

CONSERVATION TEAM CONSULTATION APPLICATION RESPONSE

APPLICATION REF:	26/01046/FP, 26/01047/LBC & 26/01401/AD
CASE OFFICER:	VW
APPLICATION SITE:	The Chequers, 58 High Street, Royston, Hertfordshire SG8 9AW
DESCRIPTION OF WORKS:	FP - Erect ramped access to front elevation and single-storey extension to rear. Install kitchen flue to north (side) elevation. LBC - Erect ramped access to front elevation and single-storey extension to rear. Kitchen flue to north (side) elevation. New signs to south, east and west elevations. Internal and external alterations. AD - Projecting hanging sign to west elevation and signage to south and east elevations.
RECOMMENDATION: Subject to the draft conditions provided, I raise NO OBJECTION to these proposals on the basis that the scheme satisfies the provisions of Sections 16(2) (LBC only), 66(1) (FP only) and 72(1) (all) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the aims of Section 16 of the NPPF, the aims of Policy HE1 of North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031.	
Impact on The Chequers and the Royston Conservation Area. The proposal will have a small adverse impact upon the above heritage asset.	
SITE CONTEXT: The Chequers is grade II listed and is in the Royston Conservation Area, therefore, both the building and the area are Designated Heritage Assets for the purpose of applying the aims of Section 16 of the NPPF. The list entry can be found at the following link: https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1347653?section=official-list-entry	
DETAILED ANALYSIS AND CONSIDERATIONS: A site meeting was convened on 7 April 2026 and attended by me, the Planning Compliance Officer, the new leaseholder, and their advisers/contractors. The following observations were noted and advice provided at that meeting: - Former unauthorised signage affixed to the property by former occupier, had been removed, except for the hanging public house sign. Two temporary signs attached to the building. - A soft strip of some of the interior with no concerns raised by officer as to what had taken place. Prior to the visit, the leaseholder was made aware that no items that	

the LPA may consider to be historic fabric should be altered or removed prior to not only the arranged meeting but, more importantly and if necessary, before the determination of an application for listed building consent.

- Ground floor ceiling in a varied condition, with areas between the historic beams consisting of either modern plasterboard or traditional lath and plaster. The lath and plaster sections are generally in poor condition. I advised that these be repaired as part of the works, by a heritage contractor conversant with using lime. Owner to clarify Building Regulations requirements for fire resistant plaster boarding due to the residential accommodation located above. Underdrawings of the ceilings requires listed building consent.
- I raised no objection to the removal of the current bar and repositioning the bar area to the end of the room from which the gable end backs onto the carpark subject to the fireplace being repaired and left exposed.
- No objection to boxing-in an exposed soil pipe.
- I advised that a dark coloured engineered wood floor should be installed in the restaurant area and that this would not extend to the rear of the property, where the kitchen and food preparation areas are to be located.
- A discussion took place regarding the provision of customer toilets, and this was to be proposed in an area beneath the steel staircase providing access to the first floor (included in submission) and would replace an unauthorised timber constructed extension. Relocating the toilets would allow for an enlarged food preparation area to the rear of the building and improve the accessibility of the restaurant layout.
- The proposed signage comprises lettering in a style that is illuminated by pendant lighting rather than halo illumination. The signage is intended to be attached to the front elevation of the property and gable end together with a hanging sign on the side elevation.

In addition, two matters have been included in these applications that were not previously discussed in detail on site: ramped access to front elevation and kitchen flue. I gave an indication previously that I would support a proposal for the kitchen flue and that remains the case, but I had not offered previous comment on the ramp and railings.

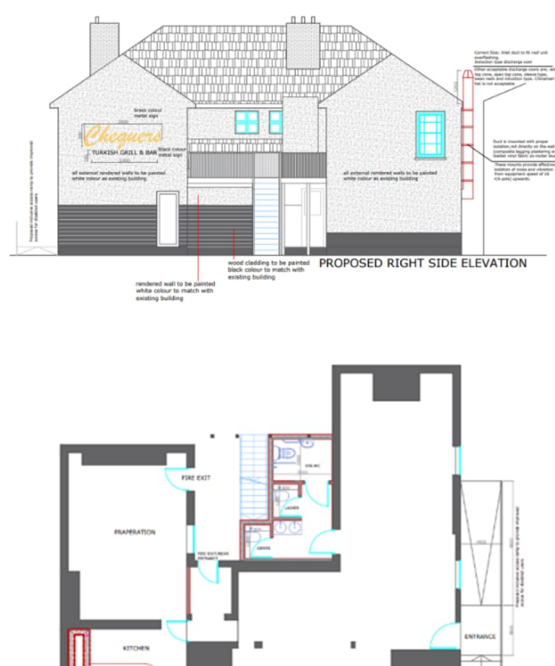
The flue is located down the side of the building away from public view and is considered unobjectionable.



The single-storey addition under the external stairs will have limited impact on the building's special character and will provide an essential facility for this use. The submitted DAS states at 2.2 the following which is regarded as a convincing justification:

The proposed toilet facilities will provide improved accessibility and convenience for all users. Due to the existing internal level changes and the limitations of the current facilities, the provision of a new accessible toilet is considered essential to improve usability, inclusivity, and hygiene standards for customers.

The applicant has followed advice given on site in terms of the external appearance of the addition and I raise no objection either to the footprint of the addition or the internal access.



Generally, commercial and residential properties in the RCA have level access and it is only towards the southern end of the High Street that there is a distinct change in levels and where railings and stepped access are noticed at two properties (see below right). The submitted DAS does not mention the ramp/railing or provide a convincing justification for this installation but would probably be broadly similar to the case made for the toilets i.e. essential to improve usability and inclusivity for customers. On balance, although impacting upon the principle elevation, in my opinion, the benefits of the ramped access outweigh any perceived harm (which in any event would be towards the lower end of less than substantial harm, if at all). If consented, I encourage a 'turned' end to the railing (see right hand image below) and which could be secured via condition.



Turning to the proposed advertisements, as noted above, I am pleased to see that the former unauthorised signage affixed to the property had been removed by the time of my site visit.



It was noted at the previous site meeting that temporary unauthorised signage had been attached to the building but this is due to be replaced by the proposed signage which comprise: 2no. brass colour metal signs measuring 2000mm long x 800mm high x 60mm deep, 1no. black colour metal sign measuring 2400mm wide x 150mm high and presumably also 60mm deep (?) and a 900mm high x 800mm wide projecting hanging sign (all externally illuminated).

Exterior



Context image, taken from the A10, majority of the former unauthorised signage removed. One piece attached to the gable end remains.



Unauthorised signage removed, temporary signage attached to the exterior of the building, also unauthorised.

There is evidence of a previous hanging sign and this aspect of the scheme is considered unobjectionable.



PROPOSED FRONT ELEVATION

Suggested conditions (LBC only)

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

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

3. All existing signage shall be removed before the approved signage scheme is implemented.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to the listed building's special character and to the appearance of the Royston Conservation Area under Sections 16 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan.

4. The canopy over the front entrance door shall be retained unless otherwise agreed and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt as not clear on the approved drawings and to ensure that special regard is paid to the listed building's special character under Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan.

5. Details as to the construction of the ramp including any impact on the plinth of the existing building together with railing/handrail details shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of that part of the development hereby consented. Thereafter the ramp, railing and handrail shall only be underdrawn in accordance with the approved details

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to the listed building's special character and to the appearance of the Royston Conservation Area under Sections 16 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan.

6. Where existing lath-and-plaster ceilings exist at ground floor these shall be maintained and where necessary, repaired like-for-like. In addition, where ceilings are proposed to be underdrawn, the extent and type shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the ceilings shall only be underdrawn in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to the listed building's special character under Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan.

7. The fireplace/surround behind the proposed bar shall remain in-situ and exposed unless otherwise agreed and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to the listed building's special character under Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan.

8. Details of the restaurant and bar area floor finish shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the floor finishes shall be installed in accordance with approved details.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to listed building's special character under Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan.

HERITAGE POLICY ASSESSMENT:

Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990:

Sections 16(2), 66(1) and 72(1)

North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031:

Policy HE1

NPPF (December 2024):

The following paragraphs are relevant:

- **135 c)** (*sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment*),
- **207** (*local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting*)
- **210** (*desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness*),
- **212** (*great weight should be given to the asset's conservation*),
- **213** (*clear and convincing justification*), and
- **215** (*harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use*).

CONCLUSION:

I find this scheme **OBJECTIONABLE**.

OFFICER: Mark Simmons

DATE: 17/06/2026