

## CONSERVATION TEAM CONSULTATION APPLICATION RESPONSE

|                              |                                                                                                                                                                          |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>APPLICATION REF:</b>      | 25/00607/LBC                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>CASE OFFICER:</b>         | MT                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>APPLICATION SITE:</b>     | 8 - 9 Bridge Street, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG5 2DE                                                                                                                      |
| <b>DESCRIPTION OF WORKS:</b> | Repaint timber window frames and doors in dark red.<br>Installation of fascia signage and hanging metal sign.<br>Installation of CCTV and associated security equipment. |

### RECOMMENDATION:

I raise **NO OBJECTION** on the basis that the proposal will satisfy the provisions of Sections 16(2) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the aims of Section 16 of the NPPF and Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031.

### SHORT SUMMARY:

#### Impact on listed building's special character and its setting

The proposal will have a small impact upon the building's special character.

#### Impact on character or appearance of the Hitchin Conservation Area.

The proposal will have a small impact upon the CA's appearance.

#### Harm, preserve or enhance.

The proposal would not harm the building's special character.

### SITE CONTEXT:

Nos.8, 9 and 9A Bridge Street are together grade II listed and are a Designated Heritage Asset for the purpose of applying the aims of Section 16 of the NPPF. The building was added to the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest on 17 June 1974, and the list entry is at the following link:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1102189?section=official-list-entry>

### DETAILED ANALYSIS AND CONSIDERATIONS:

The Heritage Statement supporting this application outlines the works as follows:

*Therefore, the works proposed are limited painting of the timber in a muted dark red tone, along the same boundaries as the current blue-coloured paint, therefore not over-reaching previous works that have taken place in the past and providing a much-needed refresh to the existing façade.*

*4 CCTV cameras, 2 motion sensitive lights, door strengthening measures and 2 internal panic buttons are also planned to be installed given the sensitive nature of the current tenant, the local member of Parliament, and the need to ensure staff safety.*

*This is proposed alongside simple vinyl lettering to provide signage and a hanging sign, attached to the existing metal hanger, as is typical of shops in the conservation area. Together, I hope that*

*these features will make my office an easy-to-locate service in the heart of Hitchin town, and enable my team and I to better serve the community, without detracting from the historic nature of this beautiful listed building.*

It is important to note that the new paintwork does not over-reach previous works of redecoration. It is noted that for a significant part of the C21, the property was occupied by Planet Furniture and Interiors and a muted grey/green colour was applied to signage and external joinery. More recently, the fascia sign and joinery were painted dark blue whilst a strident yellow colour was applied to fascia sign and joinery at no. 9A adjacent. The point being that colour is a subjective matter and it would need to be made clear as to why a particular colour choice would occasion harm to a listed building's special character if a redecoration scheme is recommended for refusal. Furthermore it is noted that listed building consent has not previously been sought for colour changes at nos. 8, 9 and 9A.

Building currently



Building once work carried out



As stated at page 27 of the Historic England 2021 Listed Building Consent: Historic England Advice Note 16. Swindon. Historic England, Under the Heading 'External Decoration' it states:

*Most listed buildings have undergone many cycles of external redecoration using matching paint type, texture, finish and colour and most such redecoration would not affect special interest, in which case it would not need LBC.*

Whilst the existing colour scheme is subdued, and in my opinion sits well with the exposed framing and the carved corbels to south-west corner recessed porch, the proposed colour scheme is not considered overly strident, and the corbels would not be painted. The colour scheme could be altered at any time.

I have considered the other aspects of this scheme including the following and find no reason to conclude that there would be harm occasioned to this listed building.

- Window privacy frosting.
- Cut vinyl graphics and
- Hanging sign (3mm aluminium faced in sign vinyl background and white cut vinyl text).
- Installation of CCTV and associated security equipment.

**HERITAGE POLICY ASSESSMENT:****Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990:**

Sections 16(2) 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:**

The proposal is considered acceptable.

**OFFICER:** Mark Simmons

**DATE:** 08/08/2025