



Hertsmere Borough Council
Civic Centre
3 Elstree Way
Borehamwood
Hertfordshire
WD6 1WA

Our ref: 22093
Date: 9 September 2026

For the attention of: [REDACTED]

Application ref: 26/1162/S62A
Location: Maple House, 1 To 7 Princes Parade, 8-16 (evens), and, 30 - 32 High Street, Potters Bar, Hertfordshire
Proposal/Description: Partial demolition of existing buildings (with retention of existing two-storey car park and substation) and redevelopment of the site to provide a mixed-use development comprising residential apartments (class C3) and flexible commercial floorspace (class E) across 4 blocks and associated internal roads, parking, drainage, landscaping, amenity space and associated works (PINS reference S62A/2026/0159).

Thank you for consulting with Place Services on the above planning application. This letter sets out our consultation response on the landscape impact of the application and how the proposal relates and responds to the landscape setting and context of the site.

Summary

Not supportive on landscape grounds	☒
No landscape objection, subject to attached recommendations and/or conditions	☐
Further information required prior to determination	☐
No landscape comments / does not wish to comment	☐

This review is based on a desktop study without a site visit, of the above-referenced application and its submitted documents. Our Landscape comments are as follows:

1.0. Site Context

The site comprises Canada Life Place, a six-storey purpose-built office block within a wider office development located in Potters Bar town centre. Maple House, a taller office block, lies immediately to the south within the site and fronts onto Mutton Lane. The eastern portion of the site is occupied by a row of recent three storey buildings that directly front the High Street with shops at ground floor and flats above. Further along the site boundary a car wash and an older terrace of shops and flats form the eastern portion with an access

through to the Canada Life Plaza. Other buildings include a multi-storey car park and a large hardstanding car park at ground level to the rear. The southern portion of the site fronting Mutton Lane is characterised by an open landscaped frontage with mature trees and open landscaped area behind. The only other vegetated areas are the northern and western site boundaries where mature trees form a verdant enclosure to the site. Some mature oak trees are protected by TPO. Some small trees are interspersed within the car parking bays. The character of the site is urban, bound by the town centre mixed-use high street with retail units, local services and cafes. Main roads intersect the town centre in this location.

The Canada Life building itself has planning consent under 26/0764/FUL with conversion to residential use and retained. This planning application is for the redevelopment of its immediate curtilage; the buildings, car park and landscaped areas as defined within the red line boundary. It is proposed to retain the multi storey car park and substation.

The proposal comprises four residential blocks (A, B, D & E) located around central courtyards and ranging between 4 – 15 storeys in height. Included also is an area of Public Open Space between Blocks B & D, fronting the High Street, with two communal residential courtyards incorporating inter-generational play equipment. Car and cycle parking is also provided within the site which is serviced from the internal access road and existing servicing area on the High Street. It is proposed to retain existing site trees protected by TPO.

2.0. Planning Policy Context

Draft Hertsmere Local Plan

2.1. Notwithstanding the current status of the Hertsmere Draft Local Plan Regulation 18 (2021), the following landscape evidence base documents are considered relevant in landscape terms:

- Landscape Sensitivity to Residential and Employment Development in Hertsmere (2020)
- Outline Landscape Appraisals for potential development sites in Hertsmere (2020)

Hertsmere Local Plan

- 2.2. The Hertsmere Local Plan 2012-2027 is made up of four parts, including: the Core Strategy (2013); the Elstree Way Corridor Area Action Plan (AAP) (2015); the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan (SADMPP) (2016); and the Hertsmere Local Plan Policies Map.
- 2.3. The Hertsmere Local Plan 2012-2027 is made up of four parts, including: the Core Strategy (2013); the Elstree Way Corridor Area Action Plan (AAP) (2015); the Site

Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan (SADMPP) (2016); and the Hertsmere Local Plan Policies Map.

- 2.4. The Site is therefore subject to the following landscape policies, including [but not limited to]:
- Policies CS12: 'The Enhancement of the Natural Environment', Policy CS14 Protection or Enhancement of Heritage Assets, and Policy CS16: 'Environmental impact of development' of the Core Strategy (2013)
 - Policies SADM11: 'Landscape Character', SADM12: 'Trees, Landscaping and Development', Policy SADM15 'Sustainable Drainage Systems', SADM30: 'Design Principles', and SADM37: 'New and Improved Open Spaces' of the SADMPP (2016).
- 2.5. Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) relevant to Landscape are the Planning and Design Guide SPD and Biodiversity and the Trees SPD.

Local Landscape Character

- 2.6. The town of Potters Bar sits close to three Landscape Character Areas (LCA) within the Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment. These LCAs are rural in character; gently undulating fields with mature hedgerows and woodlands, private estates and parkland are characteristic. Major A roads, motorways and associated infrastructure form modern elements within these LCAs. A strong network of public footpaths and bridleways traverse the landscape and fringes of Potters Bar.

3.0. Review of the proposal/submitted information:

- 3.1. The application is supported by Design and Access Statement, Arboricultural Report, Landscape Strategy Report, Townscape and Visual Impact Appraisal, Landscape Plans and Boundary treatment plans are also provided. The submission is detailed in terms of landscape documents.

Layout

- 3.2. The site layout remains largely intact with retention of two large buildings and commercial units fronting the High Street and retained multi-storey car park. Additional built form is proposed that wraps around the street corner which requires removal of the existing site trees on Mutton Lane. These trees contribute to local town centre visual amenity. Devoid of much 'green' in the town centre, the loss of all of these trees as shown on the Arboricultural plans is unfortunate. Street trees improve air quality, filtering pollutants as well as providing shading in harsh urban environments. New tree planting is proposed but is no longer integral to the street scene. Retention of the protected oak trees on the northern boundary however is appreciated. Two new courtyards are proposed as pockets of green space; however, these are tucked away and poorly connected. Permeability and legibility through the site are weak.

- 3.3. Overall, the new public spaces appear constrained by the retained layout and service roads. Opportunities to open up to the High Street and adjacent public areas have been missed.
- 3.4. The ambition to improve links from the site to The Walk and on to the train station is welcome, however connected landscape spaces and direct routeways are not obvious.
- 3.5. The 'High Street Extension' which occupies a gap between blocks on the high street is positive but could be larger and improved by linking on to broader pavements with street trees and seating. Redevelopment of the site presents the opportunity to link tree lined walkways and cycling route along the High Street and into the site 'Neighbourhood Park' channelling people through the site to The Walk to the north and on to the railway station. This could be a positive improvement to the existing car-dominated town centre and busy crossroads.

Visual

- 3.6. A Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment (TVIA) prepared by Turley accompanies the application. Wirelines are provided for close range and distant viewpoints where the proposed redevelopment has most representation within the study area. The TVIA states the '*proposed Development would be highly visible from the surrounding local area of the town centre and suburban fringe of Potters Bar. This is due to the nature scale and height of the replacement taller building at Maple House on Site in comparison to the existing generally low to mid rise urban and suburban built development which defines the majority of the settlement area of Potters Bar*'. This is accepted.
- 3.7. The study area extends to 2km. Whilst this zone comprises views from many directions giving good representation, we are aware of visibility towards the town from public rights of way on elevated land to the west, particularly from PRoW crossing open fields west of Mymmshall Wood, LCA24: Catherine Bourne Valley. We would have expected a more extensive exploration of views considering the scale and nature of the proposed redevelopment present in the townscape and landscape.
- 3.8. Accepted that views to the existing tall town centre buildings and mast are very prominent in the skyline from the surrounding landscape and Potters Bar fringe, the proposed redevelopment scheme features greater mass and height of built form within views. This would merit greater scrutiny in assessment than other less visually prominent developments in the local landscape. We are disappointed that views from the west of the A1(M) have not been considered.
- 3.9. The TVIA assesses visual receptors including users of PROWs and open agricultural or estate land to the northwest and southwest, including areas around Royal Veterinary College/Bolton Park Farm and Wrotham Park (Grade II Registered Park and Garden), provide long-range views of Maple House above suburban development. '*The tall building*

is visible as a focal point within open, semi-rural landscapes, reinforcing wayfinding and the visual relationship between the town and its rural hinterland'. This is accepted.

- 3.10. The visualisation (AVR) methodology used aligns with the Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note TGN 6/19 (Visual representation for development proposals). Additional visual material includes architectural computer-generated images (CGIs) of the development viewed within its immediate townscape context, Southgate Road, Mutton land and the High Street.

Landscape and Visual Effects

- 3.11. Of particular landscape concern is the level of landscape and visual effects of the proposed Potters Bar town centre redevelopment on the visual and landscape resource. The TVIA results give an overall minor visual effect on receptors using the rural landscape and open parkland. Given their medium to high sensitivity this seems underestimated. We would judge the magnitude of change in the view as higher than 'low'. The tall buildings in the centre of the town appear as a focal point, as the TVIA states, '*reinforcing wayfinding and the visual relationship between the town and its rural hinterland*'. The increase in massing and scale with the additional height of Maple House and taller blocks next to it would give a greater magnitude of change with more visual prominence.
- 3.12. The overall effect on landscape receptors given as LCA3: Rural and Open Parkland in the TVIA which encompasses the three Hertfordshire Landscape Character Areas LCA24 Arkley Plain and LCA26 Hornbeam Hills (Enfield Chase) to the south; LCA53a Northaw Common Parkland and LCA54 Potters Bar Parklands to the north, LCA29 Mimms Hall Valley to the west is given minor to negligible effect. This is accepted as any change is indirect and key characteristics of the LCAs would be maintained.

4.0. Summary

- 4.1. The proposed redevelopment scheme at the town centre site is evidently impactful on the Potters Bar townscape due to the increase in height of the replacement Maple House and taller blocks around it. This is compounded by the loss of site trees and reduced visual amenity in the streetscene. Street trees have not been incorporated into the scheme that would have greatly improved the design. The application presents a comprehensive landscape design package which is commendable, but the landscaped spaces lack cohesion and connectivity with limited visual amenity benefits from outside the site. Opportunities to bring meaningful landscape and trees into the street scene in this central Potters Bar location have been missed.
- 4.2. With the level of visual effects on distant views in the surrounding rural landscape, as demonstrated in the TVIA VP 10 and 12 to the south, and VP 11 to the north and with

views evident from PRoWs to the west within LCA24: Catherine Bourne Valley, we cannot support the scheme in its current form from a landscape perspective.

Please contact us if you have any queries in relation to this advice.

Place Services – Landscape Team

Email: landscape@essex.gov.uk



This advice has been provided by Place Services on behalf of Hertsmere Borough Council.

Please note:

This letter is advisory and should only be considered as the opinion formed by specialist staff in relation to this particular matter.

We are unable to respond directly to applicants/agents or other interested parties. Any additional information, queries or comments on this advice that the applicant/agent or other interested parties may have, must be directed to the Planning Officer at the relevant LPA, who will seek further advice from us where appropriate.

AI may have been used in the preparation of this response, but its use will be limited to basic proof-reading, grammar, and spelling correction. This response has been reviewed by the author(s). If you have any queries, please contact us for information about our AI guidance.