

**NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**PLANNING CONTROL COMMITTEE**

**MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES, GERON ROAD, LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY, SG6 3JF  
ON THURSDAY, 30TH JANUARY, 2025 AT 7.30 PM**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** *Councillors: Elizabeth Dennis (Chair), Nigel Mason (Vice-Chair), Emma Fernandes, Bryony May, Caroline McDonnell, Louise Peace, Tom Tyson, Martin Prescott, Val Bryant, Jon Clayden and Mick Debenham.*

**In Attendance:** *Peter Bull (Senior Planning Officer), Shaun Greaves (Development and Conservation Manager), Susan Le Dain (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer), James Lovegrove (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager), Alina Preda (Trainee Solicitor), Callum Reeve (Electoral Services Assistant) and Sonia Sharp (Locum Senior Planning Solicitor).*

**Also Present:** *At the commencement of the meeting approximately 13 members of the public, including registered speakers.*

**111 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

*Audio recording – 2 minutes 3 seconds*

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ruth Brown, Amy Allen, Ian Mantle and Sadie Billing.

Having given due notice Councillor Jon Clayden substituted for Councillor Brown, Councillor Val Bryant substituted for Councillor Allen and Councillor Mick Debenham substituted for Cllr Mantle.

**112 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS**

*Audio recording – 2 minutes 30 seconds*

There was no other business notified.

**113 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

*Audio recording – 2 minutes 34 seconds*

- (1) The Chair advised that, in accordance with Council Policy, the meeting would be recorded.
- (2) The Chair drew attention to the item on the agenda front pages regarding Declarations of Interest and reminded Members that, in line with the Code of Conduct, any Declarations of Interest needed to be declared immediately prior to the item in question.
- (3) The Chair clarified matters for the registered speakers.
- (4) The Chair advised that Section 4.8.23(a) of the Constitution applied to the meeting.

**114 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

*Audio recording – 5 minutes 14 seconds*

The Chair confirmed that the registered speakers were in attendance.

**115 24/01604/FP TEMPLE DINSLEY, (FORMERLY THE PRINCESS HELENA COLLEGE), SCHOOL LANE, PRESTON, HERTFORDSHIRE, SG4 7RT)**

*Audio recording – 5 minutes 48 seconds*

The Senior Planning Officer provided an update regarding the Supplementary Document that had been published on 30 January 2025.

At the request of the Chair, the Senior Planning Officer presented the reports in respect of Application 24/01604/FP and 24/01605/LBC as one presentation, supported by a visual presentation consisting of photographs and plans.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Tom Tyson
- Councillor Jon Clayden
- Councillor Nigel Mason
- Councillor Louise Peace
- Councillor Elizabeth Dennis
- Councillor Emma Fernandes

In response to questions, the Senior Planning Officer advised that:

- Electric Vehicle (EV) chargers would be fitted in the car ports.
- The roof of the sports hall would be fitted with solar tiles.
- Freestanding bathroom 'pods' were designed to sit in the middle of a room to minimise interactions with the existing building and to ensure this remained protected.
- No information was yet available on the type of refuse bins to be provided.
- Historic England had recommended to include a condition requiring a management company plan for the whole site be included.
- The footpaths would be for public use as part of the Section 106 agreement and would be secured by boundary fences, as cattle would graze in the open space.
- The section 106 agreement would secure 75 year leases for both the Preston Cricket Club and the Parish Council to take on responsibility for the sporting facilities and the Council would not be directly involved in the management of the facilities in the long term.
- The developer and Sport England had confirmed that 19 car parking spaces was sufficient for cricket use. There was also the possibility of making additional parking available on the grass verges adjacent to the East Drive if required.

In response to questions, the Development and Conservation Manager advised that:

- As there was no increase in floor space, there was no requirement for the developer to provide affordable housing as stated in paragraph 65 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- In this application existing vacant floorspace would be replaced with new floorspace, but with no net increase in floorspace.

The Chair invited Parish Councillor Margaret Trinder and Andrew Riant to speak in support of the application. Parish Councillor Trinder thanked the Chair for the opportunity and provided the Committee with a verbal presentation, including that:

- She was the Chair of Preston Parish Council.
- All buildings on the new site had been sensitively drawn and the new building was appropriate in size.
- Provision had been made to protect wildlife, in particular barn owls which were of importance to the community.
- Preston Parish Council wanted to show their appreciation to the developer for keeping them well informed throughout the application process and to the Senior Planning Officer for his support in ensuring the views of the Parish Council were understood.
- Temple Dinsley was an important part of the parish.
- The footpaths would ensure that all residents could access the sporting facilities and the village.
- The 75 year lease on the two tennis courts for community use would ensure that they could not be removed by a future residents group.
- Preston Parish Council would do their best to promote the use of the sporting facilities for as much of the year as possible.
- She was accompanied by Andrew Riant, Co-Chair of the Preston Cricket Club who could answer any points of clarification from Members regarding the development of the cricket ground and supportive pavilion on the estate.

The following Members asked for points of clarification:

- Councillor Tom Tyson
- Councillor Louise Peace
- Councillor Mick Debenham

In response to points of clarification, Parish Councillor Trinder advised that:

- There were still people living in the village that remembered the levels of traffic from when the site was a school.
- It was accepted that this development would bring less vehicular traffic to the area and that this would be staggered throughout the day rather than coinciding with school drop off and collection times.

In response to points of clarification, Mr Riant advised that:

- The new grounds would allow the sharing of use by the women, men and junior cricket teams across the two grounds, freeing up the recreation ground to be used for other sports.
- Home matches were currently played in a nearby village and this would enable a permanent basis with a 8 grass wicket.

The Chair thanked Parish Councillor Trinder for her presentation and Mr Riant for his input and invited Jon Buck to speak in support of the application, alongside Tom Allington, as agent, and Russell Prince, as the applicant. Mr Buck thanked the Chair for the opportunity and provided the Committee with a verbal presentation, including that:

- He was one of the architects involved with Temple Dinsley.
- They had worked together with Historic England for over two years on this project.
- The Grade II listed building was over 300 years old and needed to be preserved as a heritage asset for future generations.
- There would be 35 new apartments provided in the main building.
- The Tank House and Pump House would be converted into two premium new homes.

- The sports hall and science block would be demolished and replaced with 22 new homes.
- The no overall gain in floor space would help balance the substantial costs incurred in preserving the heritage assets.
- Under these new proposals there would be less vehicular traffic than when the building was used as a school.
- The landscaping proposals exceeded the net gain for biodiversity requirements.

The following Members asked for points of clarification:

- Councillor Nigel Mason
- Councillor Val Bryant
- Councillor Jon Clayden
- Councillor Caroline McDonnell

In response to points of clarification, Mr Buck advised that:

- It was still to be decided how to make key services available to residents and this would be confirmed at a later stage in the planning application.
- This proposal provided a good dwelling mix with two thirds of the apartments in the main building being a mix of two and three bedroomed dwellings.
- The majority of the site would be accessible and lifts would be provided in the main building where possible for access to some of the apartments.
- The 22 new houses would be completely accessible and had been designed where a lift could be installed.
- The two new houses in the Summer House Plantation were large and would have lifts installed, so were fully accessible.
- A small ramp would be installed for access to the main building.
- No affordable housing would be provided. The provision of affordable housing was not required for this application and it would not be viable to provide it.

The Chair thanked Mr Buck for his presentation and Mr Allington and Mr Prince for being in attendance.

In response to points raised, the Senior Planning Officer advised that the public footpaths were within the conservation area and these would be provided by Hertfordshire County Council Highways as part of the section 106 agreement.

Councillor Martin Prescott proposed to grant permission and this was seconded by Councillor Nigel Mason.

The following Members took part in the debate:

- Councillor Martin Prescott
- Councillor Mick Debenham
- Councillor Nigel Mason
- Councillor Jon Clayden
- Councillor Val Bryant
- Councillor Elizabeth Dennis

Points raised during the debate included:

- This was an excellent proposal which was very comprehensive and sympathetic to the community and showed that an extensive amount of work had been undertaken by the applicant.
- It was good to see how well the applicant and the Parish Council had worked together to provide something that would be of benefit to the whole community.

- It was good that young people in the village would be able to access the cricket club facilities.
- It was disappointing that there could not be any affordable housing provided at Temple Dinsley.

Having been proposed and seconded and, following a vote, it was:

**RESOLVED:** That application 24/01064/FP be **GRANTED** planning permission subject to the reasons and conditions set out in the report of the Development and Conservation Manager subject to:

- (a) The completion of a satisfactory legal agreement and the applicant agreeing to extend the statutory period in order to complete the agreement if required.
- (b) The Committee to delegate powers to the Development and Conservation Manager to resolve and amend matters as is appropriate and necessary.
- (c) The conditions and the additional section 106 agreement requirements and updated conditions as outlined in the original report and the Supplementary Document, including the addition of Condition 59.

“Condition 59

***Permissive footpaths***

*Prior to the proposed new permissive path from the Dower House being first brought into use, details of alterations to existing boundary wall and gate where new access is proposed onto Hitchin Road shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Thereafter, the alterations and gate shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and be made available for pedestrian use in accordance with the phasing plan approved under condition 4.*

*Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to protect the setting and appearance of heritage assets.”*

**116 24/01605/LBC TEMPLE DINSLEY, (FORMERLY THE PRINCESS HELENA COLLEGE), SCHOOL LANE, PRESTON, HERTFORDSHIRE, SG4 7RT)**

*Audio recording – 1 hour 34 minutes 10 seconds*

The Senior Planning Officer provided an update regarding the Supplementary Document that had been published on 30 January 2025.

There were no further questions from Members or contributions from public participants on the Listed Building Consent application.

Councillor Martin Prescott proposed and Councillor Jon Clayden seconded and, following a vote, it was:

**RESOLVED:** That application 24/01065/LBC be **GRANTED** listed building consent subject to the reasons and conditions set out in the report of the Development and Conservation Manager subject to:

- (a) The Committee to delegate powers to the Development and Conservation Manager to resolve and amend matters as is appropriate and necessary.

(b) The inclusion of the additional condition (Condition 64):

*“Prior to the proposed new permissive path from the Dower House being first brought into use, details of alterations to existing boundary wall and gate where new access is proposed onto Hitchin Road shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Thereafter, the alterations and gate shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and be made available for pedestrian use in accordance with the phasing plan approved under condition 4.*

*Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to protect the setting and appearance of heritage assets.”*

## 117 APPEALS

*Audio recording – 1 hour 39 minutes 3 seconds*

The Development and Conservation Manager presented the report entitled Planning Appeals and informed the Committee that:

- 6 appeals had been decided, of which 4 had been dismissed and 2 had been allowed.
- 3 appeals had been lodged.
- A Purchase Notice had been served on the Council by the landowners regarding listed building consent for double glazed windows in a property in Breachwood Green.
- A cost decision had been made to the Council for a property in Knebworth which related to a permission in principle which was a two-stage process.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Elizabeth Dennis
- Councillor Caroline McDonnell
- Councillor Tom Tyson
- Councillor Nigel Mason

In response to questions, the Development and Conservation Manager advised that:

- A purchase notice was a notice served by a landowner on the Council requiring the purchase of land when a listed building consent had been refused and the landowner was claiming that the land was no longer capable of reasonably beneficial use. When the Council refused to accept a purchase notice, the case had to be referred to the Secretary of State.
- There was no further update available on the planning application in Hinkworth Road, Ashwell.
- The public enquiry into the planning application for 42 dwellings in Baldock would commence on 29 April and 4 days have been allocated for this hearing. An update would be provided at the next Planning Control Committee meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.22 pm

Chair