



FAO: Planning Department,
North Herts Council

Ref: 24/01640/LBC, 24/01639/FP, 24/01641/AD
Date: 22/11/2024

BUILT HERITAGE ADVICE

Dear Sir / Madam,

RE: 32 Sun Street Hitchin Hertfordshire SG5 1AH

Built Heritage Advice pertaining to an application for:

24/01640/LBC -Internal and external alterations to facilitate change of use to restaurant and hot food takeaway to include installation of ventilation system on the rear roof. (Development has commenced).

24/01639/FP- Change of use to restaurant and hot food takeaway. Installation of ventilation system on the rear roof and enlarge existing roof light/roof hatch. (Development has commenced).

24/01641/AD- Installation of externally illuminated fascia sign and hanging sign. (Development already carried out).

No. 31 and 32 Sun Street are jointly a Grade II listed eighteenth building with later alterations. The building is three storeys tall with a modern shop front and timber framing that is visible in the interior. It has historic significance as a historic building in the town centre and historic and architectural interest due to its historic fabric.

The site is located within the historic core of Hitchin Conservation Area, and a large number of nearby buildings along Sun Street, Bucklersby and nearby Marketplace are nationally listed. The application site makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area due to its historic and architectural interest highlighted above. In the adopted Hitchin Conservation Area Character Statement (CACS) the application site is located in 'Character Area 2c: The Market Place, Bridge Street, Tilehouse Street and Upper Tilehouse Street'

The application site is within the CACS 'View 2' which looks southwards along Sun Street and highlights the many historic shopfronts as making a positive contribution and several modern, incongruous shop fronts as making a negative contribution to the character of the Conservation Area.



The works have already been completed and can be divided into three main parts:

- Internal alterations for restaurant use
- External alterations including enlarged rooflight and ventilation system on the rear roof
- Installation of externally illuminated fascia sign and hanging sign

The internal works comprise a fit out for restaurant use. The main restaurant area is the more historic part of the ground floor, while the kitchen is located within the twentieth century addition.

These internal works include installation of a new bar, tiles to walls and oak cladding; black powder-coated light fittings, replacement kitchen and toilets; new bar and glazed windbreak by entrance; low-level panelling and bench seating along the existing walls; a curved wall separating the restaurant from the toilets and kitchen; repainting the walls and ceiling, new lighting, laying new LVT flooring and refinishing existing timber floor.

These works are in keeping with the existing character, are reversible and are not harmful in heritage terms.

The enlarged rooflight is in the more modern rear section of the kitchen, is not highly visible and is acceptable in in heritage terms.

It was not possible to view the ventilation system during the site visit due to access issues, but an assessment has been made based on the submitted details and photos provided in a neighbour response. It is understood that some type of ventilation is necessary for a restaurant use and that the rear of the property is relatively screened and so the flue is not prominent within the Conservation Area.

However, the flue is large and runs across the flat roof and is in proximity to a number of listed buildings on Sun Street, Bucklersbury and Market Place, which impacts the significance of the subject building and nearby listed buildings. There is no clear justification provided as to the size and design of the flue and whether this is an acceptable or commonly used ventilation system used by nearby restaurants, cafes etc or more generally on sensitive listed buildings. Further justification should be provided to demonstrate that the flue is acceptable in terms of impact on listed buildings.

It is noted that a neighbour consultation raised concerns in terms of amenity impacts which should be assessed as by the Planning Officer as part of the determination process.

The shopfront fascia sign and hanging sign are of an appropriate material and character and have an acceptable impact in heritage terms.

The flue has a harmful impact on the character of the subject building and nearby listed buildings contrary to Section 16 (2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. With regards to the National Planning Policy Framework the level of harm is 'less than substantial' as per paragraph 208. 'Great weight' should be given to the heritage asset's conservation as per paragraph 205.

Yours sincerely,

David Buckley BA (Hons) MA MRTPI IHBC
Historic Environment Team
Place Services

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