

<u>Location:</u>	Node Court Drivers End Codicote Hitchin Hertfordshire SG4 8TR
<u>Applicant:</u>	Mr. Eric Smart
<u>Proposal:</u>	External and internal alterations to facilitate the restoration and conversion of Node Court to provide 8no. dwellings and to provide 1no. dwelling at the Midden as amended by plan received on 4 December 2024
<u>Ref. No:</u>	23/00408/LBC
<u>Officer:</u>	Melissa Tyler

Reason for Delay: Ongoing negotiations – followed by amended scheme, consultation, viability assessment and Statutory Consultee response delay

Reason for Referral to Committee: The application is one of two submitted for related works. The other application (application reference 23/00407/FP) for alterations to both listed structures and new buildings with the curtilage of the property is also presented to Members for consideration.

1.0 **Policies**

1.1 **North Hertfordshire District Local Plan (The Local Plan) 2011 – 2031**

Policy SP13: Historic Environment

Policy HE1: Designated Heritage Assets

1.2 **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2023)**

Section 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

2.0 **Site History**

Extensive history relating to office use (see file) however listed below are more recent application history in relationship to conversion to residential.

2.1 18/00383/PRE Change of Use from B1 Offices to C3 residential and construction of new buildings to create 7 x 3 bed and 8 x 2 bed dwellings with associated parking and landscaping.

- 2.2 18/03366/FP Conversion of Node Court to 9no. dwellings. Erection of 3no. dwelling-houses as enabling development to facilitate the restoration of Node Court together with associated car parking, landscaping and boundary treatment. **Withdrawn**
- 2.3 18/03367/LBC External and internal alterations to facilitate the restoration and conversion of Node Court to provide 9no. dwellings. **Withdrawn**
- 2.4 23/00407/FP Conversion of Node Court to 8no. dwellings. Conversion of Midden building to residential and the erection of 6no. terraced dwelling-houses as development to facilitate the restoration of Node Court together with associated car parking, landscaping, boundary treatment and ancillary works (Amended Plans received 4 December 2024)
TO BE DETERMINED ALONGSIDE THIS APPLICATION

3.0 **Representations**

- 3.1 **Historic England – No comments to make -refer to Conservation Officer**
- 3.2 **Conservation and Listed Building Officer – (full comments can be found on website)**

Summary:

The new build terrace will in my opinion, occasion some harm to the significance of the heritage assets due to the design and amount of development sought. Whilst the amount of development appears to be fixed because of the assessment and outcome of the feasibility appraisal, it is acknowledged that some effort has been made to address design concerns. Subject to feedback on the dormer window issue, I conclude that whilst the terrace would result in some harm to Node Court's significance, thus would not satisfy the provisions of Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the aims of paragraphs 135 c) and Section 16 of the NPPF and the aims of Policies HE1 and HE2 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031, the degree of harm is considered to be low on the less than substantial continuum.

*"It is for the case officer to consider if the extent of harm identified is outweighed by the benefits of bringing Node Court back into a long-term viable use, which I consider would be the case. For this reason, I raise **NO OBJECTION**.*

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

- 4.1.1 Node Court is located to the south of Drivers End Lane and is within the parish of Codicote. Node Court is Grade II listed and was constructed in 1928 as a model dairy. It has since been converted to an office use and has suffered extensive fire damage due to an arson attack in 2015. The building itself is positioned centrally within the site and is situated by a central access which extends to the east side of the building leading to a large car parking area which serves both Node Court and the associated single storey building to the rear and is known as the 'Midden'.. Grassed areas surround Node Court and a landscaped and tree-lined 'belt' is situated between the front of the building and Drivers End Lane. The listing description reads as follows:

“Model dairy, now offices. 1928 by Maurice Chesterton for the American businessman Carl Holmes. The design has its roots in the Picturesque revival and was probably inspired by Marie Antoinette's dairy in 'Le Hameau', Versailles. Circular rendered brick building mainly of 1 storey and attic arranged around a courtyard and covered with a continuous roof of thatch. Plastic casement windows, formerly metal frame. N entrance has broad 2-storey arch set in a wide gable. Offset 1-storey wings each side. On opposite side of courtyard is a 2-storey cottage with timber frame balcony. Large 3-storey tower to the SE with eyebrow. dormers in circular pyramid roof. The circular courtyard acted as turning space for milk lorries. To the SE is a covered way, formerly also thatched, which was equipped with a mechanical bucket conveyor system and leads to the dungery, a low rectangular thatched, hipped-roof structure. The Node set standards for hygiene and efficient dairy farming in England. It resembles contemporary expressionist buildings in Holland. (Country Life, 30.6.1958).”

4.2 Proposal

- 4.2.1 Listed building Consent is sought for the external and internal alterations to facilitate the restoration and conversion of Node Court to provide 8no. dwellings and to provide 1no. dwelling at the Midden as amended by plan received on 4 December 2024

4.3 Key Issues

- 4.3.1 The key issue in this case is the proposed developments impact upon the architectural or historic interest of the listed building and the Conservation Area.
- 4.3.2 This listed building application seeks approval for the conversion of Node Court and The Midden to residential properties to secure the long-term conservation of the Listed buildings. This permission sits alongside the planning application (ref 23/00407/FP) which include the addition of 6 terrace properties under the guise of enabling development which is a mechanism that allows new development, which would typically be restricted, to take place in order to secure the long-term conservation of a heritage asset.
- 4.3.3 A number of consultation response have been received from the Conservation Officer throughout the application process. Following amendments to the original scheme, his final comments are as follows.
- 4.3.4 *“Node Court, The Midden, and the former thatched walkway between form a grade II listed former model dairy built in 1928 with its design having roots in the Picturesque revival and was probably inspired by Marie Antoinette's dairy in 'Le Hameau', Versailles. This circular rendered brick building stands in a rural and relatively verdant, open setting. Its significance lies not only in its unique design and extensive use of thatch but also in the fact that it set early C20 standards for hygiene and efficient dairy farming in England. Great weight has been given to the asset's conservation (para 213, NPPF) and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness (para 210, NPPF). Although the quantum of new development is considered harmful to the setting and thereby the significance of Node Court, it is accepted that this would constitute appropriate enabling development to secure the future of this heritage asset (para 84b, NPPF).*

"I have reconsidered the proposals considering the more recent material submitted. The introduction of eyebrow dormers to the dairy, the amended front elevation to The Midden, further improved changes to the new build terrace all point towards a much more positive intervention. However, I have raised two matters: i) part D of the Dorset Model as highlighted in bold on page 2 of this response and ii) the design of the terrace's rear dormers. Having said that, the improvements to the terrace mean that this building responds more positively to its context which includes the setting to Node Court and The Midden thus more closely aligns with para 135 b) and c) of the NPPF. Throughout this process I have continually sought to encourage a scheme that will sit well with the heritage asset and its setting.

Recommendation

"The new build terrace will in my opinion, occasion some harm to the significance of the heritage assets due to the design and amount of development sought. Whilst the amount of development appears to be fixed because of the assessment and outcome of the feasibility appraisal, it is acknowledged that some effort has been made to address design concerns. Subject to feedback on the dormer window issue, I conclude that whilst the terrace would result in some harm to Node Court's significance, thus would not satisfy the provisions of Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the aims of paragraphs 135 c) and Section 16 of the NPPF and the aims of Policies HE1 and HE2 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031, the degree of harm is considered to be low on the less than substantial continuum.

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- 4.3.5 Subject to the recommended worded conditions, I would take the view that in order to preserve and provide a long-term use of the listed buildings and to restore to former glory prior to the devastating arson attacks that it is considered that the conversion would not harm the listed buildings, therefore, no objections are raised on the basis that the proposal satisfies the provisions of Sections 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as supported by the aims of the NPPF and Local Plan policies.

4.4 Conclusion

- 4.4.1 The identified Heritage Conservation benefits include:
- The listed building's restoration which will prevent further degradation and ensure the asset's long-term sustainability.
 - Conversion to residential use will provide a sustainable future for the building, meeting the requirements of Policy HE1.
- 4.4.2 The public benefit of securing the future of the listed buildings weighs heavily in favour of the issue of Listed Building Consent. The proposed development aligns with North Hertfordshire's objectives of preserving heritage. The proposed works would not harm the architectural or historic interest of the listed building and are therefore acceptable and listed building consent should be issued.

4.5 **Alternative Options**

4.5.1 N/A

4.6 **Pre-commencement Conditions**

4.6.1 I can confirm that the applicant/agent agree with the proposed pre-commencement conditions.

5.0 **Recommendation**

5.1.1 That listed building consent be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions.

1. The work to which this consent relates shall be begun by not later than the expiration of the period of 3 years from the date of this notice.

Reason: To comply with the provisions of Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. Node Court shall be re-thatched using Norfolk Reed with wheat straw ridges and not combed wheat reed unless otherwise agreed and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to protecting the special architectural and historic interest and integrity of this grade II listed building under Section 16(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 – 2031.

3. Prior to the occupation of any units, the thatched walkway linking the Dairy with The Midden shall be refurbished and confirmation of the completed works shall be submitted in writing to the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to protecting the special architectural and historic interest and integrity of this grade II listed building under Section 16(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 – 2031.

4. Before work begins, precautions shall be taken to secure and protect the following exterior features during the building work:

- i. Plaque on gateway range (Margot Holmes).
- ii. Hobbs, Hart & Co iron plate.
- iii. Tap with a recessed cast-iron surround.

as recorded at DP33, DP41, DP45 respectively of Appendix 4 - Photographic Index forming part of the 'Historic Building Impact Assessment January 2023' prepared by Wardell Armstrong supporting this consented scheme. No such features shall be disturbed or removed temporarily or permanently without the prior approval in writing of

the Local Planning Authority and shall remain in place for the duration of the construction/ alteration work hereby permitted.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to protecting the special architectural and historic interest and integrity of this grade II listed building under Section 16(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 – 2031.

5. Details of all external flue extraction systems shall be submitted to and approved in be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of that part of the works hereby granted consent. Thereafter the external flue extraction systems shall be implemented with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to protecting the special architectural and historic interest and integrity of this grade II listed building under Section 16(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 - 2031.

6. Metric scale section drawings of all new windows (including 1:1 scale drawing of proposed glazing bars) together with details of window ironmongery shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the manufacture and installation of the new windows. Thereafter the windows shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to protecting the special architectural and historic interest and integrity of this grade II listed building under Section 16(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 - 2031.

7. Details of all new internal & external doors shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the manufacture and installation of the new internal & external doors. Thereafter the internal & external doors shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to protecting the special architectural and historic interest and integrity of this curtilage-listed building under Section 16(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 - 2031.