

Location: Temple Dinsley (formerly The Princess Helena College)
School Lane Preston Hertfordshire SG4 7RT

Applicant: Mr Russell Prince - The Door PHC Ltd

Proposal: Change of use of the Former Princess Helena College and associated land from a former all-girls boarding school to 69no. private residential dwellings (Use Class C3), including the conversion of and extension to the main Grade II* Listed House to 35no. new apartments, the conversion of the retained Teaching Block to provide 8 new apartments, the demolition of the existing sports hall building and science block and replacement with 20no. new houses and 2no. new apartments, the conversion of the Tank House and the Pump House buildings to provide 2no. detached dwellings and the erection of 2no. new dwellings located within the summerhouse plantation. The provision of a new car-park together with domestic storage units and covered parking bays to include solar PV Panels, and waste storage units and the provision of new driveways and associated works. Erection of 4 no cart lodges/ports. Erection of new sub-station building and plant room. In addition, the associated landscaping of the site including provision of new pathways and gates and the reinstatement of Grade II* Listed Parks and Gardens and the provision of a new Cricket Pitch and associated Cricket Pavilion.

Ref. No: 24/01604/FP

Officer: Peter Bull

Date of expiry of statutory period: 18th October 2024

Extension of statutory period: 30th January 2025

Reason for Delay:

The initial officer report was delayed due to discussions and negotiations on various technical aspects, further information received and additional consultation exercises that was undertaken as a result.

Reason for referral to Committee

The site area for this application for development exceeds 1 ha and therefore under the Council's scheme of delegation, this application must be determined by the Council's Planning Control Committee.

1.0 **Site History**

- 1.1 The planning history of the site relates to its former boarding school use and various extensions, additions and new outbuildings to accommodate the school since the introduction of the planning system in 1947. With the exception of the following applications, the recent planning history is not considered particularly relevant to the proposals now presented:

01/01175/1 - Detached building to provide science centre. Re-alignment of path of internal driveway (as amplified by plan no 3565.309 rec'd 28.8.01) – Approved

09/01977/1 - Change of use of agricultural field to playing field. Conversion and extension of redundant barn to pavilion to serve playing field – Approved although not implemented.

11/00864/1LB - Internal alterations and extension to allow conversion of redundant barn to pavilion to serve playing field – Conditional Consent

15/01815/1 - Installation of 208 solar panels to south roof slope of Sports Hall (as amended by drawings received 10/09/2015) – Approved

17/01378/1 - Construction of a performing arts centre attached to the schools existing sports hall with associated landscaping. – Approved although not implemented

2.0 **Policies**

2.1 **North Hertfordshire District Local Plan 2011 -2031**

Policy SP1: Sustainable Development in North Hertfordshire

Policy SP2: Settlement Hierarchy

Policy SP5: Countryside and Green Belt

Policy SP6: Sustainable transport

Policy SP7: Infrastructure requirements and developer contributions

Policy SP8: Housing

Policy SP9: Design and sustainability

Policy SP10: Healthy communities

Policy SP11: Natural resources and sustainability

Policy SP12: Green infrastructure, biodiversity and landscape

Policy SP13: Historic Environment

Policy T1: Assessment of transport matters

Policy T2: Parking

Policy HS3: Housing Mix

Policy HS5: Accessible and adaptable housing

Policy D1: Sustainable design

Policy D3: Protecting living conditions

Policy D4: Air quality

Policy HC1: Community facilities

Policy NE1: Strategic green infrastructure

Policy NE2: Landscape

Policy NE4: Biodiversity and geological sites

Policy NE6: New and improved open space

Policy NE7: Reducing flood risk

Policy NE8: Sustainable drainage systems

Policy NE9: Water quality and environment

Policy NE10: Water conservation and wastewater infrastructure

Policy HE1: Designated heritage assets

Policy HE4: Archaeology

2.2 Preston Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2018 – 2031

Policy QL3: Local Distinctiveness

Policy EH2: Conservation Areas and Heritage Assets

Policy QL3: Local Distinctiveness:

Policy HD2: Pedestrian Links and Rights of Way:

Policy HD3: Housing Types:

Policy HD4: Tenure of Housing:

Policy HD5: Sustainability and Energy Efficiency:

Policy HD6: Design:

Policy HD7: Gardens:

Policy HD8: Flood Risk and Drainage Provisions:

Policy HD10: New Housing Development:

Policy EH1: Village Boundary, Rural Character and Setting:

Policy EH2: Conservation Areas and Heritage Assets:

Policy EH3: Open and Green Spaces:

Policy EH5: Tranquillity and Dark Skies:

Policy EH6: Views and Vistas:

Policy EH7: Protecting and Enhancing the Local and Natural Environment:

Policy EH8: Hedgerows, Trees and Verges:

Policy TC1: Safe and Sustainable Transport:

2.3 Supplementary Planning Documents

Developer Contributions SPD (2023)

Design SPD (2015)

Vehicle Parking Provision at New Development SPD (2011)

Sustainability SPD (2024)

North Hertfordshire and Stevenage Landscape Character Assessment

2.4 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024)

Section 2: Achieving sustainable development

Section 5: Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

Section 6: Building a strong competitive economy

Section 8: Promoting healthy and safe communities

Section 9: Promoting sustainable transport

Section 11: Making effective use of land

Section 12: Achieving well-designed places

Section 13: Protecting Green Belt land

Section 14: Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

Section 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Section 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

2.5 Hertfordshire County Council

Local Transport Plan (LTP4 – adopted May 2018)

Hertfordshire Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies

Development Plan Document 2012

Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan (2002 - 2016)

Hertfordshire Waste Development Framework (2011 – 2026)

2.6 National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Provides a range of guidance on planning matters including design, flood risk, biodiversity and planning obligations.

3.0 Representations

3.1 Preston Parish Council - supports the application generally except for the conversion of the Tank House and the Pump House into two detached dwellings which are considered inappropriate due to the risk to archaeological remains in these locations, the disturbance to wildlife and the effect these dwellings would have on the landscape of this area of the park

3.2 Historic England - in principle support a scheme that would put these highly graded heritage assets to a new viable use - thus securing their ongoing conservation.

3.3 Conservation Officer – supports the overall proposals subject to conditions

3.4 The Gardens Trust – no response received

3.5 Sport England – holding objection initially received requiring more information. More information has been provided by the applicant and a response to re-consultation will be provided verbally at the meeting

- 3.6 HCC Highways – objects to the proposal on the grounds that the application has failed to demonstrate a satisfactory policy and design-led approach to the accessibility of the proposed development for non-car mode travel, details of this are set out at in appendices to this report.
- 3.7 HCC Growth and Infrastructure Unit – no objection subject to financial contributions towards educational facilities being secured.
- 3.8 HCC Archaeology – no objection subject to conditions
- 3.9 HCC Local Lead Flood Authority – holding objection. Further details requested
- 3.10 NHC Ecology – no objection subject to conditions
- 3.11 NHC Waste and Recycling – no objection
- 3.12 NHC Environmental Health (Contaminated Land) – no objection subject to conditions
- 3.13 NHC Environmental Health (Noise) – no objection subject to conditions
- 3.14 NHC Environmental Health (Air Quality) - no objection subject to conditions
- 3.15 NHS Integrated Care Board – no objection subject to financial contribution being secured towards primary health care needs arising from the development.
- 3.16 Preston Cricket Club – supports the proposals. The provision of community sports facilities on previously private areas of the estate greatly assists the continuity and expansion of sporting opportunity for village residents and visitors.
- 3.17 Anglian Water – no objections. Advisory notes provided in event of approval.
- 3.18 The Luytens Trust – concerns about some elements of alteration in the main building and the location of allotments, overall, the proposals are supported.
- 3.19 The Ramblers – some concerned about the permissive paths through the site and aspirations for these to be designated as public footpaths.
- 3.20 Neighbours – 8 letters of support, 2 neutral comments and 8 letters of objection

Support: there is general support for the restoration and reuse of the main building and wider proposals.

Neutral: the impacts on bird populations should be mitigated by the provision of bird and bat boxes

Objections:

- Significant volume of additional supporting documents to help justify the original application creating a pseudo-scientific methodology, misleading and contradicting and not credible particularly the LVA and structural surveys
- Not a balanced proposal

- Dubious justification for Pump and Tank House conversions and associated buildings and works
- Traffic associated with construction harmful to village.
- New dwellings - Summerhouse, Harwoodhouse, Pump and Tank Houses – intrusive and harmful with associated new infrastructure inadequately justified
- Loss of and impacts on important habitats and species particularly bats, barn owls and rare parkland fungi
- Inappropriate development within the Green Belt
- 'Glint and Glare Assessment' is needed to understand solar panel impacts
- Adverse archaeological impacts
- Adverse impacts arising from new lighting associated with residential uses
- New driveways harmful
- Landscape: A further intrusion in an 18th Century Park disrupting important views in an open area of the Green Belt.
- Harmful to heritage assets
- Loss of historic features within the Tank and Pump houses
- Restrictive Covenants, Planning Conditions and Management Codes will not be sufficient to protect the long-term impacts arising from the development
- Section 106 contributions are needed
- The proposal will create a 'new' isolated housing estate with Preston experiencing all the negative impacts but none of the benefits of this large-scale development.
- Harmful landscape and visual impacts
- Cumulative amount of new development for Preston village excessive
- Absence of improved community infrastructure including village shop
- Absence of affordable homes
- Over provision of community sports facilities
- Contrary to local and neighbourhood plan policies
- Loss of sporting facilities
- New houses with their associated surroundings of garages, gardens, fencing, parking areas and cars will look totally out of place in the middle of this historic Park
- The excavations required for these new houses will damage the ancient pasture of the Park
- Vehicular congestion within the site likely
- Site maintenance including existing and new planting needs consideration

4.0 Planning Considerations

4.1 Site and Surroundings

- 4.1.1 The Site (27.8ha) comprises a number of statutory listed and unlisted buildings and structures centred around a Grade II* listed country house of early C18 origin (1714). The house was substantially enlarged and remodelled in the early C20 during which time formal gardens to the west and north of the house were created. The house and garden are surrounded by C18 parkland which is a separately listed registered park and garden (also Grade II*). The house became a school in 1935, in which use it remained until its closure in 2022.

- 4.1.2 Elements associated with the former school use of the Site exist across the site including a disused cricket pavilion, four tennis courts and associated fencing, signage and lighting columns. The formal gardens are in a poor state of repair. The north-eastern/ eastern part of the Site comprises predominantly deciduous woodland (The 'Summerhouse Plantation'). Immediately to the west of this woodland lies the 'East Drive', a tree lined driveway. The remainder of the Site is mature parkland, at the time of writing under grazing by cows. It is located within the Green Belt and it is partially located within Preston Conservation Area.
- 4.1.3 The site is outside but immediately to the east of the settlement boundary for Preston village, 5km south of the centre of Hitchin. It is bounded to the east and south by public highway – School Lane and St Albans Highway respectively. To the north and west the boundaries are edged by agricultural land. The Dower House is located on lower ground towards the north west part of the Site approximately 300m north of Temple Dinsley house. Formerly within the grounds of Temple Dinsley, this property was granted permission in 2017 for conversion into six separate residential units. For the avoidance of doubt, the Dower House is outside the application site as are the original lodge houses adjacent the St Alban's Highway vehicular access.
- 4.1.4 The Site is gently undulating, rising to the north-west of the house, with a pronounced valley extending north-east from the north side of the gardens, down which provides distant views of Letchworth. The setting is rural, with further buildings located adjacent to the south boundary.

4.2 The Proposal

- 4.2.1 The application seeks planning permission for the Change of use of the Former Princess Helena College and associated land from a former all-girls boarding school to 69no. private residential dwellings (Use Class C3), including the conversion of the main Grade II* Listed House to 35no. new apartments, the conversion of the retained Teaching Block to provide 8 new apartments, the demolition of the existing sports hall building and science block and replacement with 20no. new houses and 2no. new apartments, the conversion of the Tank House and the Pump House buildings to provide 2no. detached dwellings and the erection of 2no. new dwellings located within the summerhouse plantation. The provision of a new car-park together with domestic storage units and covered parking bays to include solar PV Panels, and waste storage units and the provision of new driveways and associated works. Erection of new sub-station building and plant room. In addition, the associated landscaping of the site including provision of new pathways and gates and the reinstatement of Grade II* Listed Parks and Gardens and the provision of a new Cricket Pitch and associated Cricket Pavilion.
- 4.2.3 The application proposals are set out in over 200 plans and drawings together with other supporting documents considering the relevant technical matters. These are as follows –
- Planning Statement (Sworders, July 2024)
 - Draft Section 106 Heads of Terms (Sworders, July 2024)
 - Statement of Community Involvement (Sworders, July 2024)
 - Design, Access and Heritage Statement (SCABAL / KPT Architects, July 2024)
 - Schedule of Materials (SCABAL/ KPT)
 - Level 3 Historic Recording (John Selby, July 2024)

- Archaeological Desk Based Assessment (Britannia Archaeology Ltd – June 2024)
- 50no, 'Significance Impact Tables' (SCABAL/KPT)
- Initial Landscape Appraisal (ILA) (SCABAL, July 2024)
- Energy Statement (CBG, July 2024)
- Energy Feasibility Report ('M &E Feasibility Report by CBG, July 2024)
- Transport Assessment (EAS, July 2024)
- Construction Traffic Management Plan (EAS, July 2024)
- Travel Plan (EAS, July 2024)
- Ecology Report (Applied Ecology, July 2024)
- Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment (Report and Metric) (Applied Ecology, July 2024)
- Biodiversity updated report and surveys (September and December 2024)
- Sports pitch and facilities report (October 2024)
- Planning Statement Addendum
- Flood Risk Assessment & SUDs Statement (EAS, July 2024)
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment & Tree Survey (Sharon Hosegood Associates, July 2024)
- Acoustic Report (Gillieron Scott Acoustic Design, July 2024)
- Phase 1 Geo-Environmental Desk Study Reports (J P Chick & Partners Ltd, June 2024)
- Asbestos Surveys (Cambridge Asbestos Removal – August 2023 and Green Shield Environmental, August 2020)
- Structural Report (AFP Consulting Engineers Ltd, May 2024)
- Method Statement for Demolition of Buildings (AFP Consulting Engineers Ltd, April 2024)

4.2.4 Revised and additional information was provided in November 2024 and these comprised -

- Revised east car park arrangement
- Additional plans and information relating to the on-site community sports facilities
- Revised arboricultural report and supporting plans
- A formal Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA)

4.2.5 In January 2025, a number of plans were updated and retitled for clarification purposes.

4.2.6 The residential accommodation provided would be as follows -

Building	1 bed`	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	5 bed	Total
Main Building (existing)	10	20	4	1		35
Teaching Block (existing)	2	5	1			8
Edwin (new)		2	2			4
Violet (new)				4		4
Sadleir (new)			4	2		6
Ithel			6			6

(new)						
Templar (proposed)			2			2
Summer House (new)					1	1
Harwood House (new)					1	1
Tank House (existing)			1			1
Pump House (existing)			1			1
TOTAL	12	27	21	6	2	69

Table 1: Residential accommodation

4.2.7 Due to the complexity of the proposals which are wide ranging and spread across the Site, they are described separately as follows -

- (i) *The conversion of and extension to the main Grade II* Listed House to 35 new apartments the conversion of the retained Teaching Block to provide 8 new apartments* – this application extends only to the proposed residential use of the building, external alterations including new windows and two small extensions to the rear of the east wing at basement level apartment 22. For the avoidance of doubt, the proposed internal alterations to facilitate the residential use require only listed building consent. A detailed summary of the internal and external works to this building is therefore provided in the associated listed building application 24/01605/LBC also under consideration by Members.
- (ii) *The demolition of the existing sports hall building, science block and replacement with 20 new houses and 2no. new apartments* – the demolition of buildings is a building operation and due to the floor area involved and the location of these buildings, planning permission is required for their removal. The demolition of other detached stable and storage buildings within the site would normally be permitted development. However, in the circumstances they are considered as part of the overall demolition works across the site due the fact that replacement buildings are reliant on their removal. The total amount of gross internal floor area to be demolished amounts to 3,586sqm. These buildings are relatively modern having been added by the school. The new houses are located on the site of the demolished sports hall and science block and are laid out in a series of blocks - two terraces each containing six houses, one terrace of four houses, one terrace of three houses and the two apartments in a standalone block. These will be two storeys in height, have a traditional plan form with pitched tiled roofs and be constructed in brick. The buildings will have a contemporary appearance. Small private gardens are included to each house. A series of linked footpaths connect the five blocks. Vehicular access is via a hard surfaced road located to the east of the main house. Cycle and car parking to these units is provided in a new car park to the east of the main building.

- (iii) *The erection of 2 new dwellings located within the summerhouse plantation (including the demolition of a storage building)* – these are two detached properties with detached timber cart lodges (car ports) structures partly replacing an existing redundant storage building within the plantation and partly relocating unused volume from the demolished sports hall. Summerhouse is a contemporary designed two storey flat roofed detached property located partly on the footprint of the demolished storage building to the south-western boundary of the plantation. Harwood House is also a contemporary designed two storey flat roofed detached property to the north-west of the plantation. Both properties would be served from an existing access track off the East Avenue. Each dwelling would include a detached single storey cart lodge (9.8m wide, 10.3m deep and 2.7m / 3.2m high)
- (iv) *The conversion of the Tank House and the Pump House buildings to provide 2 detached dwellings* – the internal alterations to these buildings are assessed in the accompanying listed building application 24/01605/LBC. Planning permission is sought specifically for the proposed residential uses, external alterations to the buildings to facilitate the residential uses, estate style metal boundary fences, the erection of detached timber framed cart lodges (6.1 m wide, 8.6m deep and 1.9m / 2.8m high) and access drives from the existing main drive.
- (v) *The provision of a new car-park together with domestic storage units and covered parking bays to include solar PV Panels, and waste storage units and the provision of new driveways and associated works* – located to the south east of the Main Building adjacent the existing main car parking area for the former school comprises an enclosed (walled) car parking area for both residents and visitors. The majority of spaces will be covered by photovoltaic panels mounted on a metal frames and will incorporate storage areas for domestic items including bicycles. The car park also includes central free standing waste storage area, green roofed storage (for grounds equipment) and an energy centre which will house the air source heat pump system for the main building.
- (vi) *Erection of new sub-station building and plant room* – this will be located adjacent to the existing site boundary wall (west) adjacent School Lane. It will measure 4.7m wide, 7.1m deep and 2.7m high. External materials are not yet specified.
- (vii) *Associated landscaping of the site including provision of new pathways and gates and the reinstatement of Grade II* Listed Parks and Gardens* – preliminary hard and soft landscaping proposals are set out in a variety of drawings and documents. The proposals are set out in two distinct parts. The restoration of the formal historic garden areas (originally designed by Gertrude Jekyll) immediately adjacent to the west and north of the Main Building including new planting along the lines of the original design and repairs to existing garden structures. The restoration and enhancement of the wider grounds comprises new planting, primarily trees and hedges, together with preliminary hard landscaping details associated with the new build elements.

- (viii) *The provision of a new cricket pitch, replacement cricket pavilion building, 2no. refurbished tennis courts and associated car parking* – a new adult cricket pitch will be provided on part of the former school playing field adjacent to the St Albans Highway. The proposal is to replace a redundant former pavilion and storage building in the southern section of the site with a new pavilion building. This will measure 22.2 wide, 7.2m deep and 4.6 metres in height. It will have a timber planed shiplap external appearance with a natural slate roof. There are three existing tennis courts adjacent to the East Drive. Two of these are to be refurbished for community use and one will be repurposed and extended to provide car parking facilities (19 spaces) for users of the community sports facilities.

4.3 Key Issues

4.3.1 The key issues are:

- Principle of residential development
- Green Belt impacts
- Impact upon heritage assets
- Design, appearance and layout
- Archaeological impacts
- Visual and landscape impacts
- Residential amenity
- Housing mix and Vacant Building Credit
- Highway and access impacts
- Sports pitch impacts
- Ecology and biodiversity
- Trees impacts and proposals
- Landscaping proposals
- Flooding and drainage impacts
- Utilities and services
- Sustainability considerations
- Planning obligations
- Planning balances – Heritage, Very Special Circumstances, Final

Principle of development

Loss of educational use

- 4.3.2 Paragraph 88 of the NPPF *Supporting a prosperous rural economy*, seeks 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. There is no specific national or local policy that seeks the retention of educational uses.

4.3.3 The proposed residential development on the site will result in the loss of the current educational use. Princess Helena College was a private school for boys and girls which operated from the site since 1935. It is understood that the site provided very occasional community use before its closure primarily the use of the school swimming pool and the tennis courts in the summer and the school hall for larger functions. The village is well served by other existing community buildings including a village hall, school, recreation ground and public house. It is understood that United Learning (UL) took over the school in 2018 when it was on the verge of closure due to falling demand for places and long-standing financial pressures. Despite significant investment, the impact of the pandemic on the independent schools' market meant that the UL was unable to reverse its long-term decline. The site was marketed by specialist marketing agent, Savills, from November 2021 until its sale in the summer of 2023. During the same period, the building was also marketed by other specialist commercial agents including The Hotel Property Group. The location of the building and site away from the nearest urban area (Hitchin) and the need for significant investment in buildings and the wider grounds is believed to have probably discouraged potential other educational users. In the circumstances, an alternative use of the site is considered to be both appropriate and necessary to secure investment in heritage assets across the site.

Residential use of the site

4.3.4 Part 5 of the NPPF *Delivering a sufficient supply of homes* confirms that the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay.

4.3.5 Part 11 of the NPPF *Making effective use of land confirms that* 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 (paragraph 124). Paragraph 125 goes on to say that planning decisions should give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and also promote and support the development of underutilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained. Part 5. *Delivering a sufficient supply of homes* of the NPPF explains that housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities (paragraph 83). Paragraph 84 supports the development of new homes which would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance the immediate setting and which also would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset.

4.3.6 The site is located immediately adjacent to but outside the settlement boundary of Preston village. The North Herts Local Plan (NHLP) Policy SP2: Settlement Hierarchy and Spatial Distribution identifies Preston as a Category A village as it includes community facilities such as a school, public house and village hall and pavilion. NHLP Policy HS3 also requires that residential proposals should provide a density, scale and character of development appropriate to its location and surroundings.

- 4.3.7 The site is immediately adjacent to existing residential development within the village settlement boundary to the west. Existing and proposed footpaths link the Site to the village. The village includes a range of local services including primary school, village hall, recreation ground with sports pitches and a public house. The site is approximately 3.5 miles from Hitchin railway station and bus interchange. A bus service (no 88) runs between the village and Hitchin. The proposal would utilise brownfield land and secure an optimal viable use for the heritage assets across the Site.
- 4.3.8 As set out in the Council's most recent Housing Land Supply Update (May 2024), the total requirement for housing delivery in the District from 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2029 is 5,990 dwellings. Currently there is a deficit of 1,359 dwellings over the five-year period of 2024/25 – 2028/29. The Council therefore can only demonstrate a five-year land position of 3.9 years against our adopted housing requirement. This figure falls below the five-year figure as required in the NPPF. Where a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites cannot be demonstrated, Paragraph 11 (d) of the NPPF confirms that where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date (including the housing land supply) and (i) unless there are protected areas or assets of particular importance (i.e. Green Belt and heritage assets) which provide a strong 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, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination – permission should be granted. This matter is considered further in the *Planning Balances* section at the end of this report.

Conclusion on principle of development

- 4.3.9 The reuse of the site for non-educational purposes is considered to be justified. The residential use of the site will secure a number of benefits – additional housing where there is shortfall across the district, the reuse of brownfield land, optimal viable use for heritage assets and a site located immediately adjoining a category 'A' village. Overall, it is considered that residential redevelopment of this site is appropriate in land use terms and cumulatively these matters weigh significantly in the planning balance.

Green Belt impacts

- 4.3.10 The site is immediately adjacent to but outside the settlement boundary for Preston. It is in the open countryside within the Green Belt. National Policy on Green Belt is set out at Section 13 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Paragraph 137 of the NPPF confirms that the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts, where the fundamental aim of policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open.
- 4.3.11 The Green Belt serves five purposes, these are set out at paragraph 138 of the NPPF and are:
- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
 - To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
 - To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

4.3.12 NHLP Policy SP5: *Countryside and Green Belt* supports the principles of the Green Belt and recognises the intrinsic value of the countryside and confirms that the Council will only permit development proposals in the Green Belt where they would not result in inappropriate development or where very special circumstances have been demonstrated.

Inappropriate development

4.5.13 The starting point for consideration of this application is the development plan. NHLP Policy SP5 is consistent the national policies on the Green Belt. The *Preston Neighbourhood Plan (PNP)* does not contain any specific policies relating to the Green Belt.

4.5.14 Paragraph 153 of the NPPF confirms that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. The NPPF also sets out exceptions to this to inappropriate development at paragraph 154. There are:

154. Development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless one of the following exceptions applies:

a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;

b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use), including buildings, for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;

c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building; Other than in the case of development on previously developed land or grey belt land, where development is not inappropriate.

d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;

e) limited infilling in villages;

f) limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and

g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land (including a material change of use to residential or mixed use including residential), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

h) Other forms of development provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These are:

i. mineral extraction;

ii. engineering operations;

iii. local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location;

iv. the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction;

v. material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds); and

vi. development, including buildings, brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.

4.5.15 Paragraph 153 of the NPPF stipulates that substantial weight must be given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. Paragraph 156 of the NPPF refers to *Golden Rules* but these are not applicable due to no 'new' or additional housing being proposed compared to existing built form.

Appropriate development

4.5.16 The following elements are considered to be appropriate development in a Green Belt context -

- Conversion of Grade II* listed Temple Dinsley building, Pump House and Tank House - 're-use of the permanent building and the change of use of land (154h)
- Erection of new dwellings on the footprint of the sports hall – complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development (154g)
- Erection of cart lodges to Pump and Tank Houses - the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building" (154c). *Note: an addition to a building does not need to be physically attached to it to be considered an extension considered by the High Court in Warwick District Council v Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing And Communities [2022] EWHC 2145,*

4.3.17 For the avoidance of doubt, as the cricket pitch and tennis courts are on land already used for sports facilities, their use by the community does not constitute a material change of use of the land. There are therefore no implications in relation to Green Belt policy.

Inappropriate development

4.3.18 Elements of the proposal that are considered necessary to facilitate the new residential uses and which are considered to be inappropriate development are –

- (i) The new East Car Park together with domestic storage units and covered parking bays to include solar PV Panels, waste storage units and the provision of new driveways and associated works;
- (ii) Electricity substation;
- (iii) A 13 sqm extension to the rear of the Main Building;
- (iv) A cycle storage and switch room building;
- (v) Summer House and Harwood House including cart lodges.

4.3.19 The five purposes of the Green Belt are confirmed as being -

- A. to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- B. to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- C. to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- D. to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- E. to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

- (i) The new East Car Park and associated development*
- 4.3.20 This is the most significant new element of the proposal. This part of the Site is undeveloped presently forming part of the grassed parkland and will have some spatial impacts. Visually, the development would result in encroachment from the solar canopies and associated storage structures although this is tempered by its lower land level and existing partial landscape screening. It will result in limited conflict with purpose (C).
- (ii) Electricity substation*
- 4.3.21 This is located in a discreet location adjacent to the western site boundary wall. It is a single storey scale and a modest footprint. It will have some minor spatial and visual impacts. It will result in limited conflict with purpose (C).
- (iii) Extension (13sqm) to the Main Building*
- 4.3.22 This is located to the rear of the Main Building forming part of Unit 2 (Larder). It will have a modest footprint and scale having a minimal spatial impact. Visually the extension will be contained being seen in juxtaposition with the Main Building. It will result in limited conflict with purpose (C).
- (iv) A cycle storage and switch room building*
- 4.3.23 This is located to adjacent to the new build terrace known as lthel. It will have a modest footprint and scale having a minimal spatial impact. Visually the extension will be contained being seen as an ancillary building to the residential terrace. It will result in limited conflict with purpose (C).
- (v) Summer House and Harwood House including cart lodges*
- 4.3.24 Two new dwellings and cart lodges (car ports) are proposed to the woodland plantation to the east of the site – Summer House and Harwood House. There is an existing redundant storage building in the south-western corner of the plantation. This is due to be demolished and replaced with a two-storey dwelling and detached single storey cart lodge with a larger footprint and volume (known as Summer House). The NPPF confirms that in certain circumstances a replacement building or the redevelopment of a site is not inappropriate development (paragraphs 154 (d) and (g)). This new dwelling would introduce a different use and would be materially larger than the existing building.
- 4.3.25 It is accepted that the scale, form and footprint of the existing sports hall building is harmful to the settings of both the main property and registered park and gardens (both of which are Grade II* listed). Paragraph 210 of the NPPF states -

In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*

- 4.3.26 To provide replacement buildings of the same scale, form and footprint in the same location as the sports hall building would be compliant with Green Belt policy but fail to take the opportunities for enhancement of heritage assets as set out in the NPPF. In such instances where there is policy 'friction', it is necessary to consider which should be

prioritised. The quantity of heritage assets across the site including two high level heritage assets (Grade II*) provides reasonable justification in seeking improvements to their settings. The location of these two detached properties is chosen on the basis that (i) there is already one albeit smaller redundant storage building located within the plantation (ii) they are located sufficiently distant from the Main Building and associated curtilage buildings such that they do not affect their setting and (iii) they are located in a mid-20th century planted woodland. The proposed replacement dwellings here create a gross internal footprint of 840sqm. The 'unused' gross internal floor area following partial redevelopment of the area occupied by the sports hall and demolished storage building is 840sqm. The two proposed cart lodges each measure approximately 100sqm in area and these effectively are 'additional' areas in a Green Belt context.

- 4.3.27 To summarise, it is confirmed that the two properties in the plantation – Summer House and Harwood House – are not additional gross internal floor area but relocated and replacement floor areas. These new locations together with the proposed cart lodges are considered to create some new spatial and visual impacts within the Green Belt and are therefore considered, in part at least, to be inappropriate development. They will result in limited conflict with purpose (C).

Conclusion of Green Belt

- 4.3.28 The above confirms that elements of the proposal have been identified as being 'appropriate development' and others 'inappropriate development'. In relation to the latter, limited harm has been identified to *openness* and one of the *purposes*. Overall, limited harm has been identified to the Green Belt. The acceptability or not of these built elements depends on whether *Very Special Circumstances (VSC)* exist. This matter is considered in the later part of the report once benefits the development will deliver have been identified.

Impact upon heritage assets

- 4.3.29 Section 66 (1) of The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (The LBCA Act) stipulates that when considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building, or its setting, special regard shall be had to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural interest which it possesses. Effect upon listed buildings therefore should be given considerable importance and weight. Relevant factors include the extent of assessed harm and the heritage value of the heritage asset in question. The LBCA Act requires special attention to be made to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas. There is no reference to their setting.
- 4.3.30 Paragraph 194 of the NPPF stipulates that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution to their setting and where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation. Paragraph 195 of the NPPF confirms that local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting their setting) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise.

4.3.31 NHLP Policy SP13 confirms that the Council will balance the need for growth with the proper protection and enhancement of the historic environment. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight will be given to the asset's conservation and the Management of its setting. Regarding designated heritage assets, NHLP Policy HE1 stipulates that planning permission for development proposals affecting Designated Heritage Assets or their setting will be granted where they will, amongst other things, lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset and this harm will be outweighed by the public benefits of the development, including securing the asset's optimum viable use. This policy reflects paragraph 208 of the NPPF which confirms that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use. Preston Neighbourhood Plan (PNP) policy *EH2: Conservation Areas and Heritage Assets* requires all development proposals to explain and demonstrate the impacts on local heritage assets. PNP policy *HD10: New Housing Development* requires new dwellings to maintain and contribute to the local character with particular focus on green spaces.

4.3.32 The application is accompanied by a Heritage Assessment (HA) by the Skabal and KTP Architects. This considers the impact of the proposed development on a range of identified heritage assets. With the exception of archaeology matters which are considered separately below, the designated Heritage Assets within the site application area are -

- Temple Dinsley Parkland (Grade II*)
- Preston Conservation Area (North-West part of the site)
- Main Building House and Formal Gardens (Grade II*)
- Pump house (curtilage listed)
- Tank house (curtilage listed)
- Piggery (Grade II)*
- Ice house (Grade II)*
- Gate Posts and Park Wall (Grade II)*
- Sports hall and Teaching Block (curtilage listed)
- Science Block (

* these buildings and structures are subject to repairs and restoration only and are addressed as part of the listed building application only

4.3.33 The house is listed at Grade II* attributing more than special interest and representing just 5.8% of all listed buildings. The gardens and parkland are included within the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest at Grade II* which places it within the top 30% of all registered parks and gardens. The NPPF confirms that such Designated Heritage Assets are of high significance.

4.3.34 Nearby Designated Heritage Assets located outside but either adjacent or near to the application site:

- Dower House (Grade II)
- The two lodges located adjacent to the St Alban's highway vehicular access (potentially curtilage listed)

4.3.35 For the avoidance of doubt, internal and external alterations to the listed buildings are matters dealt with under the accompanying listed building application. From a heritage perspective, the planning application is concerned with –

- the proposed new residential uses
- external alterations to all buildings and any demolition works
- the impacts arising from new development on the setting of listed buildings
- the impacts arising from new development on the setting of the listed registered park and garden (RPG) and
- the impact arising from new development on the setting of the conservation area.

4.3.36 The listed buildings and structures across the site are in varying states of disrepair. Intervention is therefore both necessary and important to secure their long-term protection. Residential uses of the larger buildings is considered to be optimal from a heritage perspective providing the immediate and long term protection.

Temple Dinsley Registered Park and Garden RPG (Grade II)*

4.3.37 The impact on the Grade II* listed Temple Dinsley Parkland is considered as part of the planning application. It has two principal areas - Historic Lutyens Garden to the west and north of the main building and the C18 parkland to the east and south. The Historic Lutyens Garden comprises nine areas - The Forecourt, The Outer Edges of the forecourt, the Pool Garden and Pool Garden Steps, the Rose Garden one, the Herbaceous Garden, the Magnolia Garden and Rose Garden two, the Pergola Garden and North Lawn, the North Terrace and the Orchard.

4.3.38 The proposals seek the restoration of the formal landscaped gardens to the north, west and south of the Grade II* listed Main House. Details of the garden restoration are set out a number of submitted drawings and documents. This will see a Lutyens and Jekyll inspired planting scheme, drawn from historic photographs and paintings of the property. It will also include repairs to the existing hard surfacing, terraces, walls and pergolas within the Grade II* RPG. These are considered to be direct heritage benefits of the scheme which should be weighed in the planning balance. A range of conditions are recommended to secure the precise details of the restoration works to these elements.

4.3.39 There will be some loss of the historic parkland through the introduction of a new walled garden car park area and energy centre to the southeast of the Grade II* listed Main House. This will have an impact on both the setting of the listed building and direct effect on the RPG which is considered to be harmful, engaging Paragraph 215 of the NPPF. This harm should be considered alongside the identified public benefits and heritage benefits of the scheme, as well as providing a viable new use for the heritage assets on the site.

Preston Conservation Area

4.3.40 The Preston Conservation Area extends into the northwest part of the Temple Dinsley site, taking in the main entrance drive, Grade II* listed building, Teaching Block, formal gardens and pond to the south of the Service Wing. The Sports Hall, Pump House, Tank House and modern plantation and wider areas of parkland may be considered to fall within the setting of the Conservation Area.

4.3.41 The adopted Conservation Area Character Statement identifies that the Conservation Area covers the historic core of the village, with Temple Dinsley forming a key part of its significance. A *Key View (KV4)* is identified from School Lane, looking down the main drive. Areas of significance green space and trees are identified along the western edge of the Temple Dinsley site.

4.3.42 Overall, the direct impacts of the proposal are considered to form an enhancement to its character and appearance through the formal garden restoration and securing the future use of the listed buildings on the site. The *Key View KV4* is likely to experience some temporary change during the construction period, however it is not anticipated that this would be permanent.

4.3.43 In terms of indirect impacts on the setting of the Conservation Area, these are more varied. The demolition of the Sports Hall and erection of 22no. new dwellings on the site, utilising its footprint may be considered an enhancement. However, the erection of the walled garden car park within the parkland will see the loss of an area of parkland that contributes positively to the setting of the Conservation Area. Therefore, Paragraph 215 would be engaged and this harm should be weighed in the planning balance taking into account the direct heritage benefits derived from the submitted scheme, alongside other public benefits.

Main Building (House, including Service Wing and Western Spur) (Grade II)*

4.3.44 Overall, the building is currently in poor condition due to damp and general poor maintenance over recent years. The roof finish was stolen in 2024 so temporary holding repairs have been carried out. Structural alterations have also been made which have compromised the building in several areas.

4.3.45 The conversion of the Main Building to 35no. apartments has been well thought out, with external alterations (new windows, a small extension and new staircase) generally limited to fabric of lesser heritage significance. There would be some inherent harm created through the subdivision of the building, however the proposal will secure a new viable use for the building which is supported. A range of conditions are recommended to secure the precise details of the proposals.

Teaching Block (curtilage listed)

4.3.46 Generally, this building has been subject to greater alteration historically and is therefore considered to be less sensitive to conversion. Nevertheless, the conversion of the Teaching Block to 8no. Apartments has been well thought out, with alterations generally limited to fabric of limited heritage significance. There would be some inherent harm created through the subdivision of the building, however the proposal will secure a new viable use for the building which is supported. A range of conditions are recommended to secure the precise details of the proposals.

Science Block (building adjoining Conservation Area)

4.3.47 This is a modern brick and tiled roof building which makes little contribution to the heritage significance of the site. There is no objection raised to its demolition on heritage grounds.

Sports Hall (curtilage listed)

- 4.3.48 This modern building was believed to be erected circa 1980. It is attached the listed building via a simple linking block. The footprint, scale, massing and form of this building makes no contribution to the heritage significance of the site. Its demolition has the potential to enhance the setting of the Grade II* Main House, Grade II* RPG and Preston Conservation Area. There is no objection raised to its removal on heritage grounds.

Pump House (curtilage listed)

- 4.3.49 The conversion of the Pump House to residential will incur some harmful alterations (new windows and doors) to secure a new viable use for the building. However, due to the current poor condition and redundant nature of the building the proposals are considered to be a direct heritage benefit of the scheme as it would secure the long-term maintenance and conservation of the building. A range of conditions are recommended to secure the precise details of the alterations.

Tank House (Barn 2) (curtilage listed)

- 4.3.50 The conversion of the Tank House to residential will also incur some harmful alterations (new windows and doors) to secure a new viable use for the building. Since the application was originally submitted, the fenestration has been revised to reduce the level of glazing proposed which will allow the building to continue to appear as a timber framed and weather boarded barn, whilst establishing the new residential use. However, due to the current poor condition and redundant nature of the building the proposals are considered to be a direct heritage benefit of the scheme as it would secure the long-term maintenance and conservation of the building. Conditions are proposed below to secure the details of the alterations.

- 4.3.51 Works to Garden Pergolas and Belvedere (curtilage listed), Piggery (Grade II), Ice-house (Grade II), Gate Posts and Park Wall (Grade II) are confined to repairs and do not require planning permission. These matters are dealt with as part of the accompanying listed building application.

New build houses (Edwin, Violet, Sadleir, Ithel, Templar)

- 4.3.52 There is no objection the erection of new dwellings on the site of the Sports Hall and Science Block following their demolition. The proposals seek to provide a contemporary development which is set back from the Teaching Block, providing greater space in which the curtilage listed building may be experienced. It also breaks down the scale and massing of the built form in this location, providing a new layout which responds to the adjacent listed buildings. The development also makes use of the level changes within the site, such that the new dwellings will be no higher in height than the Sports Hall such that they would only be visible in glimpsed views from the RPG and upper floors of the Main Building and Service Wing. The design of the new dwellings will provide a subtle contrast to the architectural character of the heritage assets. As such, the new build houses would not affect the significance of the RPG, setting of listed and curtilage listed buildings and setting of the Preston Conservation Area. Conditions are proposed to secure the precise details of these new houses.

Harwood House and Summer House

- 4.3.53 This area is a mid-twentieth century area of woodland which does not contribute to the significance of the above identified heritage assets. As such, the demolition of Barn 1 (Summerhouse Building) and erection of these two 5no. bed detached dwellings within the Summerhouse Plantation would not affect the significance of the RPG, setting of listed and curtilage listed buildings and setting of the Preston Conservation Area. There is no objection on heritage grounds to. Conditions are proposed below to secure the precise details of these new dwellings is recommended.

Sports pavilion and car park

- 4.3.54 These elements will be located outside of the Conservation Area, within the Registered Park and Garden to the north of the Main Building and adjacent to the St Albans Highway. They would be within the setting of the listed buildings. The pavilion will be a traditional single storey cricket sports pavilion with a pitched roof. The car park will be a repurposed tennis court and therefore there is already some visual impact arising from this. Overall, these elements are not considered to affect the significance of the RPG, setting of listed and curtilage listed buildings and setting of the Preston Conservation Area. There is no objection on heritage grounds to. Conditions are proposed below to secure the precise details of the materials for the pavilion building and any resurfacing material for the proposed car park.

Overall heritage conclusion

- 4.3.55 The proposals will result in a variety of harmful impacts on the Registered Park and Garden, Preston Conservation Area, the main listed building and the teaching block. However, the proposals also deliver a range of meaningful heritage benefits securing the re-use of heritage assets, the removal of unsympathetic buildings and structures within the grounds and the restoration of a variety of heritage assets. These benefits are considered to better reveal significance of the assets which in turn are considered to contribute towards mitigating the harm, as also described above. As acknowledged by Historic England, to secure the long terms future of heritage assets, there are certain necessary compromises that would impact upon significance, as have been set out above. Overall, it is considered that this would equate to harm to significance would be '*less than substantial*'. In this situation, paragraph 215 of the NPPF confirms that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use. The public benefits arising from the proposal are considered in the *Planning Balance* at the end of this report.

Design, appearance, scale and layout

- 4.3.56 Section 12 *Achieving well-designed and beautiful places* of the NPPF confirms 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' (paragraph 131).
- 4.3.57 NHLP Policy D1 and the Design Supplementary Planning Document, clarify the expectations for the design of buildings and places which should reflect the local character of the sites surroundings.

4.3.58 Due to the quantity and status of heritage assets on the site, the detailed design approach for development has been heritage focussed. The proposed replacement buildings and associated development including community sports facilities on the site are traditional in plan form, scale and layout with the new dwellings having a more contemporary design and appearance. The proposals are considered broadly to both respect the setting of existing heritage assets on the site whilst also making a clear distinction between original and new buildings. Essentially, the proposals are another stage in the Site's evolution. The quality of external materials will be critical in ensuring a high-quality development across the site. Illustrative materials have been identified and specific details will need to be agreed prior to each phase of the development commencing. The dwellings known as Summer House and Harwood House are located within the treed plantation and particular care will be needed in selecting materials which are both sensitive to and enhance this natural setting.

Conclusion on design, appearance, scale and layout

4.3.59 Overall, the proposals are considered to be sympathetic to both to the setting of heritage assets on the site and are in accordance with the development plan. Conditions requiring a brick sample panel to be agreed and full details of the materials to be used for the new build elements to be agreed prior to commencement are both necessary and reasonable. This matter weighs neutral in the planning balance.

Archaeology

4.3.60 Policy 16 *Conserving and enhancing the historic Environment* of the NPPF sets out the importance of protecting heritage assets. NHLP Policy SP13 *Historic Environment* provides the overarching policy to ensure the protection and enhancement of heritage assets. NHLP Policy HE4 confirms that planning permission for development proposals effecting heritage assets with archaeological interest will be granted provided that a desk based assessment and where justified, an archaeological field evaluation is carried out; the preservation of archaeological remains will be preserved and where the loss of the whole or a material part of important archaeological remains is justified, archaeological recording, reporting, publication and archiving of the results of such archaeological work is undertaken before it is damaged or lost.

4.3.61 The application is supported by Archaeological Desk Based Assessment by Britannia Archaeology Ltd which explains the potential effects the development will have upon archaeology. It confirms that there is potential for archaeological remains specifically dating to the medieval and post-medieval periods is considered to be high. Any alterations to the main house may cause a significant impact to the character of the historic fabric and should be recorded in its current state prior to development. The Historic Building Recording also submitted in support of the application provided a detailed recording of the buildings at Temple Dinsley, including a temporal phasing of the buildings extant today. The Historic Building Recording is considered to be thorough in its detailing of the site. However, it is still possible for additional information on the building's history to be uncovered during the alterations and conversion proposed in this application. It is believed that the position of the proposed development is such that it should be regarded as likely to have an impact on heritage assets of archaeological interest. In the circumstances, it is both reasonable and necessary to provide properly for the likely archaeological implications of this development proposal. In the event permission is granted, appropriately worded conditions requiring a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) and the provision of post construction reports are considered to be sufficient to provide for the

level of investigation that this proposal warrants. The standard conditions usually imposed in such instances have been amended to allow above slab level demolition works.

Conclusion on archaeology

- 4.3.62 The proposal has the potential for archaeological remains specifically dating to the medieval and post-medieval periods. A WSI and associated reports would address this matter. Subject to conditions, there are no objections to the proposals on archaeological grounds. This matter weighs neutral in the planning balance.

Landscape and visual impacts

- 4.3.63 Chapter 15 of the NPPF *Conserving and enhancing the natural environment* confirms that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes (paragraph 180).
- 4.3.64 NHLP Policy NE2 confirms that planning permission will be granted for development proposals that respect the sensitivities of the relevant landscape character, do not cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area or the landscape character area in which the site is located, taking account of any suitable mitigation measures necessary to achieve this, ensure the health and future retention of important landscape features and have considered the long-term management and maintenance of any existing and proposed landscaping. PNP *Policy EH1: Village Boundary, Rural Character and Setting* requires proposals to protect the open countryside, woodlands, hedgerows and green corridors are protected and, where practicable, enhanced. Development proposals which would unacceptably impact on these environmental assets will not be supported. PNP *Policy EH6 Views and Vistas* identifies a series of key views including one from St Alban's Highways towards Temple Dinsley (viewpoint K). Proposals are required to safeguard, respect and where practicable enhance the identified key views and vistas.
- 4.3.65 The application is supported by a variety of documents and plans which consider landscape and visual impacts arising from the proposals. These comprise a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) and garden restoration proposal document.

The Landscape Character Assessment

- 4.3.66 Across England 159 National Character Areas (NCA) have been identified. In this instance, it is considered that the local landscape character assessment provides the most appropriate landscape character descriptions for the size and scale of the Site. This is set out in the Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (updated 2020).
- 4.3.67 The Site lies entirely within the Offley / St Paul's Walden Landscape Character Area, immediately adjacent to the Langley Scarp Landscape Character Area to the north east. Key characteristics include:
- Gently rolling upland plateau landscape;
 - Large arable areas with smaller parcels of grazing land adjacent to settlements;
 - Varying sized blocks of deciduous woodland;
 - Field pattern generally large scale.

The submitted Landscape and Visual Assessment (LVA)

- 4.3.68 The application is accompanied by a LVA by DRaW (a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute) which identifies the landscape and visual effects of the proposed development. This has been carried out in accordance with best practice.
- 4.3.69 The LVA identifies nine viewpoint locations – four outside the site boundary and five inside - from which the development would be viewed from and has assessed likely effects upon landscape and visual receptors.

Viewpoint	Impact
1 (public) - Represents Preston Neighbourhood Plan View K, 'Towards Temple Dinsley'	Moderate beneficial
2 (public) - Towards the main entrance to the Site from School Lane	Minor beneficial
3 (public) -Towards the Site from Preston Village Green	No change
4 (public) - Hitchin Road in front of Preston Recreation Ground to the north east of The Site	No change
5 (public) - Preston Road, north east of The Dower House	Negligible minor adverse
6 (private) - Main Drive	Minor beneficial
7 (public) - East Drive	No change
8 (private) - Northern end of the east drive looking west	Moderate adverse
9 (private) - View south-west from the orchard	Moderate beneficial

Table 2: Landscape and visual impact summary

- 4.3.70 Whilst two adverse directions of effect have been found, it is suggested that the single minor/ moderate adverse landscape effect relates to a relatively small and discreet plot within the Site only and that wider Site level effects are found to be beneficial. There are no adverse landscape effects beyond the Site itself. Adverse visual effects relate to one glimpsed view for motorists close to the Site boundary and one private view within the Site only (8). No other adverse visual effects beyond the Site or to public receptors have been found. In conclusion, the findings by the applicant's consultant are that the majority of likely landscape and visual effects arising from the proposed development would be beneficial.

Review of the LVA

- 4.3.71 Officers broadly concur with the findings set out in LVA. The site is largely visually contained from public view due to topography and existing features – walls, buildings and landscaping – limiting the visual and landscape impacts. The demolition works together with garden restoration and building / structure enhancement works proposed will overall improve visual impacts for both public and private visitors to the site and Preston village and the wider landscape. The '*negligible minor adverse*' impacts identified from Preston Road, north-east of The Dower House can be mitigated by the careful selection of materials for Summer House and Harwood House dwellings.

Conclusions on landscape and visual impacts

- 4.3.72 Some minor adverse impacts are likely to result from the proposals although overall these are likely to result in landscape and visual benefits. No objections are therefore raised on landscape and visual grounds. This matter weighs as both harmful (limited) and beneficial (moderate/substantial) in the planning balance.

Residential amenity

- 4.3.73 Chapter 15 *Conserving and enhancing the natural environment* of the NPPF requires decisions to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of air, noise and other forms of pollution (paragraph 187). NHLP Policy D3 *Protecting Living Conditions* confirms that new development should protect residential amenity for existing local residents. PNP Policy HD7: *Gardens* seeks the provision of commensurately sized private gardens for new houses.

- 4.3.74 The application is supported by a number of technical documents – Phase 1 Land Contamination Report, Acoustic Design Feasibility Report and Construction Traffic Management Plan – setting out potential noise dust and other localised impacts

Construction period impacts

- 4.3.75 The primary impacts arising during the construction period are likely to be from delivery traffic and building and engineering operations on the site. The submitted Construction Traffic Management Plan confirms that HGV movements will only occur during periods when construction noise is permitted within the village - 08:00 – 16:00 on weekdays and 08:00 – 13:00 Saturdays. Construction hours are not set out. The Council's Environmental Health Officer has confirmed that the proposed hours for HGV movements are acceptable. In relation to noisy construction works (i.e. noisy at a residential or other sensitive receptors) 0800 to 1800 hours Monday to Friday and 0800 to 1300 hours on Saturdays. There should be no noisy works on Sundays or Bank/Public Holidays. If planning permission is granted, a condition to this effect could be reasonably included. A Community Liaison Strategy is also set out in the construction traffic management plan ('CLO') which will seek to manage and mitigate potential amenity impacts. In the event permission is granted, a condition to secure the delivery of the Strategy would be appropriate.

Operational impacts

- 4.3.76 The subdivision of the Main Building and other converted buildings have the potential to create noise and disturbance between residential units. An acoustic report sets out how such noise would be mitigated, and this is considered to be acceptable. According to the submitted Transport Assessment, the traffic attracted to the site will be less than the former educational use with a reduction in associated traffic noise. In relation to wider amenity considerations, it is noted that the nearest neighbouring properties are in the north at the Dower House (six units). The proposals are sufficiently distant from these properties such that they are not likely to result in any adverse residential impacts. The Council's Environmental Health Officer has confirmed that a phase 2 investigative land report is needed to clarify whether there is any land contamination and, if it is found, a remediation strategy to be agreed. This matter can be secured by condition in the event permission is granted. The proposed dwellings which will replace the demolished sports hall are arranged in a courtyard style to mimic the plan form of a farmyard that historically might

have typically existed on sites like this. Although this means that private amenity spaces will be permeable with a degree of intervisibility between them, this is considered to be a sensitive and historically appropriate design solution and given the extensive open spaces within the site – including secluded and semi-private areas - that would be accessible to future residents. Given the foregoing, there is not thought to be any unreasonable operational amenity impacts arising from the proposals.

Conclusions on residential amenity impacts

- 4.3.77 Potential operational impacts arising from the proposal - noise and contaminated land - can be mitigated by way of conditions. Similarly, construction period impacts – deliveries and construction noise - can also be managed by way of conditions in the event permission were to be granted. The proposal is considered to be in accordance with the development plan. This matter is considered to be neutral in the planning balance.

Housing mix and Vacant Building Credit

- 4.3.78 Section 5 of the NPPF - *Delivering a sufficient supply of homes* confirms the need to significantly boost the supply of homes with the overall aim to meet as much of an area's identified housing need as possible, including with an appropriate mix of housing types for the local community' (paragraph 60).
- 4.3.79 NHLP Policies SP8 and HS3 requires that developments to provide an appropriate range of house types and sizes. NHLP Policy HS5 sets out requirements for accessible and adaptable housing. PNP Policy HD3 *Housing Types* requires proposals to address local housing needs including the provision of two and three-bedroom houses suitable for families, local people and first-time buyers. NHLP Policy HD4 *Tenure of Housing* requires proposals to deliver a mix homes, including an element of social and affordable housing, which takes account of the most up to date study of housing needs in the neighbourhood area.

Housing mix and accessibility

- 4.3.80 As can be seen from the table set out in section 4.2 a variety of housing types are proposed. In summary, there will be 12 x one bed, 27 x two bed, 21 no three bed, 6 x four bed and 2 x five bed units. This housing mix is considered to be reasonable and satisfies the aforementioned NHLP policies.
- 4.3.81 Although the existing main building will not meet accessibility standards due to historic constraints, all of the new build dwellings (total 24 units) to be in place of the sports hall will be accessible and adaptable with the two units (Summer House and Harwood House) being also wheelchair accessible. The proposals therefore exceed the requirements of NHLP Policy HS5.

Vacant Building Credit (VBC)

- 4.3.82 Section 5 of the NPPF confirms that the "Provision of affordable housing should not be sought for residential developments that are not major developments, other than in designated rural areas (where policies may set out a lower threshold of 5 units or fewer). To support the re-use of brownfield land, where vacant buildings are being reused or redeveloped, any affordable housing contribution due should be reduced by a proportionate amount" (paragraph 65). An associated footnote 30 further clarifies that "Equivalent to the existing gross floorspace of the existing buildings." This policy provides an incentive for brownfield development on sites containing vacant buildings. This requires

Affordable Housing requirements to be reduced based on the quantity of floorspace being brought back into use or replaced

4.3.83 The National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG), clarifies further the approach to this matter -

“National policy provides an incentive for brownfield development on sites containing vacant buildings. Where a vacant building is brought back into any lawful use, or is demolished to be replaced by a new building, the developer should be offered a financial credit equivalent to the existing gross floorspace of relevant vacant buildings when the local planning authority calculates any affordable housing contribution which will be sought. Affordable housing contributions may be required for any increase in floorspace”

Where there is an overall increase in floorspace in the proposed development, the local planning authority should calculate the amount of affordable housing contributions required from the development as set out in their Local Plan. A ‘credit’ should then be applied which is the equivalent of the gross floorspace of any relevant vacant buildings being brought back into use or demolished as part of the scheme and deducted from the overall affordable housing contribution calculation. This will apply in calculating either the number of affordable housing units to be provided within the development or where an equivalent financial contribution is being provided.

4.3.84 The Developer Contributions SPD confirms that VBC will not apply unless it can be demonstrated that the site has been marketed for its current use for a period of at least 12 months. Paragraph 4.3.2 sets out the marketing approach to the existing educational use of the site. Officers accept that reasonable attempts to market the site for alternative educational users was undertaken.

4.3.85 A summary of the ‘Gross Internal Floor Area’ (GIFA) to be demolished and to be replaced with new building dwellings is set out in the following table -

Total GIFA (existing)	8,380m²
Demolished structures	3,586m²
Converted buildings	4794m²
New housing (a) sports hall (b) other	2,746m ² 840m ²
Total	3,586m²
Total conversion and new housing	8380m²

Table 3: Vacant Building Credit Gross Internal Floor Areas

4.3.86 The Site comprises a vacant building and brownfield land satisfying the definitions set out in the NPPF and NPPG. The proposals comprise the change of use of the existing main building and replacement buildings for demolished buildings. The proposed dwellings do not include any net gain of built floor space. The cumulative floorspace of these new dwellings will be no more than the cumulative Gross Internal Floor Area (GIFA) of the buildings to be demolished.

Conclusion of housing mix and vacant building credit

4.3.87 The proposal is considered to deliver a satisfactory housing mix and accessible housing. Given the proposal satisfies national and local policies and guidance relating to vacant building credit, it is confirmed that the proposals are not required to provide either any affordable housing or provide any commuted sums towards off-site provision. This matter is neutral in the planning balance.

Transport and Highways

4.3.88 Section 9. *Promoting sustainable transport* of the NPPF sets out the overarching objectives and considerations to ensure development provide sustainable options for travel i.e. travel by foot, bicycle and public transport. Paragraph 109 refers. Paragraphs 110, 115 and 116 confirm –

110. The planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.

115. In assessing sites that may be allocated for development in plans, or specific applications for development, it should be ensured that:

- a) sustainable transport modes are prioritised taking account of the vision for the site, the type of development and its location;*
- b) safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users;*
- c) the design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflects current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code⁴⁸; and*
- d) any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree through a vision-led approach.*

116. 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, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios.

- 4.3.89 NHLP policy SP6: *Sustainable transport* confirms that the Council will seek to secure accessibility improvements and promote the use of sustainable transport modes insofar as reasonable and practicable. Paragraph 105 of the NPPF confirms that '*planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails.*'
- 4.3.90 PNP Policy TC1: *Safe and Sustainable Transport* confirms proposals will be supported where amenities in the village can be readily and safely accessed by pedestrians and cyclists. Also, there should be no unacceptable increase in traffic or give rise to unacceptable highway safety risks. PNP Policy HD2: *Pedestrian Links and Rights of Way* seeks to protect existing pedestrian links and secure improvements to the wider network where possible. Policy HD6: *Design* sets out expectations for cycle parking.
- 4.3.91 The application is supported by a Transport Assessment (TA), TA addendum (TAA), a draft Travel Plan (TP) and a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) have been submitted to support the application which identified the anticipated transportation and highways matters associated with the proposed development. The TA confirms that it is estimated that the former school generated roughly 317 vehicle movements in the AM peak hour, and around 317 in the PM peak period, with close to 700 vehicle movements throughout the course of a day. The proposed uses are estimated to generate about 26 movements in the AM peak hour and 48 in the PM peak hour with approximately 292 vehicle movements throughout the course of the day. As can be appreciated from this, the proposed residential and community uses are expected to result in a significant decrease in vehicle movements during both the network peak hours, as well as through the course of the day compared to the former school use. In their consultation response, Herts CC Highways (HA) acknowledges that the development will not have an adverse impact on the highway network.

Vehicular Access

- 4.3.92 The Site is served by two vehicular accesses presently. The main entrance to the former school is off School Lane adjacent to the junction with Crunnells Green to the west of the site. The secondary access point is off the St Alban's Highway adjacent to the two lodge houses originally serving the site (now in separate ownership). The proposal seeks to retain the existing main site access point off School Lane, with vehicular entry for most residential uses and the cricket pitch gained solely using this access. The site will work with a one-way vehicular flow arrangement, as currently in place at the site, with vehicles continuing along the existing internal driveway, exiting via St Albans Highway. The proposal will retain the existing driveway that leads from School Lane, offering access to the main buildings within the site. From here residents and visitors will be able to access the relevant car parks and parking spaces. Visitors to the community sports facilities - cricket pitch and tennis courts - will access the facility by entering the site off St Albans Highway. Both access points have adequate visibility. The HA have not identified any specific technical objections to their continued use for residential purposes.

Pedestrian access

- 4.3.93 The main pedestrian access into the Site along the western boundary, opposite the School Lane/Crunnells Green junction. This route is not currently formalised, with access from the site being made through a gate and via the existing verge located on the eastern side of School Lane. There is no formal crossing point between the village and the Site. There is also a permissive footpath on the site which commences at the main vehicular site access at School Lane, running across the field at the south of the site and joining back with School Lane in the east, near to where the junction with St Albans Highway. This would provide future residents' safe access from the western portion of the site to St Albans Highway in the east, whilst avoiding a section of road with no separate pedestrian facility.
- 4.3.94 A footway runs along the western side of School Lane, commencing at Chequers Lane in the north. The footway is circa 1.8m in width and continues into the village, terminating to the south between The Red Lion Pub and Crunnells Green. There are no formal or informal crossing points along School Lane, within the vicinity of the site, although the footway does offer access to other routes that allow users to access the western expanse of the village.
- 4.3.95 The site is surrounded by a number of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) which link the existing school site to the wider village of Preston. The PRoWs link the site to Preston primary school, located to the south-west, as well as St Martins Church and Preston Playground, located to the north. No PRoWs are directly impacted by the proposals.
- 4.3.96 The proposals include a number of additional footpaths for both occupiers and members of the public. These comprise –
- New public footpath along the eastern side of School Lane connecting Crunnells Green with the existing footway approx.100m to the north;
 - Along the eastern side of Hitchin Road connecting the existing footway south of School Lane junction with Chequers Lane with the bus stop approx 40m to the north;
 - New permissive path linking the Dower House residential development in the north to an existing gate on School Lane and the main village;
 - Two new permissive paths within the site spurring from the existing permissive path from the main gate to the St Alans Highway. These will link the village to both the proposed community sports facilities in the south of the site and the public footpath network beyond.
- 4.3.97 No surfacing improvements to existing PRoW (linking the village to urban area) have been identified. The applicant has agreed to provide (via a s278 agreement) the two new public footpaths and associated crossings identified above which will link the Site to the village, including the on-site community sports facilities. In the event of permission being granted, these footpaths would be secured via condition and the permissive paths via the section 106 agreement. There would be some wider public benefit from the provision of the footpaths which would weigh in favour of the development.

Cycling infrastructure

- 4.3.98 Currently there is no specific cycling infrastructure within the village or on the surrounding local highway network. The roads serving Preston are, not unusually, relatively narrow and therefore not particularly conducive to cycling. However, the recreational Cycle Route 16 runs through Preston, offering an unbroken connection from the site to the southern side of Hitchin. The HA has considered whether there was potential to upgrade existing PRowS adjacent to Preston village to bridleways which would allow for cycle use. However, affected landowners are against the idea of dedicating the rights of way to bridleway status. No other road improvements for cycling have been identified and, in the circumstances, there are no improvements sought to cycling infrastructure as part of the development.

Public transport

- 4.3.99 Currently the number 88 bus route runs east/west between Luton and Hitchin through Preston village. The route operates 6 services in each direction throughout the day Monday to Friday, with 4 services in each direction running throughout the day on Saturday. Currently Preston falls outside of the Herts Lynx operating zone. The local village bus stops are located a circa 50m/1-minute (southbound stop) and a circa 140m/2-minute (northbound stop) walk from the site via the main pedestrian access. The southern bus stop is indicated by a pole and flag, with timetable information provided, while the northern bus stop offers a small shelter. There are no bus cage markings on the carriageway, Kassel kerbs, nor real-time bus information. The HA Bus Service Development Officer has recommended that given the remote location of the site, the current 88 route bus service is enhanced with potentially increased Saturday operational hours or adjusted weekday services to better serve local schools. An annual contribution of £50,000 (index linked) for 5 years to be put towards the local bus service to support its long-term viability is sought for this. The HA acknowledge that the sums involved are not likely to have a large impact on modal shift or congestion, it will at least allow residents access to an improved bus service. As stated previously above, the HA acknowledges that the development will not have an adverse impact on the highway network. The contribution sought for improved bus service is not therefore required to mitigate impacts arising from the residential use of the Site. It is sought to improve the range of sustainable transport modes as referred to in paragraphs 110 and 115 of the NPPF.

Highway Safety

- 4.3.100 The applicant's transport consultant has assessed the safety record near to the site access points for the most recent five-year period available (2018-2022 inclusive). No collisions are identified as having occurred within 150m of any vehicular or pedestrian access with a small number of collisions resulting in minor injuries beyond. The HA has not identified any concerns in this regard. Given the foregoing and the expected decrease in traffic movements associated with the residential use, highway safety is not considered to be a notable concern.

Car parking

- 4.3.101 The site will provide three car parking areas – existing open air hardstanding car park, proposed new East Car Park (covered) and re-use of former tennis court for community sports facility parking (open air). The residential parking areas are both located to the south-east of the main building. Detached units at the Tank House, the Pump House, Summerhouse and Harwood House will include ‘cart lodges’ incorporating, car, cycle and domestic storage facilities. Details of parking standards and actual provision is set out in the table below –

Resident (SPD/proposed)	Visitor (SPD/proposed)	Total for site (SPD / proposed)	Community sports facility parking (SPD/proposed)
118 / 99	33 / 39	151 / 138	Not defined / 19

Table 4: Car parking summary

- 4.3.102 The council’s parking SPD was adopted in 2011 and since then the national policy position has shifted away from car led developments. Given the type and number of constraints associated with the site, the availability of other hardstanding areas and the provision of community sports parking facility, which is likely to have occasional and seasonal use, the proposals are considered to provide a balanced provision of car parking for the proposed residential and community uses.

Cycle Parking

- 4.3.103 Long stay (covered) cycle parking for the residential uses is proposed across the site in a variety of locations - within cart lodges, the covered east car park and within the existing main building. A total of 158 cycle parking spaces, consisting of 130 long stay spaces for residents and 18 short stay cycle parking spaces for visitors are proposed. Adopted standards require a minimum of 1 secure covered space per dwelling. This equates to 1.8 space per unit although in reality, the flexible nature of storage spaces means that additional cycle storage maybe possible especially for detached houses which have their own cart lodges. The cycle parking provision for residential uses is considered to be acceptable.
- 4.3.104 In relation to the community sports facilities, no cycle storage facilities have been identified. However, in the event that permission was to be granted, a condition requiring details of a long stay (covered) cycle storage facility to this area of the Site would be reasonable and necessary.

Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP)

- 4.3.105 The purpose of this document is to propose how construction traffic including site personnel movements will be managed during the construction phase. This has been reviewed by Herts CC Highways Network Manager (Operations). A number of issues and matters of clarification relating to the Plan have been raised. The applicant’s highway consultant has amended the Plan to clarify the points of concern and this has been referred back the HA for further comment. An update on this matter will be provided at the meeting. In addition, concerns from an objector about the route for construction traffic has been considered by Herts CC Highways. It has confirmed that the proposed route is considered optimal taking into account all highway constraints and impacts on affected villages.

Travel Plan (draft)

- 4.3.106 A draft Travel Plan was submitted with the application. This has been reviewed by HA Active & Safer Travel Team. The Team have requested clarification on a number of points and the developer's consultant has recently updated the draft Travel Plan. A further consultation with the Herts CC Highways has been carried out and their response is pending. An update on this matter will be given at the meeting.

Highway improvements

- 4.3.107 The HA has indicated that it seeks a s106 contribution / strand 2 toolkit figure of £6,826 per dwelling (index linked). This would equate to £470,994 for the whole development. no other wider areas to mitigate or improve the immediate or wider highway infrastructure has been identified. From this the HA has identified the following potential highway improvements –

- *The developer to collaborate with the parish council to replace/repair the existing shelter and install a new, suitable shelter on the green, ensuring a safe and dry waiting area for bus passengers – a new shelter for the bus stop on the Green would be an enhancement (currently there is no shelter). Given its status as a 'village green' there are other legal controls which restrict the erection of structures within it. The parish council do not support the erection of shelter on this land. In the circumstances, there is not reasonable prospect of a bus shelter being delivered. In relation to the existing other bus shelter, the parish council has confirmed that this is in a good state of repair and does not require repair or replacing. A contribution towards bus shelters is not necessary or reasonable.*
- *Provide pavements and pedestrian crossing points to ensure safe and easy accessibility to bus stops for everyone – School Lane, Hitchin Road, and Church Lane – two new public footpaths to be provided by the developer as part of a s278 agreement. Although, no crossing points along School Lane have been agreed, preliminary drawings by the applicant's transport consultant identify the location and type of these. Precise details can be secured via the s278 works. This is considered to be reasonable and acceptable.*
- *Enhance road safety by improving speed signage and warnings on the approaching roads (Hitchin Road) – this is supported by the parish council and the applicant has agreed to make a contribution to such signage.*
- *Additional pedestrian paths from within the development on to School Lane to reduce the walking/wheeling distance to bus stops – section 4.3.68 confirms the internal footpaths proposed to improve connectivity between the site and the village. These are considered to be both reasonable and acceptable.*
- *Developer to demonstrate that they are promoting the local bus service/s along with travel vouchers to encourage sustainable modes of travel – the developer has agreed to provide a contribution (circa £16,000) to either cover bus vouchers for a three month period for each residential unit or a pilot public transport service for residents. Promotion of local bus services can be secured through the site wide Travel Plan (a draft of which has already been provided). These are considered to be both reasonable and acceptable.*

- *A financial contribution (£250,000) towards improved bus journeys for the 88 bus route* – this is explained in paragraph 4.3.71. The improvements to the existing bus service serving the village have been costed at £250,000. However, the HA acknowledges that this is not required to mitigate any impacts on highway infrastructure arising from the new residential use of the site (as previously confirmed, there will be a significant decrease in vehicle movements during both the network peak hours, as well as through the course of the day compared to the former school use). It also accepts that it is not likely to have a large impact on modal shift or congestion. The contribution is sought to improve sustainable transport options. Officers have carefully considered this and conclude that this contribution is not proportionate in scale and kind for the development proposed and does not pass the necessary CIL regulation tests. This contribution is not therefore being sought.

Conclusion on Highway and access impacts

4.3.108 In their consultation responses, the HA has not raised any technical objections to the use of the vehicular accesses or raised any highway safety concerns relating to the residential use. The proposed residential use of the Site will result in a net decrease in vehicular movements to the site compared to the last use as a school. A range of on-site permissive and public footpaths will improve pedestrian connectivity from the Site and within the locality for both new residents the wider public. The applicant will deliver the new public footpath improvements and related crossings at their own cost via a s278 agreement. No opportunities have been identified to improve cycling infrastructure near to the site. The proposal will deliver acceptable car and cycle parking facilities. No fundamental issues have been identified with the CTMP and draft Travel Plan. The HA has indicated that they seek a s106 contribution of £6,826 per dwelling in accordance with their toolkit. This would equate to a total contribution of £470,994. In accordance with the CIL regulations, officers have identified which of the HA's improvements are reasonable and the applicant has provided written agreement to these. Having regard to paragraphs 110 and 115 of the NPPF requiring the prioritisation of sustainable transport modes, the measures set out are considered to be proportionate in scale and kind for the proposed development. The footpaths and crossing improvements will have wider public benefits linking the village to the proposed community facilities and the immediately adjacent PRoW network. As the HA is recommending refusal of the application, no highway conditions have been provided. In the event Members resolved to accept the officer's conclusions on this matter, highway conditions from the HA should be sought. Overall, this matter is considered to weigh beneficially in the planning balance.

Sports pitch impacts

4.3.109 Section 8. of the NPPF *Promoting healthy and safe communities* requires planning decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places. Paragraph 102 clarifies that 'Access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities, and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change.' Paragraph 103 specifically states that -

Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or

b) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or

c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.

4.3.110 NHLP Policy SP10: *Healthy Communities* confirms that the council will provide and maintain healthy, inclusive communities for our residents by (i) supporting the retention of existing community, cultural, leisure or recreation facilities and (ii) require appropriate levels of new community, cultural, leisure and built sport & recreation facilities to be provided in new Development. The council adopted the Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan and the Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy and Action Plan in December 2018. These are joint strategies resulting from the partnership working of stakeholders such as national governing bodies, facility providers, local clubs and leagues. The council is in the process of updating the strategy and it is anticipated that this will be published later in the year.

4.3.111 The proposals do not result in the loss of or affect the use of playing field or pitches although as the proposal involves the loss of other sports facilities - the former schools sports hall and one of four existing tennis courts. In these circumstances, there is no statutory requirement to consult Sport England although planning guidance advises that it should be consulted. Sport England has been consulted and their comments are considered below.

Existing sports facilities and pitches on site

4.3.112 Existing on-site provision comprises a sports hall, disused sports field, a disused cricket pavilion building, four tennis courts and swimming pool (originally a pond). As part of the proposals, the following sports facilities would be affected –

- the sports hall would be demolished
- the swimming pool would revert to its original use an ornamental pond
- one of the four tennis courts would be and repurposed as a car park for the community sports facilities
- the existing cricket pavilion building would be removed

4.3.113 The loss of the above sports facilities is tempered by the fact that there was very occasional public use of these when the site was operated as a school, usually during summertime when the school was unoccupied.

New provision arising from the proposed residential use

4.3.114 The proposed residential use generates a need for both new sports pitches and facilities. The Sport England Sports Pitch and Facilities calculators confirm that the proposal will generate the following needs -

Sport	Pitches / area (m2)
Natural Grass Pitches (*cricket pitch requirements 0.02)	0.27
Artificial Pitches	0.02
Changing rooms	0.34

Swimming pool	1.77 m2
Sports hall	0.04 m2
Tennis courts	0.04 m2
Indoor bowls	Fixed

Table 5: Sports pitch and facilities arising

In summary, the new need arising from the development for sports pitches is circa 0.28 (pitches) and 1.85m2 of sports facilities which equates to a capital cost of £191,718 and an annual maintenance cost of circa £5,999 (£120,000 over 20 years).

Local sports pitch need and retained / enhanced sports pitch provision

- 4.3.115 A financial contribution towards the improvement of existing sports pitches and facilities in either the parish or nearby Hitchin would be the typical way to delivery need arising from the development. However, the applicant has been in discussions with both the Parish Council and the local cricket club (Preston Cricket Club) for a period of time prior to the submission of the application to discuss sporting needs of the village. Once the application was submitted, extensive discussions have continued to take place between the applicant, the district council, Preston Parish Council and the Preston Cricket Club.
- 4.3.116 Preston Cricket Club has been established for over 140 years and is part of the Saracens Hertfordshire Cricket League, where it currently fields four senior Saturday XIs throughout the summer, as well as two Sunday teams, an emerging women's team and more than 70 junior players (U9-U13) enjoying both coaching and match play cricket. Currently there is a need to host two concurrent home matches which requires a second ground and associated pavilion facilities to be hired out of the village. This is done at considerable cost to the Club and requires complicated yearly negotiation with competition from other interest groups. There are also challenges with playing games outside of village location as it does not help the Club Preston in furthering the strong local inclusivity.
- 4.3.117 The creation of a cricket pitch and associated pavilion at Temple Dinsley would enable senior 3rd and 4th XI teams as well as some junior and women's cricket, where ball strike distances tend to be less dramatic than for the 1st and 2nd XI teams. The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) promotes diversity and inclusion and expanding the Club's facilities will help foster both increased women's cricket and further attracting participation from North Hertfordshire's African-Caribbean and South Asian communities.
- 4.3.118 The cricket club has provided a feasibility report setting out estimated costs for the delivery of the new pitch and pavilion. The club is seeking initially sought a contribution from the developer towards the building work associated with the cricket facilities of £175,000 although most recently due to the pavilion design needing to be constructed in materials appropriate to the heritage setting they are seeking a contribution of £200,000. A contribution towards this is an essential element of the project's overall financing and indeed the project is very unlikely to be viable without it. The developer has offered a contribution of £175,000. The cricket club has confirmed that it is confident the shortfall can be secured via other funding streams and support from cricket club members.
- 4.3.119 The location of the proposed pitches and outfield, complying to ECB minimum size standards for adult cricket (which allow for both the playing area and surrounds). The cricket club has worked hard to identify the current opportunity to stage cricket at Temple Dinsley / Princess Helena College, continuing the availability of sports facilities there but with access for the broader community - both from the village and the wider area.

- 4.3.120 As part of the proposals a redundant existing pavilion building (48m²) would be removed once the new pavilion comes into use. A replacement bespoke single storey cricket pavilion building with changing facilities, toilets, communal area and storage space is proposed (160 m²). The pitch and associate land would be provided to the cricket club on a peppercorn rent for a period of 75 years.
- 4.3.121 Immediately adjacent to the proposed cricket facilities, there are three existing disused tennis courts (approximately 0.17ha). The developer has offered the use of two of the courts (approximately 0.12ha) to the parish council who have indicated their desire to take the responsibility for managing the community use of these. The two courts will be refurbished and leased to the parish council on a peppercorn rent for a period of 75 years. The remaining tennis court would be remodelled and resurfaced to make provision for 19 open air car parking spaces for visitors using the community sports facilities. The three retained tennis courts are 0.19ha in area and the cricket pitch is 1.29ha. This gives a total of 1.48ha of on-site sports pitch where 0.28 pitches are required. By way of reference, according to Sport England's calculator the capital cost needed to provide a single tennis court is circa £125,000.
- 4.3.122 In addition to the two community tennis courts, another existing tennis court adjacent to the northern site boundary would be retained and refurbished exclusively for residents of the development. Due to the restricted use of this, it has limited benefit in wider sports pitch provision arising from the development.
- 4.3.123 All of the foregoing community sports facilities would be located in the southern part of the site adjacent to the secondary vehicular access (east Avenue) and the St Albans Highway. Maintenance of all these community facilities would be the responsibility of the cricket club (cricket facilities) and parish council (community tennis courts).

Sport England response

- 4.3.124 Sport England has been consulted on the proposals. Their initial response raised a number of queries and therefore a holding objection was issued. Meetings and discussions between officers, the applicant and Sport England have taken place. Sport England's verbal position at the time of writing this report was that in lieu of the sports facilities lost and the new sports pitch and facility demand generated by the proposed residential uses (as set out above), it has indicated that it supported the proposals on the proviso that community sports facilities were provided in full by the developer. As Members will appreciate, there are a range of benefits sought to be secured as part of the wider proposals and these must be carefully weighed in terms their importance. Confirmation on Sport England's updated position is awaited and this will be provided at the meeting.

Conclusion on sports pitch

- 4.3.125 Officers consider that given the very occasional use of the sports facilities on site by the public, the money needed to invest in their refurbishment and the Sites remote location away from the main urban area of Hitchin, their continued use of the site for community purposes would be extremely limited. Also, the replacement sports hall housing is likely to deliver the investment in the various heritage assets on the Site. The delivery of community sports facilities is considered a priority given identified local need. The need from the development for pitch sports is 0.17ha based on the adopted sports pitch standards and calculator which equates to a commuted sum of £191,718 is required together with an annual maintenance cost of £5,999 (£120,000 over 20 years). The

developer is not under any obligation to provide sports facilities on site. However, the actual on-site sports pitch provision is 1.48ha which equates to an significant over provision sports pitches. In addition, the developer has offered a contribution to the cricket club of £175,000 towards the provision of the cricket pitch and pavilion. The cricket club has verbally indicated that it is confident that any shortfall in delivering the pitch and pavilion can be met through other funding streams and club supporters / players. This is a highly usual proposal which will deliver on-site sports pitch provision for a rural community use in the long term (75 years) where there is a proven need. This is considered to be a significant benefit for the community both locally and for the immediate rural area generally. In the circumstances, subject to these benefits being secured in a s106 agreement, officers believe that the proposal is acceptable from sports pitch impact and provision perspective.

Open space

4.3.126 Chapter 8. *Promoting healthy and safe communities* of the NPPF confirms that development proposals should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which -

(c) enable and support healthy lives, through both promoting good health and preventing ill-health, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs and reduce health inequalities between the most and least deprived communities – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling (paragraph 96).

4.3.127 The NHLP Policy NE6: *New and Improved Open Space* states that planning permission will be granted for development proposals that make provision for new and/or improved open space in accordance with the Councils open space standards. In terms of open space provision for new housing development, NHDC have adopted and apply the ‘Fields in Trust’ Standards (FiT), under the ‘Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play – Beyond six-acre Standard’. Further details are set out on the Council’s Developer Contributions SPD.

4.3.128 PNP policy AF1: *New and Improved Community Facilities* confirms in principle support for improved community facilities in the parish with particular focus on accessibility for children, the elderly and those with disabilities. Policy EH3: *Open and Green Spaces* seeks to protect existing open space, provide new green infrastructure to provide permeability for wildlife through and around the development.

Open space provision

4.3.129 The open space requirements arising from and provided by the development is set out in the table below. These are also illustrated in submitted drawings. As the ‘outdoor sport’ typology has been dealt with in the previous section of the report, it is not repeated here.

Open Space Typology	FiT standard (hectares)	Actual provision (hectares)
Parks and gardens	0.13	3.6
Amenity green space	0.01	1.8
Natural and semi-natural green space	0.3	6.3
Allotments	0.04	The plans identify a community growing

		space for residents. The site will also provide a replacement orchard which is set out in the 'Landscaping' section of this report.
Play parks	Local Area of Play (LAP), Locally Equipped Area of Play (LEAP) and contribution towards Multi Use Games Area (MUGA)	These are to be provided off-site within the village. Improvements to existing play facilities off site within village via financial contributions

Table 5: Open space typologies

4.3.130 As can be seen from the table above, the minimum standards are significantly exceeded for parks and gardens, amenity green space and natural and semi natural green space. These spaces will need to be managed and details of this can be secured by condition. Allotments will be provided in the form of a Community Growing Space which is located within a small herbaceous border within the historic garden area to the west of the Main Building. Details of how this would be managed would be secured by the same condition. In relation to play parks, it is considered that there would be greater benefit if this were provided off-site due the heritage constraints across the site and the wider benefits from improving existing play facilities within the immediately adjacent village. The Council's SPD requires a contribution towards a MUGA. However, given that the delivery of community sports facilities are being prioritised, this contribution has been incorporated into the cricket club contribution towards the delivery of cricket pitch and pavilion.

Conclusion on open space provision

4.3.131 The management of these spaces are expected to be undertaken by a management company, details of which are to be secured by way of a condition. This can be secured by condition in the event of permission being granted. As can be appreciated from the above table, the development will exceed the minimum requirements in relation to open space. These are benefits which contribute towards the VSC case in relation to inappropriate development within the Green Belt and also in the overall planning balance.

Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

4.3.132 Chapter 15 *Conserving and enhancing the natural environment* of the NPPF requires decisions to contribute to and enhance the natural environment. NHP Policies SP12 - *Green infrastructure, biodiversity and landscape*, NE4 - *Biodiversity and geological sites* and NE6 - *Designated biodiversity and geological sites* - seek to protect, enhance and manage the natural environment. PNP policy EH3: *Open and Green Spaces*, EH7: *Protecting and Enhancing the Local and Natural Environment* and Policy EH5: *Tranquillity and Dark Skies* are also relevant policies in relation to ecology and BNG.

- 4.3.133 The 2021 Environment Act introduced an automatic requirement for every planning permission granted to achieve a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). The proposal is subject to mandatory BNG requirements. The application includes a BNG assessment.
- 4.3.134 In relation to existing ecology, the application is supported by a Ecological Assessment Report by Applied Ecology Ltd. This Report involved desk study and a phase 1 habitat survey and bat roost assessment. It confirms that the Site does not lie within any statutory or non-statutory designated site for nature conservation. Whilst there are a number of priority habitats within 500m of the Site there was no irreplaceable habitats found.

Ecology

- 4.3.135 In relation to animals and habitats the findings confirmed that there was no evidence of protected species on the site although on site habitats have the ability to support common reptile species, specialist invertebrate species, west European hedgehog and a variety of bird species. Survey work revealed the presence of a Barn Owl in the pumping station building and the tank house. Bat roosting and activity has been identified in trees, including those within the plantation and the following buildings West Wing, East Annex, Science Block, Teaching Block, Tank House and Pumping Station.
- 4.3.136 The council's ecologist has confirmed that the bat activity in the Summer Plantation is of County importance for the bat assemblage due to the presence of nationally rare Barbastelles. It is confirmed that the tree works to facilitate the two dwellings in the plantation will not have an impact on bats. Given the sensitivities of the bat interest on site, it is recommended that a bat monitoring programme for the plantation be secured for 10 years. This would include a long-term management plan with details of monitoring and remedial actions to be where detrimental impacts are found to have. Submission of an annual report to the LPA to determine levels of bat activity would also be required. Works to the Main House, demolition of the science block and conversion of the Tank House and Pump House are considered likely to result in the damage or destruction of bat roosts and will require a bat licence from Natural England. Confirmation that such a licence has been issued prior to the demolition of these buildings (which does not include the sports hall) should be conditioned in the event of permission being granted.
- 4.3.137 In relation to the Barn Owl, it will be essential to ensure that nesting of this is not disturbed by renovation activity to either building, and that accommodation is made to ensure that it can continue to nest and roost within the site by the provision of tree and/or building mounted barn owl boxes. These can be secured by condition. In accordance with NHLP policy NE4 biodiversity enhancement and on plot opportunities should be explored for the new build dwellings in addition to the mitigation for species impacts already discussed. A condition is recommended to secure a Ecological Enhancement Plan to secure a range of enhancement measures. This would include bird nesting measures requested by other interested parties who have commented on the proposals.
- 4.3.138 Given the extensive bat interest across the site impacts from lighting are the main concern arising from the proposals. Existing buildings on site have, by the nature of being a school, previously been illuminated and as such bats using these buildings are accustomed to the light. However, changes to increase this and the introduction of lighting in previously unlit areas will be detrimental. As such a lighting strategy for the site, including woodland areas, should be conditioned.

4.3.139 The Ice House is identified as a Local Wildlife Site (LWS) due to its value as a hibernation roost for Daubenton's, Natterer's and Brown Long Eared bats. The location of the eastern car park in the vicinity of the Ice House and any potential impacts on the bats using it is a matter to be given careful consideration. NHLP Policy NE4 of the North Herts Local Plan requires a 12m buffer around Local Wildlife Sites and as such the car park has been pulled away to allow for separation. A fence is to go around the perimeter of this buffer to prevent public access with interpretation for its historical interest to be kept outside of the fence. Additionally, the access to the Ice House will be need to be secured with a lockable grille to allow bat access but prevent humans or pets from entering. Further, concern was raised over the potential impact from lighting associated with the use of the car park. A lighting scheme has been provided which demonstrates light spill will avoid the LWS but additional to this a new yew hedge will be planted to screen out headlights as cars enter and exit parking spaces. As a number of buildings are to be demolished and converted, together with changes to introduce new dwellings to woodland the use of a Construction Environment Management Plan is advised to prevent harm to protected species and avoid unnecessary ecological impacts

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

4.3.140 As has already been confirmed, the development is subject to mandatory BNG. The application is subject to a requirement to deliver 10% BNG and a Statutory Metric calculation has been provided with the application which indicates that the scheme would secure a 16.61% gain in habitat units and a 12.81% gain in hedgerow units thereby meeting the statutory requirement. Given the scale of the site, distinctiveness of habitats present and high number of units involved the gains are considered significant and ongoing management of the habitats on site will be informed by a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan to be secured via a s106 agreement. A pre-commencement 'Biodiversity Gain Plan' condition is recommended in the event that planning permission is granted.

Conclusion on ecology and BNG

4.3.141 Having regard to foregoing, ecology impacts arising from the proposals, particularly in relation to bats and the Barn Owl, can be mitigated and further details can be secured by conditions. In relation to BNG, the proposal will provide an above mandatory 10% improvement across the site. This is considered to be a benefit in the planning balance.

Trees impacts and proposals

4.3.142 Chapter 15 of the NPPF - *Conserving and enhancing the natural environment* - confirms that proposals should protect and enhance the natural environment. NHLP Policy SP1: *Sustainable development in North Hertfordshire* seeks to protect key elements of North Hertfordshire's environment. NHLP Policy NE2 *Landscape* seeks to ensure the health and future retention of important landscape features and their long-term management and maintenance. PNP policy EH8 *Hedgerows, Trees and Verges* requires proposals to retain and maintain existing trees and hedgerows where possible. New landscaping is also suggested to mitigate the visual impact of development.

4.3.143 The historic background of the site and its formal status as a RPG confirms its importance in landscape terms. The site contains extensive areas of existing hedgerows, trees and of course the plantation to the eastern boundary. The application is supported by a tree report by Sharon Hosegood Associates (SHA) arboricultural consultancy. This sets out tree constraints, impacts and preliminary mitigation measures arising from the development.

4.3.144 The report summary confirms proposals have been carefully designed to minimize impact to trees and follows close design team collaboration. The vast majority of trees will be retained, although two discrete areas of the mid last century plantation ‘Summerhouse Plantation’ will be removed. Tree planting will exceed the NHDC Tree Strategy Policy of requiring two trees for every one tree removed, including new woodland planting of a greater species diversity than the relatively poor-quality, self-sown sycamore dominated parts of the plantation which is required for removal for development. The existing landscape screens all of the proposals, and will be enhanced by planting which is appropriate for the biodiversity and landscape setting. Rev B relates to the new substation, parking in East Park (moved back from trees) and provides detail on the energy centre (now away from trees) – all text changes in blue for ease of reading.

Categorisation of tree features - trees/groups/hedges/woodlands	Total	Trees/groups to be retained	Trees/groups to be removed
Category A	28	28	0
Category B	391	380	11
Category C	511	413	98
Category U	123	73	50
Total	1053	894	110 +49U

Trees/groups to be retained	Trees/groups to be removed	Trees to be planted	Net additional trees
894	111 (excluding U)	388	277 plus woodland planting

Table 6: Removed, retained and proposed trees

4.3.145 The council’s arboricultural consultants (Maydencroft) have considered the tree impacts arising from the development. Some revisions have been made to the proposals to mitigate the impact on veteran trees. The submitted arboricultural report has been updated to reflect these changes.

Summerhouse Plantation

4.3.146 The council’s consultant has confirmed that most tree removals required to facilitate this proposal are located within Summerhouse Plantation where the two new properties (Summer House and Harwood House) will be built. The areas chosen for each property have been carefully selected to optimise existing open spaces and the footprint of the current building. Although the number of tree removals in these areas is quite high, just under half of these trees have been designated as Category U (unsuitable for retention), which was confirmed on a site. No trees of high quality (Category A) have been identified requiring removal within the woodland and only six trees of moderate quality (Category B) are to be removed.

The proposed East Car Park

4.3.147 This part of the proposal will necessitate the removal of some trees due to the level of root impact and proximity to the new surfacing and parking areas. There are two veteran trees (T119 named Majestic Oak and T171 on the Ice House) immediately adjacent to the proposed car park. Following discussions, the layout of this has been revised significantly reduce any potential impact to either of these veteran trees.

Other site wide tree considerations

- 4.3.148 A cable route which had the potential to impact a veteran holm oak (T621) has been amended and is now located outside of the RPA and buffer zone of the tree.
- 4.3.149 The site contains significant number of trees many of which are not directly affected by the development. It is confirmed that no Category A trees are to be removed as part of this proposal and only eleven Category B trees require removal. The remaining tree removals comprise ninety-eight Category C and fifty Category U trees. As part of the landscaping proposals for the Site, 388 new trees along with additional woodland planting is proposed. This level of planting is considered sufficient to mitigate the loss of the removed trees and will have a positive impact on the landscape and help increase the overall quality of the arboricultural resource across the site. Other trees have been identified as requiring removal on the grounds of health and safety rather than to facilitate the project. Although this does increase the overall level of tree loss on site, the work is necessary as part of ongoing site management, and the proposed on-site mitigation will prevent the arboricultural value of the site from declining.
- 4.3.150 The demolition of the sports hall is anticipated to be the building operation which will 'commence' the development and details of tree protection measures relating to this specific operation have been submitted and agreed already. Other detailed tree protection and construction details adjacent to trees will need to be set out in an Arboricultural Method Statement prior to each phase of the development which would be secured by condition.

Conclusion on tree impacts

- 4.3.151 A variety of tree impacts have been identified by the applicant's arborist. These have been considered by the Council's arboricultural consultant. Overall, the tree impacts across the site are not considered to be unreasonable and will provide the opportunity to secure better management in the long term. Subject to conditions requiring an Arboricultural Method Statement, Tree Protection Plan and a Veteran Tree Management Plan at each phase of development, there are no reasons to withhold permission on tree impact grounds. This matter is considered to be neutral in the planning balance.

Landscaping proposals

- 4.3.152 Chapter 15 of the NPPF - *Conserving and enhancing the natural environment* - confirms that proposal should protect and enhance the natural environment. NHLP Policies SP1: *Sustainable development in North Hertfordshire* and NE2 *Landscape* sets out matters relating to proposals which affect existing and proposed landscape.
- 4.3.153 The restoration of the Registered Park and Gardens (RPG) and wider grounds is central component to the project. The proposals are set out in a number of documents and plans and is split between the formal historic 'Luytens and Jekyll' gardens to the west and north of the Main Building and the wider 'non-formal' park and grounds. The formal garden plans have been provided by George Carter - a designer specialising in formal gardens with extensive experience of the restoration and reconstruction of historic gardens. Livingston Eyre Associates have prepared preliminary hard and soft landscaping drawings for the non-formal garden areas in wider grounds and associated with the new build elements.

Formal gardens

- 4.3.154 These areas are detailed in a number of drawings informed by a survey and comprise - *Formal Gardens Site Plan, Historic Lutyens Garden Block Plan, Rose and Herbaceous, Magnolia and Rose Garden, Magnolia and Rose Garden 2, Pergola and North Terrace, Forecourt and Diamond Garden, Pool Garden.*
- 4.3.155 The proposals comprise –
- Entrance forecourt – reconfiguring of the gravel and grass layout with new borders and mown beds.
 - The Pool Garden - the existing modern swimming pool is to be reconfigured and the early canal-like pond is to be re-instated.
 - The Rose Gardens – these will be repaired and replanted with appropriate roses. York paving will also be restored.
 - The Herbaceous Garden – this will be cleared and regraded reinstating a wide central mown path defined by York-stone edging.
 - The Magnolia Garden - the very overgrown yews from the original hedge surrounding the 2nd Rose Garden be removed and both hedges replanted. The paving steps and retaining walls will be restored following the surviving pattern.
 - The Pergola Garden - it is proposed to retain the present configuration on the North and South side of the lawn. The long East pergola and its terminations to the North and South is to be cleared of planting and replanted with controlled climbers. The central paved paths to be re-laid and repointed.
 - The North Terrace – reinstatement of blocks of yew and that the replanting of the two beds removal of most of the overgrown vegetation and to restore the hard landscaping. The dense planting of trees and shrubs to the far East at the upper level will be thinned and enhanced with underplanting with a weed-suppressing bark top dressing between planting.
 - The Quincunx Orchard - the deer fence to be hidden behind a beech hedge on all sides. Defective trees are to be replaced with similar varieties. Overgrown fruit trees will be pruned to a better shape.
 - The Belvedere – this is to be carefully cleared of ivy and other overgrowth. The yew hedge running North South terminating at the Belvedere is to be clipped back to a formal hedge and the overgrowth against the Belvedere to be removed to help re-instate the NE view from the East window.
- 4.5.156 The proposed restoration of the historic garden concentrates on the designed elements of the 1908-1918 period (Lutyens and Jekyll) widely considered to be the prime period. The original herbaceous and shrub planting was quite simple and of low height which gave the architecture and garden structures prominence. This period also took advantage of pre-existing planting and of garden walls and contours. Though the garden has lost much of its planting of the Lutyens and Jekyll period, the survival of paths, walls, paving, steps and garden structures make this garden important. Most of the mature trees within the formal gardens will be retained and in some cases the canopies reduced. No planting specification survives for the garden, but other historic evidence has informed the preliminary details with more precise details to be secured by way of condition in the event of approval.

Non-formal garden areas and open space

- 4.3.157 Illustrative hard and soft landscaping proposals for the new houses, the proposed new East Car Park and the grounds and gardens to the north of the Main Building are set out in seven drawings prepared by Livingston Eyre Landscape Architects. These drawings include preliminary details of new planting proposals across the wider site, the location and types of new boundary treatments, retaining walls, footpaths, steps and other hard surfacing proposals. Significant new planting is proposed largely to deliver the required biodiversity net gain improvements. This is focussed to the north of the Main Building and comprises new woodland and wildflower meadows. New woodland is proposed adjacent the site boundaries to School Lane and the St Albans Highway, surrounding the community sports facilities. Other notable tree planting is proposed adjacent to the proposed walled East Car Park and a new tree lined vista adjacent to the Tank House from the main entrance from the Main Building into the wider park and grounds which will mimic a feature that historically existed.
- 4.3.158 Taken together, Historic England has confirmed that the research and documentary evidence that has been produced to inform the proposals, should ensure a sound conservation-led approach and authenticity to the reinstatement of the gardens, including sensitive and pragmatic interventions for communal use and to improve access. It supports this element of the scheme and recommends that detailed design and specifications should be secured by planning condition(s). It also supports the proposed improved management of the grassland, woodland, and waterbodies forming the wider landscape park for both heritage and nature conservation benefits. The management and maintenance plans for the gardens and wider parkland should also be secured by way of a planning condition in the event of permission being granted.

Conclusion on landscaping proposals

- 4.3.159 The proposed restoration of the formal gardens and wider grounds will enhance the setting of heritage assets and deliver significant long term heritage and environmental benefits. Subject to conditions requiring detailed landscaping plans (to be broadly in accordance with the preliminary drawings and details already submitted) and a management and maintenance plan, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in landscaping terms. This matter weighs significantly in the planning balance.

Flood risk

- 4.3.160 National policy on issues relating to flooding is set out in the NPPF at paragraphs 170 – 182. This emphasises the importance of considering the potential for flooding for new developments, particularly in areas identified at high risk. It also requires the consideration of incorporating sustainable drainage solutions where necessary and appropriate.
- 4.3.161 NHP Policies SP11 and NE7 seek to ensure that development does not result in unacceptable flood risk. PNP Policy HD8: *Flood Risk and Drainage Provisions* confirms that development proposals in locations at the highest risk of flooding will not be supported. Where any development proposal can be demonstrated to be necessary in such areas the development should be made safe for its lifetime without increasing the risk of flooding elsewhere. In other parts of the neighbourhood area beyond the locations at the highest risk of flooding, development proposals will be supported where they do not increase flood risk elsewhere in the neighbourhood area, Major developments should incorporate sustainable drainage systems within their design and layout unless there is clear evidence that this would not be appropriate either within the neighbourhood area or on the site concerned.

4.3.162 The applicant provided a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) with the application. This site falls within Flood Zone 1. The LLFA have raised an objection to the proposal on the grounds that the development is appropriate to the Flood Zone in which it is located and adequately assess the flood risk at the site using an appropriate method, fails to include an assessment of the impact of climate change using appropriate climate change allowances and did not demonstrate that adequate flood risk mitigation measures had been included in the design of the proposed development to ensure the development will be safe for its lifetime. The applicant's consultant is undertaking further flood modelling work with the view to presenting a revised flood risk assessment to address the LLFA's concerns. The LLFA has confirmed more recently that the further modelling work being undertaken is positive it looks like it will address their concerns. Members are asked to agree to delegate this matter to officers to resolve and include necessary conditions as recommended by the LLFA. In the event the matter was not resolvable, the application would be referred back to Members for reconsideration.

Conclusion of flood risk

4.3.163 There is an outstanding objection from the LLFA which requires further modelling. There is an expectation that this matter can be resolved. Subject to the LLFA confirming their agreement to a revised flood risk assessment, there is no objection to the proposal on flood risk grounds. This matter is considered to be neutral in the planning balance.

Utilities and services

4.3.164 Section 10 of the NPPF *Supporting high quality communications* confirms that 'Advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being.' PNP Policy TC2: *Broadband and Mobile Coverage* - Provision of facilities to support the delivery of efficient and effective landline, broadband and mobile coverage throughout the parish will be supported provided they are sensitively designed and located in accord with other policies in this Plan.

4.3.165 The application is supported by a Utilities statement by CBG Consultants. This confirms the following –

- Gas – the existing site has a gas connection supply. There is no intention to use natural gas with heating for the residential uses to be provided by air source heat pumps.
- Electricity - a new supply will be necessary to serve the development due to the anticipated electrification of heat and hot water. A new substation is proposed on site (to the western boundary) and switch gear room will also be provided (combined with a bike store) to the north of the Main Building adjacent the sports hall housing.
- Water – it is anticipated that water provision will be via shared tank system for the Main Building & Teaching Block residences, whilst the individual terraced houses would have individual metered connections. Anglian Water have confirmed that assets are not affected by the proposals and there is capacity to serve the development.
- Communications - The existing incoming fibre connections are not suitable for the quantity of residential users proposed on the site. A new connection from a nearby BT base adjacent to the proposed substation is proposed.

4.3.166 New service cable and pipe routes will be needed to provide the above utilities and, with the exception of the main service route between the proposed energy centre in the proposed East Car Park and the Main Building, these will need to be agreed (via condition) prior to the relevant phasing being commenced.

Conclusion on utilities and services

4.3.167 Subject to a condition to secure service routes prior to each phase of development, there are no objections to proposed utilities and services. This matter is considered to be neutral in the planning balance.

Sustainability and climate change

4.3.168 Chapter 2 of the NPPF *Achieving sustainable development* requires the sustainability credentials of proposals to be considered. Paragraph 8 requires that all three objectives – *economic, social and environmental* - of the planning system would be met. Chapter 14 *Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change* confirms that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate.

4.3.169 The Council passed a Climate Emergency motion in 2019 which pledged to do everything within the Council's power to achieve zero carbon emissions in North Hertfordshire by 2030. The Council has adopted a Climate Change Strategy to promote carbon neutral policies. NHP Policy SP11 *Natural resources and sustainability* gives broad support for proposals for renewable and low carbon energy development in appropriate locations. NHP Policy DE1 – *Sustainable Design* – requires developments to consider a number of criteria including the need to reduce energy consumption and waste. NHP Policy NE12: *Renewable and low carbon energy development* supports the principle of renewable energy subject to a technical impacts being satisfied. NHP Policy SP9 relates to *Design and Sustainability* and seeks the inclusion of a broad range of sustainability measures in developments. PNP Policy HD5 relates to *Sustainability and Energy Efficiency*. It supports developments with a low carbon footprint. More specifically, it seeks measures that encourage water conservation, deliver biodiversity and the provision of Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points. The Council has recently adopted a Supplementary Planning Document on *Sustainability*. The SPD sets out nine sustainability themes that developments should consider. There is a three tiered approach to assessment - *Bronze* would mean meeting the current minimum standards, *Silver* would be an improvement on current standards and *Gold* would be exemplary standards considerably in excess of minimum standards.

4.3.170 Sustainability measures of the development are set out in a number of supporting documents and these are summarised in a Sustainability addendum document. A summary of the sustainability targets under each of the themes set out in the SPD is set out below -

- **Theme 1: Optimising Passive Design & Fabric Performance** – new build element Gold - All new housing will achieve EPC rating A, as well adopting the London Energy Transformative Initiative (LETI) standards for operational energy targets. Additionally, the proposals will deliver a 65% reduction in CO2 emissions, exceed the SPD Gold requirements set at 50%. Existing buildings covered under final theme 'Historic Buildings'.

- **Theme 2: Achieving low-carbon energy** – new builds will meet Gold and existing buildings Silver - On-site solar photovoltaic (PV) slates will be provided on new housing together with PV panels on the roof of East Car Park. These PV panels are estimated to offset local energy consumption of 25% from existing buildings and 100% from new buildings.
- **Theme 3: Minimising carbon footprint - Whole Life Cycle Assessment (all residential development) and Circular Economy Principles (Major residential developments) - level Bronze** - The development will see the reuse of existing buildings and materials from demolished structures will be salvaged, reused and recycled. In addition to the use of PV panels as identified under Theme 2 above, low energy consumption systems are also incorporated such as air source heat pumps. Materials with low U-values and low embodied carbon such as timber will also be used.
- **Theme 4: Healthy placemaking - Green & Blue Infrastructure, NHS Health into Place Principles for Residential Development Bronze+ and Urban Greening Factor (UGF) for Major Residential Scheme Gold** - The proposal provides a network of green spaces and features on site for the community – publicly accessible permissive paths, cricket pitch, tennis courts, improved management of existing woodland, enhanced landscaping, restoration and enhancement of the historic gardens and wider grounds, community food growing opportunities, reinstatement of on-site orchard, improved play and recreation spaces (off-site). The proposal will protect and enhance existing vegetation within the development site including mature trees and habitats. New areas of woodland to promote species rich habitats within the development site are also being introduced to strengthen the site's ecological value. Natural England's Urban Greening Factor minimum requirement is 0.4 where the proposal will deliver 0.75.
- **Theme 5: Promoting biodiversity - Ecological Surveys & Assessment Silver - Arboriculture Assessment (where trees are impacted by proposal) Silver - BNG Silver - Ecological buffers Gold** - The submitted ecological report provides Ecological Surveys & Assessments on habitats, species and any undertaken to ensure required ecological surveys and assessments have been carried out, evidenced and illustrated in relation to local designations. As set out previously (Tree Impacts) no Category A trees are removed. New tree planting will exceed the council's Tree Strategy Policy of requiring two trees for every one tree removed, including new woodland planting of a greater species diversity than the relatively poor-quality. The substantial net gain in tree numbers, the sensitive and historically relevant design of new planting and the greater mix of species will result in a positive arboriculture impact. The mandatory BNG target is 10% for all eligible developments. The proposals will deliver 16.6% on site BNG.
- **Theme 6: Sustainable travel - Transport statements, assessments and travel plans Bronze - EV charging Bronze** - The travel plan has outlined a general strategy of optimising existing infrastructure for travelling by foot, cycling and public transport. The new proposal has also provided active travel facilities, such as bike stores for each new dwelling to encourage alternative

modes of transportation. The proposals would be expected to result in a significant decrease in vehicle movements during both the network peak hours, as well as through the course of the day. A Travel Plan would seek to deliver improvements including the promotion of public transport. In addition, a new internal footpath is proposed, linking the Dower House development, located to the north of the site, to the new pedestrian access at village gate. A total of 105 EV charging parking spaces are provided on site in excess of the Council's adopted standards.

- **Theme 7: Conserving water - Silver** - Construction period water saving strategy includes - Close-loop wheel washers, waterless wheel washing using angled steel grids to remove debris, high pressure low volume power hoses, recirculating water where possible, limited the water use for flushing building services by stopping it as soon as flush water is clear, employing a regime for monitoring water use and water waste. Operational period water saving measures will comprise - rainwater harvesting, greywater reuse, aerated washbasin/ kitchen taps and shower heads, tapered and low-capacity baths, sensor and low flush toilets, water efficient white goods and appliances and low-flow taps limiting hot water consumption.
- **Theme 8: Incorporating sustainable drainage - Bronze+** - Surface run-off management strategies are incorporated in both existing and new buildings. Existing main building and teaching block provides surface drainage via series of manholes and surface water sewers. The Teaching Block and proposed buildings to the north will utilise a combination of Raingarden Planters, Lined Permeable Paving and below ground Cellar Storage Tanks to meet SuDS Design Pillars, i.e. Water Quantity, Water Quality, Amenity and Biodiversity. The initial Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has also demonstrated that the proposed SuDS offers 96% of reduction on brownfield runoff rates, which exceeds beyond the minimum reduction rate of 50%. Further modelling work is being undertaken and it is anticipated that sustainable drainage measures will exceed minimum standards.
- **Theme 9: Historic Buildings – Bronze** - For existing historic buildings on the site, a range of measures will be employed to maximise sustainability performance. These comprise – additional insulation to solid walls, roof areas, floors, refurbished windows and shutters, improved draught proofing to doors, capping and ventilation of chimneys, retention and refurbishment of existing heating system with introduction of communal air source heating system, thermostat controlled hot water storage, partial introduction of under-floor heating system, energy efficient lighting and improved ventilation measures.

4.3.171 The sustainability credentials across the various themes are summarised in the table below –

Theme	Target
1. Optimising Passive Design & Fabric Performance	Gold for new build
2. Achieving low-carbon energy	Gold for new build

	Silver for existing buildings
3. Minimising carbon footprint a. Whole Life Cycle Assessment (all residential development) Bronze b. Circular Economy Principles (Major residential developments) Bronze	a. Bronze b. Bronze
4. Healthy placemaking a. Green & Blue Infrastructure, NHS Health into Place Principles for Residential Development b. Urban Greening Factor (UGF) for Major Residential Scheme Gold	a. Bronze+ b. Gold
5. Promoting biodiversity a. Ecological Surveys & Assessment b. Arboriculture Assessment (where trees are impacted by proposal) c. BNG d. Ecological buffers	a. Silver b. Silver c. Silver d. Gold
6. Sustainable travel a. Transport statements, assessments and travel plans b. EV charging	a. Bronze b. Bronze
7. Conserving water Silver	Silver
8. Incorporating sustainable drainage	Bronze+
9. Historic Buildings	Improvement over existing

Table 7: Sustainability Measures Summary

Conclusion on sustainability

4.3.172 As can be appreciated from the foregoing, the proposal will exceed existing minimum standards across a number of themes as set out in the recently adopted SPD. Where standards are exceeded, these are considered to be significant benefits which weigh in favour of the scheme. Taken as a whole, the proposals deliver a variety of economic, social and environmental improvements which cumulatively will deliver a highly sustainable development.

Community Impacts/Section 106

4.3.173 In considering Planning Obligations relating to this proposed development the Community Infrastructure Regulations (CIL Regs) and Paragraph 57 of the NPPF set out statutory and policy tests. These are: (a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms; (b) directly related to the development; and (c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development. NHP Policy SP7: *Infrastructure requirements and developer contributions* reaffirms to need to secure infrastructure that is necessary in order

to accommodate additional demands resulting from the development. The Council's *Developer Contributions SPD* also sets out further guidance and clarification on this matter.

- 4.3.174 Detailed negotiations have taken place with the applicant and agreement reached on a range of matters that are included in a draft S106 agreement. Preston has seen some growth since 2011 (circa 55 dwellings) and some of these developments have secured contributions. For the avoidance of doubt, the proposal can only seek contributions in relation to the proposed development as per the tests above.
- 4.3.175 Requests for financial contributions towards local outdoor gym and new recreation pavilion (parish council) and community shop (local community group) were received. In relation to the outdoor gym it is considered that the over provision of community sports facilities at the site is not reasonable given the policy requirements set out in the NPPF (see above). Similarly, the request for a new village pavilion building would not be reasonable given a contribution is being provided to the cricket club for a pavilion building at the new cricket pitch on the application site. The request for contributions towards new parish wide public benches is not considered to be necessary or reasonable. In relation to the MUGA contribution, officers consider that this should be pooled with cricket pitch and pavilion contribution given the wider community / public benefits this will secure and to ensure the facilities are provided in a timely manner.
- 4.3.176 The request towards a proposed community shop has been carefully considered. The co-ordinator of this project has most recently confirmed that the organisation has not yet been formerly set up as a legal entity. Also, whilst a site for the shop was identified, it is understood that this is unlikely to now come forward. Given these circumstances, a financial contribution towards a community shop is not considered to be reasonable.
- 4.3.177 The Heads of Terms for the s106 obligations are listed in the table below -

Category (Authority)	Figure (£)	Infrastructure Project(s)
Secondary Education (HCC)	£350,848 index linked to BCIS 1Q2022	Towards the expansion of The Priory Secondary School and/or provision serving the development
Childcare Services (HCC)	£435	Towards increasing the capacity of 5-11 year old childcare facilities at Preston Primary (VC) and/or provision serving the development
SEND (HCC)	£45,448 index linked to BCIS 1Q2022	Towards the delivery of new Severe Learning Difficulty (SLD) special school places (EAST) for

		pupils aged 2 to 19 years old. and/or provision serving the development
Library Services (HCC)	£13,360 index linked to BCIS 1Q2022	Towards increasing the capacity of Hitchin Library and/or provision serving the development
Youth Services (HCC)	£7013 index linked to BCIS 1Q2022	Towards increasing the capacity of Hitchin Young People's Centre and surrounding areas and/or provision serving the development
Waste Recycling Centre (HCC)	£5,510 index linked to BCIS 1Q2022	Towards the expansion provision at Stevenage Recycling Centre and/or provision serving the development
Waste Transfer Centre (HCC)	£11,849 Index linked to BCIS 3Q2022	Towards the new Northern Transfer Station and/or provision serving the development
Fire and Rescue (HCC)	£1,485 index linked to BCIS 1Q2022	Towards new appliances and/or equipment and/or provision serving the development
Highway Safety (HCC Highways)	TBA	Improvements to speed signage and warnings on School Lane / Hitchin Road / St Albans Highway
Active Travel (HCC Highways)	£16,000	To promote public transport use by residents of the development
Active Travel (HCC Highways)	£6,000	For Travel Plan monitoring
Active Travel (NHC)	Nil	The provision of permissive footpaths across the site as identified on approved drawings
Play area - LAP (Preston PC)	£9,400	Towards a new roundabout at the

		Millenium Playground in Preston
Play Area - LEAP (Preston PC)	£10,750 and £4,236	Towards a multiverse activity centre at the recreation ground in Preston and towards replacement swings at the recreation ground in Preston
Recreation – Picnic Area (Preston PC)	£4,400	Towards a picnic area at the Millenium Playground in Preston
Community Halls – village hall (Preston PC)	£7,265	Towards improvements to the existing village hall in Preston
Sport Pitch – 2no. community tennis courts (Preston PC)	Nil	The developer to refurbish and provide on a 75 years lease for a peppercorn rent
Sports Pitch – 1 no. residents tennis court (Site Management Company)	Nil	The refurbishment and provision to be managed by site management company
Sports Pitch – cricket pitch and grounds including car park (Preston Cricket Club)	Nil	The provision on a 75 year lease for a peppercorn rent
Sports Pitch – cricket pitch and pavilion (Preston Cricket Club)	£175,000	Towards the creation of the cricket pitch and provision of an associated pavilion building
BNG (NHC)	TBA	Monitoring fees to ensure monitoring of on-site BNG - HMMP provision and management and maintenance thereof
NHS ICB	TBA	Towards improvements to existing GP services in Hitchin

Table 8: Heads of Terms for s106 agreement

Planning Balances

4.3.178 As identified, there are matters that weigh in favour and against the proposed development. Due to the number of heritage assets affected, the heritage benefits and harms are set out initially. A second table identifies the wider planning benefits and harms of the development and the weight attributed to these. These are visual aids and should be considered along with the detailed assessment in the report.

Asset	Effect	Weight
Grade II* Main House and attached buildings, curtilage listed buildings and to the Grade II* Registered Park and Garden, Conservation Area and within the RPG	Harm low-level inherent harm through the division of the estate and creation of the new walled garden car parking area within the grounds	Moderate
Grade II* Main house	Benefit new viable use, removal of all of the more modern, intrusive and inappropriate additions to the listed building would provide for a full reinstatement and revealing of its architectural and historical significance.	Moderate
Demolition of sports hall and science block	Benefit will better reveal the main house and improve its setting	Moderate
Reuse and restoration of Tank House, Pump House, The Piggery, The Ice House, walls and gates, the pergola and Belvedere	Benefit new viable uses and restoration to secure long term future of buildings and structures	Moderate
Park and gardens	Benefit the proposal includes the restoration of the formal landscaped (Lutyens and Jekyll) gardens comprising new planting, repairs to the existing hard surfacing, terraces, walls and pergolas. Partial reinstatement of lawn and	Moderate

	borders area to main building entrance. Reinstatement of ornamental pond	
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Table 9: Heritage impact summary

Issue	Effect	Weight
Green Belt Openness	Harm	Limited
Green Belt Purposes	Harm	Limited
Overall effect on Green Belt	Harm	Limited
Landscape and visual impact (immediate)	Harm	Limited
Heritage	Harm (Low level of Less than substantial)	Moderate
Principle of residential development including the delivery of housing and the re-use of existing buildings and of brownfield land	Benefit	Significant
Heritage	Benefit	Substantial
Provision of community sports facilities – cricket and tennis	Benefit	Substantial
Open Space	Benefit	Substantial
Highway improvements including new public and on-site permissive footpaths	Benefit	Moderate
Biodiversity (BNG)	Benefit	Moderate
Sustainability credentials	Benefit	Substantial

Landscaping	Benefit	Substantial
Economic impacts	Benefit	Significant
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Design appearance and layout	Neutral	None*
Archaeology	Neutral*	None*
Housing mix and vacant building credit	Neutral*	None*
Visual and landscape impacts	Neutral*	None*
Residential amenity	Neutral*	None*
Flooding and drainage	Neutral*	None*
Tree impacts	Neutral*	None*
Utilities and services	Neutral*	None*

Table 10: Planning Balance summary * conditions recommended

Heritage balance

4.3.179 Before addressing the overall planning balance in line with NPPF, the heritage balance shall first be considered, which also falls within the planning balance of any other harm. The NPPF confirms that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and that they should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. As identified in this report and summarised in Table 10 above, the proposals will result in both benefits and harms. Although the benefits are numerous, the harms identified mean that the proposal will result in *'less than substantial harm'* to the significance of the designated heritage assets. In such instances, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

4.3.180 An extensive number of public benefits will be delivered as part of the proposal as summarised in the aforementioned Table. It is considered that these extensive public benefits would outweigh the collective harm arising for the heritage significance of the Grade II* Main House and attached buildings, curtilage listed buildings and to the Grade II* Registered Park and Garden, Conservation Area. Accordingly, the NPPF does not provide a clear reason for refusing the development proposed in this specific regard.

Very Special Circumstances

- 4.3.181 Elements of the proposal – most notably the proposed East Car Park but also some smaller subservient structures with the grounds of the site - constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The NPPF confirms that when considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. Very Special Circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful.
- 4.3.182 In addressing this subject, the Courts have made clear that a particular mathematical exercise is not required. Rather, a single exercise of judgement is necessary to assess whether there are very special circumstances which justify the grant of permission notwithstanding the particular importance of the Green Belt and the seriousness of any harm to it.
- 4.3.183 The built development of the scale and form proposed would incur limited harm to both the openness of the Green Belt, and limited harm through encroachment (purpose 'C'). There would also be limited non-Green Belt harm to the landscape, and to heritage assets.
- 4.3.184 Against that, the application will deliver a number of benefits – the delivery of housing (significant), the provision of community sports facilities (substantial), heritage improvements (substantial), highway improvements (moderate), above minimum standard sustainability credentials (substantial), landscaping improvements (substantial), wider economic benefits (significant) and biodiversity and ecology improvements above minimum standards (moderate). Taken cumulatively, the existence of very special circumstances, it follows that the application of the NPPF's Green Belt policies does not provide a clear reason for refusing planning permission.

Overall assessment

- 4.3.185 There is some limited conflict between Green Belt and Heritage policies. However, it is considered that the proposal would accord with the development plan as a whole.
- 4.3.186 Other material considerations - as the Council is currently unable to demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply, the tilted balance of paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF is engaged. The collective benefits of the development as described would be extensive. As such, any possible adverse impacts of granting planning permission would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole. The scheme therefore benefits from the presumption in favour of sustainable development which is a further material consideration.
- 4.3.187 Final planning balance - the proposal would accord with the development plan as a whole and other material considerations do not indicate otherwise. Accordingly, it is recommended that planning permission be granted.

Alternative Options

None applicable

Pre-Commencement Conditions

I can confirm that the applicant is in agreement with the pre-commencement conditions that are proposed.

5.0 Legal Implications

5.1 In making decisions on applications submitted under the Town and Country Planning legislation, the Council is required to have regard to the provisions of the development plan and to any other material considerations. The decision must be in accordance with the plan unless the material considerations indicate otherwise. Where the decision is to refuse or restrictive conditions are attached, the applicant has a right of appeal against the decision.

6.0 Recommendation

6.1 That planning permission be **GRANTED** 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; and

B) Providing delegated powers to the Development and Conservation Manager to resolve outstanding (i) highway matters including financial contributions and flood risk matters (ii) update conditions and informatives with minor amendments as required; and

C) Conditions as set out below.

BNG

The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for the development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition “(the biodiversity gain condition)” that development may not begin unless:

(a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and

(b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan if one is required in respect of this permission would be North Herts Council. There are statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not always apply. Based on the information available this permission is considered to be one which will require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun because none of the statutory exemptions or transitional arrangements are considered to apply

General

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three 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 (including the Heritage Statement Addendum received 19th November 2024) and other 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 demolition of the sport hall and associated link to the Teaching Block shall be carried out in accordance with the following documents –
 - a. Demolition - AFP Consulting Engineers Method Statement dated 07/11/24 and Demcom Method Statement dated 31/11/24 and the Demolitions Key Plan
 - b. Construction Traffic Management Plan by EAS Transport Planning Ltd (dated 13th December 2024)
 - c. Ecological Impact Avoidance Statement (email dated 18 December 2024)
 - d. Arboricultural Method Statement and associated plan (Sports Hall only) by Sharon Hosegood Associates (dated 20 December 2024)
 - e. Method Statement Sports Hall Abutment Demolition by Kay Pilsbury Thomas Architects (received 20 December 2024)

For the avoidance of doubt, demolition is permissible up to but not including the slab of the two structures. Reason: in the interests of residential amenity, to ensure that works are ecologically sensitive and do not result in adverse impacts to protected species, to ensure protection of on site trees, in the interests of land contamination protection and in the interests of protecting any archaeological remains.

4. No development / works shall commence (except for the demolition of the Sports Hall and link to the Teaching Block as identified on the submitted drawings and detailed in the Method Statement Sports Hall Abutment Demolition by Kay Pilsbury Thomas Architects received 20 December 2024) until a phasing plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local planning authority. The phasing plan shall set out the phasing of all building operations (including demolition works) and landscaping works together with the delivery of permissive footpaths. Thereafter, the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved phasing plan unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority. Reason: to ensure a satisfactory standard of development and to ensure the protection and enhancement of heritage and natural assets within the site.
5. All demolition works shall be carried out in accordance with the AFP Consulting Engineers Method Statement dated 07/11/24, Demcom Method Statement dated 31/11/24 and the Demolitions Key Plan and the Sustainability Assessment by Kay Pilsbury Thomas Architects and SCABAL unless otherwise approved in writing by the local planning authority. Reason: To ensure a satisfactory standard of development and in the interests of residential amenity.

Trees

6. None of the trees and hedges identified in the submitted Tree Assessment as being retained on the application site shall be felled, lopped, topped, uprooted, removed or otherwise destroyed without the prior written agreement of the Local planning authority. Refer to preliminary Arboricultural Assessment. Reason: To safeguard and enhance the appearance of the completed development and the visual amenity of the locality.
7. Notwithstanding the details submitted, prior to the commencement of each phase of development as agreed pursuant to condition 4 (except for the demolition of the sports hall and associated link to the Teaching Block – refer to condition 3), the following

documents shall be prepared having regard to BS5837 (Trees in relation to construction) and then submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority –

- (i) Arboricultural Method Statement(s)
- (ii) Tree Protection Plan(s) and a
- (iii) a Veteran Tree Management Plan
- (iv) external underground service plan illustrating the routes of all cables and pipes.

In relation to demolition of the Sports Hall and associated link to the Teaching Block, demolition works shall be carried out in accordance with the Arboricultural Method Statement and associated plan by Sharon Hosegood Associates (dated 20 December 2024). Thereafter, the development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the approved details. Reason: To prevent damage to or destruction of trees to be retained on the site in the interests of the appearance of the completed development and the visual amenity of the locality.

GPDO permitted development rights and curtilages

8. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 as amended no development as set out in Schedule 2 Part 1 (Classes A, B, C, D, E, F, G and H), Part 2 (Classes A, B, C, D, E and F) and Part 14 (Classes A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H and I) or any subsequent Statutory Instrument which revokes, amends and/or replaces those provisions) shall be carried out without first obtaining a specific planning permission from the local planning authority. Reason: Given the nature of this development, the local planning authority considers that development which would normally be "permitted development" should be retained within planning control in the interests of the Green Belt, to protect arboricultural interests and to ensure the long term protection of the habitats and species. Reason: to ensure that alterations to permitted dwellings are appropriate in a heritage context and to maintain the visual appearance of buildings.
9. Individual private curtilages to each dwelling house shall be as set out of the drawing 641-KS-70-XX-DR-A-11100-Layout-P03 (Land Uses) as identified in light green unless otherwise agreed in writing by the LPA. Reason: in the interests of residential occupiers amenity and for the avoidance of doubt.

Highways

10. Any conditions recommended by Herts CC Highways
11. Within 6 months of the first occupation of the permitted residential units, footpaths and road crossings and other highway improvements shall be provided along School Lane and Hitchin Road as identified on preliminary EAS Transport Planning drawing SK02 REVA and SK03 REVA. The final details of these works shall be agreed in conjunction with appropriate parties. These works shall be secured and undertaken as part of the s278 works. Reason: To ensure the safety and convenience of occupants and other pedestrians between the site and the public highway and village.
12. The development shall be carried out in complete accordance with the Demolition and Construction Management Plan/ Construction Traffic Management Plan by EAS Transport Planning Ltd (dated 13th December 2024) unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority. Reason: To minimise the impact of construction vehicles on the highway network and to maintain the amenity of the local area.

13. Car and cycle parking facilities shall be made available for use for both residents and visitors before occupation of individual units and thereafter retained in perpetuity. Reason: to ensure that there is adequate parking facilities for residents and visitors in the interests of visual amenity and highway safety.

Surface water disposal and flood mitigation

14. Any conditions recommended by the LLFA

Landscaping

15. Prior to the commencement of any hard landscaping works, full details of all hard landscaping (including repairs to curtilage listed terraces, walkways and structures and retaining walls and features) for each phase as identified on the approved phasing plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The detailed proposals shall be broadly in accordance with the preliminary landscaping plans provided by George Carter Garden Design and Livingston Eyre Associates hereby approved as part of this consent/permission. Where appropriate, sectional drawings to illustrate levels, ramps, gradients, retaining walls and other features shall be provided. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and completed in accordance with the phasing plan.
16. Prior to the commencement of any soft landscaping works, full details of all soft landscaping proposals including boundary treatments (including garden restoration scheme) for each phase as identified on the phasing plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The detailed proposals shall broadly in accordance with the preliminary landscaping plans provided by George Carter Garden Design and Livingston Eyre Associates submitted with the application. It shall include full details of a Community Growing Space in the small herbaceous border to comprise either conventional allotments or other shared community growing space as outline on Livingston Eyre's Landscape Strategy received 20/11/24 and which shall be made available for residents within 6 months of the full occupation of the Main Building refurbishment. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and completed in accordance with the phasing plan. Reason: to ensure that the registered park and gardens and wider grounds are restored and planted in an appropriate manner in the interests of protecting and enhancing heritage assets.
17. Within 6 months of the final occupation of the residential development hereby permitted, a Comprehensive Management and Maintenance Plan (CMMP) for the Registered Park and Gardens and wider parkland grounds including management responsibilities, maintenance schedules for all landscape areas (other than small, privately owned, domestic gardens) and the approach to dealing with the replacement of failed new planting shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Thereafter, the Plan shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details. Reason: to ensure that the Registered Park and Garden and wider grounds are maintained in an appropriate manner in perpetuity.

Archaeology

18. With the exception of above slab level demolition works of buildings identified on the Key Demolitions Plan, no other demolition or development works shall take place/commence until an Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. The scheme shall include an assessment of archaeological significance and research questions; and:

1. The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording
 2. The programme for post investigation assessment
 3. Provision to be made for analysis of the site investigation and recording
 4. Provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the analysis and records of the site investigation
 5. Provision to be made for archive deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation
 6. Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation.
19. Other than the demolition works up to but not including the slab level as defined in the AFP Consulting Engineers Method Statement dated 07/11/24 and the Demcom Method Statement dated 31/11/24 and the Demolitions Key Plan, no other development shall take place/commence in accordance with the programme of archaeological works set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under condition 17.
20. A phase of development (as agreed by condition 4) shall not be occupied for residential purposes until the site investigation and post investigation assessment has been completed in accordance for that phase with the programme set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under condition 17 and the provision made for analysis and publication where appropriate. Reason: to ensure the protection of heritage assets of archaeological interest

Environmental Health

21. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the Gillieron Scott Acoustic Design Feasibility Report submitted with the application and dated 01.07.24 unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local planning authority. Reason: to ensure residents have a satisfactory noise environment.
22. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the Community Liaison Strategy as set out in paragraphs 3.34 - 3.36 of the Construction Traffic Management Plan. Reason: in the interests of residential amenity for the duration of construction works.
23. Noisy construction activities (i.e. noisy at a nearby residential receptor or other near noise sensitive premises) shall occur only between 0800 and 1800 hours Monday to Friday and between 0800 and 1300 hours on Saturdays. There shall be no noisy works on Sundays or Bank/Public Holidays. Reason: to protect the amenity of nearby residential occupiers.
24. Prior to the commencement of construction works on new buildings works for each phase as identified on the phasing plan approved under condition 4 (except for the demolition of the sports hall and associated link to the Teaching Block) up to but not including slab level), a Phase 2 contamination investigation report shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local planning authority. Where found to be necessary by the phase 2 report a remediation strategy to deal with the risks associated with contamination of the site shall also be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The remediation strategy shall include an options appraisal giving full details of the remediation measures required and how they are to be undertaken. The strategy shall include a plan providing details of how the remediation works shall be judged to be complete and arrangements for contingency action. The demolition of the sports hall and associated link to the Main Building shall be carried out in accordance with the Demolition

Management Strategy documents AFP Consulting Engineers Method Statement dated 07/11/24 and the Demcom Method Statement dated 31/11/24 and the Demolitions Key Plan. Reason: To protect human health and to ensure that no future investigation is required under Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

25. Prior to any dwelling hereby permitted being occupied under each phase of development (as agreed under condition 4), a land contamination validation report shall be submitted and approved in writing by the local planning authority to demonstrate the effectiveness of any agreed Remediation Strategy. Any such validation shall include responses to any unexpected contamination discovered during works. Reason: To protect human health and to ensure that no future investigation is required under Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.
26. If during any phase of development (as agreed under condition 4) contamination is found during development works, it shall be reported in writing immediately to the Local planning authority. An investigation and risk assessment shall then be undertaken by a competent person, in accordance with BS10175:2011. A written report of the findings should be submitted to and approved in writing to the Local planning authority. Following completion of remedial measures a verification report shall be prepared that demonstrates the effectiveness of the remediation carried out. No part of the relevant phase of development should be occupied until all remedial and validation works have been approved in writing by the local planning authority. Reason: To protect human health and to ensure that no future investigation is required under Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.
27. Prior to occupation of each of the permitted dwellings, Electric Vehicle (EV) domestic charging points shall be installed for each dwelling in accordance with approved plans and details and shall be available for use. Thereafter, the EV charging points shall be retained in perpetuity unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority. Reason: To contribute to the objective of providing a sustainable transport network and to provide the necessary infrastructure to help off-set the adverse impact of the operational phase of the development on local air quality.

Waste Matters

28. Prior to the occupancy of each dwelling, the relevant external waste storage facilities shall be made available for residents of the relevant dwelling(s). Upon completion of the development, all waste storage areas shall be retained in perpetuity for waste storage purposes. Reason: To ensure satisfactory areas are made available for waste storage for dwelling occupiers and in the interests of visual amenity of the site and setting of heritage assets.

Sustainability

29. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the Energy Statement prepared by CBG Consultants where amended by the Sustainability Assessment submitted by SCABAL and Kay Pilsbury Thomas Architects 19th November 2024. Reason: for the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development delivers the specified sustainability benefits.

30. Within 6 months of final occupation of the development, a post construction energy and sustainability statement shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority confirming the actual Passive Design & Fabric Performance (Theme 1) and Achieving low-carbon energy performance of the development (Theme 2) compared to the approved pre-construction Energy Statement and Sustainability Assessment. Reason: to ensure that the development is energy efficient and delivers the specified sustainability benefits as set out in the approved Energy Statement and Sustainability Assessment.

Ecology

31. Prior to the commencement of any works to the buildings known as Main Building, Science Block, Tank House and Pump House, the developer shall submit either (a) a licence issued by Natural England authorizing the specified activity/development to go ahead; or (b) a statement in writing from the relevant licensing body to the effect that it does not consider that the specified activity/development will require a licence. Works may only commence to these buildings once the local planning authority has provided its written approval of the licence or statement. Reason: to ensure that protected species are adequately protected.
32. Prior to the commencement of each phase of development as agreed under condition 4 (except for the demolition of the sports hall and the associated link to the Teaching Block), an Ecological Enhancement Plan (EEP) for the creation of new wildlife features such as hibernacula, the inclusion of integrated bird/bat and bee boxes in buildings/structures and if appropriate, hedgehog pathways, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The content shall include the following -
- a) purpose and objectives for the proposed works;
 - b) detailed design(s) and/or working method(s) necessary to achieve stated objectives (including, where relevant, type and source of materials to be used);
 - c) extent and location of proposed works shown on appropriate scale maps and plans;
 - d) timetable for implementation, demonstrating that works are aligned with the proposed phasing of construction;
 - e) persons responsible for implementing the works;
 - f) details of initial aftercare and long-term maintenance.
- Thereafter, the works shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved details and be retained in that manner thereafter. Reason: to ensure that the development delivers appropriate wildlife improvement measures in the interests of biodiversity and ecology.
33. Prior to the commencement of construction works on new buildings for each phase as agreed under condition 4 (except for the demolition of the sports hall and the associated link to the Teaching Block), a lighting design strategy addressing the issues as set out below shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.
- (A) Biodiversity
- (i) identify those areas/features on site to which bats and other nocturnal species are particularly sensitive and that are likely to cause disturbance in or around their breeding sites and resting places, or along important routes used to reach key areas of their territory, for example, for foraging, and;
 - (ii) provide full details of all external lighting proposals (both freestanding and attached to buildings and structures) to comprise locations, cable routes, design and appearance, appropriate lighting contour plans and technical specifications together with a written statement by a suitably qualified person explaining how the proposals will not disturb or

prevent the above species using their territory or having access to their breeding sites and resting places.

(B) heritage assets

(i) identify locations of proposed lighting together with cable routes, design and appearance and lux levels.

All external lighting shall be installed in accordance with the specifications and locations set out in the strategy, and these shall be maintained thereafter in accordance with the strategy. Under no circumstances should any other external lighting be installed unless agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: in the interests of ecology and habitat and species protection, in the interests of protecting the character of the Green Belt, in the interest of protecting trees within the plantation and in the interests of protecting heritage assets.

34. Prior to the commencement of any engineering works associated with the approved East Car Park, details of a lockable grille to secure the entrance to the Ice House to allow bat access and prevent humans or domestic pets from entering shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Thereafter, the grille shall be installed before the East Car Park is first brought into use. Reason: The Ice House is identified as a Local Wildlife Site (LWS) due to its value as a hibernation roost for Daubenton's, Natterer's and Brown Long Eared bats and in the interests of species and habitat protection.

35. Prior to the commencement of development including ground works or vegetation clearance (except for the demolition of the sports hall and associated link to the Teaching Block), a Biodiversity Construction Environmental Management Plan (BCEMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The BCEMP should be informed by the Ecological Appraisal provided with the application dated July 2024 and include the following -

a) Risk assessment of potentially damaging construction activities (excluding the .

b) Identification of "biodiversity protection zones".

c) Practical measures to avoid or reduce impacts during construction.

d) The location and timing of sensitive works to harm to biodiversity features.

e) The times during construction when specialist ecologists need to be present on site to oversee works.

f) Responsible persons and lines of communication.

g) The role and responsibilities on site of an ecological clerk of works (ECoW) or similarly competent person.

h) Use of protective fences, exclusion barriers and warning signs.

The approved BCEMP shall be adhered to and implemented throughout the construction period strictly in accordance with the approved details, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority. Reason: to ensure the protection of species and habitats.

36. Prior to the commencement of any construction works to the Summer House or Harwood House properties, full details of external living spaces to include but not limited to hardstanding areas, patios, decking areas have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development of these two properties shall be carried out in accordance with approved details and those approved pursuant to this condition. Thereafter, the proposals shall be retained in perpetuity unless expressly approved by a new planning permission. Reason: in the interests of protecting the Green Belt, protecting trees within the plantation and in the interests of ecology and habitat and species protection.

37. Prior to the commencement of the properties known as Summer House and Harwood House, a bat monitoring programme for the summerhouse plantation area shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Thereafter, the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved programme. Reason: in the interests of protecting bats and their habitats.

Heritage and design

38. Prior to the commencement of the East Car Park, full details of the energy centre, waste storage area, all brick wall(s), equipment and storage enclosures, arboricultural method statement, surfacing materials and sections, footpaths and steps and garden gate, lighting, external materials, boundary details, hard and soft landscaping and sections to illustrate relationship of existing and proposed slab levels and structures shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Thereafter, the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and shall be permanently maintained as such. Reason: in the interests of visual amenity and to protect the setting and appearance of heritage assets.
39. No more than 18 new build dwellings hereby permitted shall be occupied until the conversion and restoration works to the Main Building and attached buildings, Teaching Block, Tank House and Pump House has been substantially completed. Reason: to ensure the heritage assets are restored, renovated and brought back into use in a timely manner.
40. Prior to the occupation of the 62nd residential unit, full details of the interpretation panels for the Main Building, Ice House, Piggery and formal gardens (their location, design, materials and content) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The boards shall be installed prior to 100% occupation of the approved residential units in accordance with the approved details and shall be permanently maintained as such. Reason: to better reveal the significance of the heritage assets on the site.
41. No service meters, broadband, alarm or telecommunication boxes or other utility or service boxes shall be fixed to the external fabric of the buildings unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority. Reason: in the interests of visual amenity and to protect the setting and appearance of heritage assets.
42. Prior to the first commencement of any new brickworks on site, a sample panel of 1 square metre minimum shall be erected on site to show areas of new exterior walling shall be approved in writing by the local planning authority. The sample panel shall indicate brick type, bond, copings, mortar mix, colour and pointing profile. The sample panel shall be retained on site for the duration of the development. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and shall be permanently maintained as such. Reason: in the interests of visual amenity and to protect the setting and appearance of heritage assets.
43. Prior to the commencement of construction works on new buildings works for each phase as agreed under condition 4 (except for the demolition of the sports hall and associated link to the Teaching Block), a schedule of the manufacturer, product types and colour finishes of the external materials to be used shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Thereafter, the development shall be implemented in

accordance with the approved details. Reason: in the interests of visual amenity and to protect the setting and appearance of heritage assets.

44. Prior to the installation of new external staircases, balustrades and balconies (including roof walkways) at the Main Building as identified on the phasing plan, full details of these to include section and elevation at scales between 1:20 and 1:1 as appropriate shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Thereafter, the development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and shall be permanently maintained as such. Reason: in the interests of visual amenity and to protect the setting and appearance of heritage assets.
45. Prior to the installation of new windows and cills, full details for each phase as identified on the approved phasing plan to include sections and elevations at scales between 1:20 and 1:1 as appropriate shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Thereafter, the development / works shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and shall be permanently maintained as such. Reason: in the interests of visual amenity and to protect the setting and appearance of heritage assets.
46. Prior to the installation of rooflights on the Main Building, Teaching Block, Tank House and Pump House as identified on the phasing plan, full details and specification shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. These shall be of low profile conservation type. Thereafter, the development / works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. Reason: in the interests of visual amenity and to protect the setting and appearance of heritage assets.
47. Prior to the installation of any proposed new external doors, full details including architraves to be used, for each phase as identified on the phasing plan as appropriate, by section and elevation at scales between 1:20 and 1:1 shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Thereafter, the development / works shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and shall be permanently maintained as such. Reason: in the interests of visual amenity and to protect the setting and appearance of heritage assets.
48. Prior to the commencement of repairs to roof structure and finishes, including gutters in the Main Building as identified on the phasing plan, a method statement and specification shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Thereafter the development / works shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and shall be permanently maintained as such. Reason: in the interests of visual amenity and to protect the setting and appearance of heritage assets.
49. Prior to the commencement of the dropping of window sill levels within the attic roof within the Main Building as identified on the phasing plan, a method statement shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Thereafter the development / works shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and shall be permanently maintained as such. Reason: in the interests of visual amenity and to protect the setting and appearance of heritage assets.

50. Prior to the installation of the proposed glazed links and glazed screen to the well at the Pump House, as identified on the phasing plan, full details of this comprising section and elevation at scales between 1:20 and 1:1 as appropriate shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Thereafter, the development / work shall be carried out in complete accordance with such approved details. Reason: in the interests of visual amenity and to protect the setting and appearance of heritage assets.

Community sports facilities

51. Prior to the installation of the Cricket Pavilion, full details of external materials shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Thereafter, the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and shall be permanently maintained as such. Reason: Reason: in the interests of visual amenity and to protect the setting and appearance of heritage assets.
52. Prior to the first use of the cricket pitch, details of a covered bicycle shelter shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The details shall include necessary drawings to illustrate the design and location of the shelter. The Shelter shall make provision for a minimum of 5 bicycles. Thereafter, the shelter shall be installed within 6 months of the first use of the cricket pitch and shall be permanently maintained as such. Reason: to ensure adequate provision is made for cycle storage and to encourage non car modes of transport.
53. Prior to the first use of the cricket pitch, the community car parking facilities shall be made available and thereafter retained in perpetuity for the duration of the cricket activities on the site. Thereafter, the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and shall be permanently maintained as such. Reason: to ensure that satisfactory car parking is made available for visitors to the community sports facilities.
54. Prior to the commencement of refurbishment works to the tennis courts, full details of refurbishment works shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Thereafter, the tennis courts shall be refurbished in accordance with the approved details. Reason: to ensure that the refurbishment works are carried out to a satisfactory standard for community use.
55. The existing sports pitch pavilion building shall be removed from the site no later than 12 months following the first use of the new pavilion building. Reason: to ensure that adequate facilities are available for cricket activities on the site and in the interests of the visual amenity of the site.

Slab levels

56. Prior to the commencement of the construction of all new buildings as identified on the phasing plan, full details of existing and proposed slab levels shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Thereafter, the development shall be carried out in complete accordance with the approved details. Reason: to ensure a satisfactory standard of development in the interests of protecting the setting and appearance of heritage assets.

Permissive paths

57. Prior to the first use of the permissive paths, the approved boundary treatments demarking paths shall be erected and thereafter maintained in perpetuity. Reason: to ensure pedestrian safety from grazing cattle and to demark private and public spaces through the site.

Demolition of buildings

58. With the exception of the existing pavilion building which is covered separately by condition 55, all the buildings and structures identified on the Demolitions Key Plan shall be removed in accordance with the phasing plan as agreed under condition 4. Reason: to ensure that the replacement buildings and structures comply with Green Belt and Vacant Building policies.

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

Informatives:

Noise

1. When undertaking work of a 'noisy' nature, it is recommended that relevant responsible persons for site management consider what precautions and mitigation could be reasonably implemented to avoid potential complaints from residential property owners. Best practice should be followed in the first instance and, where appropriate and necessary, adapted depending on the particular work being undertaken and the timing of the work. In addition, prior to the commencement of works on site, full consideration of the Community Liaison Strategy as required under condition 21 is recommended.

EV charging specification recommendations

2. EV Charging Point recommended minimum specification shall be in accordance with Building Regulations Approved Document 'S' – Infrastructure for the charging of Electric Vehicles

Anglian Water

3. Notification of intention to connect to the public sewer under S106 of the Water Industry Act Approval and consent will be required by Anglian Water, under the Water Industry Act 1991. Contact Development Services Team 0345 606 6087.
4. Protection of existing assets - A public sewer is shown on record plans within the land identified for the proposed development. It appears that development proposals will affect existing public sewers. It is recommended that the applicant contacts Anglian Water Development Services Team for further advice on this matter. Building over existing public sewers will not be permitted (without agreement) from Anglian Water.
5. Building near to a public sewer - No building will be permitted within the statutory easement width of 3 metres from the pipeline without agreement from Anglian Water. Please contact Development Services Team on 0345 606 6087.

6. The developer should note that the site drainage details submitted have not been approved for the purposes of adoption. If the developer wishes to have the sewers included in a sewer adoption agreement with Anglian Water (under Sections 104 of the Water Industry Act 1991), they should contact our Development Services Team on 0345 606 6087 at the earliest opportunity. Sewers intended for adoption should be designed and constructed in accordance with Sewers for Adoption guide for developers, as supplemented by Anglian Water's requirements.

7.0 **Appendices**

7.1 Proposed Site Plan

7.2. Herts CC Highways consultation response 1 and 2