set out in the NPPF is to always seek to secure a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings. This principle is reflected in the provisions of Policy D3 of the Local Plan.
- 4.3.13 I am satisfied that the proposed conversion of upper floors with the inclusion of a System 4 mechanical extract ventilation with heat recovery (MVHR) system would ensure satisfactory living conditions for the occupants and at the same time prevent harm to neighbouring uses and would be in accordance with Policy D3 of the Local Plan and Section 12 of the NPPF.

Highways and Parking:

- 4.3.14 The proposed development would result in the addition of **six** bedrooms in the form of a HMO. Given the town centre location and availability of public transport and access to services no on-site parking provision is provided for the proposed units.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

- 4.3.15 This development is not subject to the statutory Biodiversity Gain Plan condition because it is exempt under the statutory exemptions as set out in paragraph 17 of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024.

Environmental Implications:

- 4.3.16 The Council's Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document (2024) seeks to ensure that new developments are future proofed against the challenge of climate change.
- 4.3.17 Section 14 of the NPPF sets out how the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future. The principles set out in Section 14 are reflected in Policy D1 of the Local Plan, which sets out that development proposals should take all reasonable opportunities to reduce energy consumption and waste, retain existing vegetation and propose new appropriate planting, and future proof for changes in technology and lifestyle.
- 4.3.18 Based on the details submitted, the proposed development, is unlikely to have any significant implications for the local environment in terms of carbon emissions and therefore would be generally in compliance with Policy D1 of the Local Plan and Section 14 of the NPPF.

4.4 **Conclusion**

- 4.4.1 The proposed development is considered acceptable and in accordance with Policies SP1, SP2, SP4, SP9, SP13, ETC4, D1, D3 and HE1 of the Local Plan 2011-2031 and Sections 2, 5, 7, 12, 14 and 16 of the NPPF.

4.5 **Alternative Options**

- 4.5.1 N/A

4.6 **Pre-Commencement Conditions**

- 4.6.1 N/A

5.0 **Recommendation**

- 5.1 That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out wholly in accordance with the details specified in the application and supporting approved documents and plans listed above.

Reason: To ensure the development is carried out in accordance with details which form the basis of this grant of permission.

3. Prior to the occupation of the development hereby approved, details as set out in the Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) reference: AC20182AS.01.01 received on 16th January 2026 shall be fully implemented and be maintained at all times.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory standard of residential amenity is achieved to protect the proposed occupants and existing neighbouring amenity in accordance with Policy D3 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 to 2031.

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. The Council acted proactively through positive engagement with the applicant during the determination process 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.

Signed  Shaun Greaves Determining Officer	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Date: 14 April 2026	