



Heritage Statement

**Proposed Change of Use of First Floor Office to Studio Flat, Rebuilding of Roof, and Installation of Rooflights and Dormers at 91C Bancroft, Hitchin
Prepared in Support of Full Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent**

1.0 Introduction

This Heritage Statement has been prepared to accompany an application for full planning permission and listed building consent for the change of use of part of the first floor of a Grade II listed building at 91C Bancroft, Hitchin. The proposals include conversion of an existing office space to a studio flat, rebuilding of the existing roof structure, and the installation of three conservation-style rooflights and two traditionally styled dormer windows. The site lies within the Hitchin Conservation Area and forms part of the historic town centre.

2.0 Site Context and Listing Description

2.1 Site Description

The application site comprises the rear portion of the first floor of No. 91 Bancroft, a Grade II listed building located on the eastern side of Bancroft, within the Hitchin Conservation Area. The site lies above a ground-floor commercial unit and is currently accessed via the existing entrance through the commercial premises.

2.2 Listing Details

The building is included on the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest under Entry Number: 1347578. The listing states:



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“1. 5255 BANCROFT (East Side) Nos 91 & 92 TL 1829 SE 4/9 13.4.51. II

2. Late C18 building of 2 storeys in pale vermillion brick. Moulded brick cornice

beneath a low parapet. Steep tiled roof. Carnage at side in slightly recessed section.

3 windows (ground floor, modern bay in No 91, shop window in No 92; upper floor, all in shallow reveals, three-light on either side). Plain modern door end fanlight inserted into a pedimented case with Doric semi-engaged columns. Attic with small box dormer.

No 91 to 93 (consec), Nos 95 to 103B (consec) and Nos 105 to 109 (consec) form a group.”

2.3 Wider Setting

The site is within a terrace of buildings that contributes positively to the character and appearance of the Hitchin Conservation Area. The conservation area is noted for its historic townscape, vernacular architecture, and fine grain of development.

2.4 Accessibility and Sustainability

The site occupies a highly sustainable town centre location with ready access to a range of amenities including shops, schools, public open space, and public transport. The reuse of this underutilised upper floor for residential purposes supports local and national sustainability objectives.

3.0 Background

3.1 Planning History

There is no recent or relevant planning history associated with 91C Bancroft as recorded on the Council's planning portal.

4.0 The Proposal

4.1 Description of Development

The application seeks consent for the following works:

- Change of use of the first-floor rear office space to a self-contained studio flat;



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- Rebuilding of the existing roof to improve thermal efficiency and structural integrity;
- Installation of three flush-fitting conservation-style Velux rooflights;
- Installation of two traditionally detailed dormer windows on the rear roof slope;

5.0 Assessment of Impact on Heritage Significance

5.1 Statutory Considerations

Under Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, special regard must be had to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Under Section 72(1) of the same Act, special attention must be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area.

5.2 Impact on the Listed Building

The proposed change of use will not result in the loss of any key historic fabric. The flat will be created within a later subdivision of the building and no historic features of significance will be removed or obscured. The rebuilding of the roof is necessary for practical and structural reasons and will be carried out using sympathetic materials and detailing.

The two dormer windows are modest in size, set low within the rear slope, and reflect traditional proportions and styles common in the area. The conservation-style rooflights will lie flush with the plane of the roof, minimising visual impact. Overall, the changes are respectful and do not alter the key features that contribute to the building's special architectural and historic interest.

5.3 Impact on the Conservation Area

The proposed works are confined to the rear of the building and are not visible from the primary frontage on Bancroft. The design and materials are sympathetic to the historic environment and reflect the character and grain of the surrounding



roofscape. The scheme retains the commercial frontage at ground floor, preserving the active street frontage and mixed-use character of the conservation area.

As such, the proposed alterations are considered to preserve the character and appearance of the Hitchin Conservation Area in accordance with statutory duties and national policy.

6.0 Policy Considerations

The proposal complies with the following policies of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan:

- **Policy D1** – which requires development to positively respond to the site's context;
- **Policy D2** – which requires extensions and alterations to be sympathetic to the original building in terms of scale, form and orientation;
- **Policy HE1** – which seeks to preserve or enhance heritage assets.

The proposal is also consistent with **Section 12** of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which emphasise the importance of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and ensuring that new development makes a positive contribution to local character.

7.0 Conclusion

The proposed development has been carefully designed to ensure that it does not harm the significance of the Grade II listed building or the character and appearance of the Hitchin Conservation Area. The modest, well-considered alterations are sympathetic to the building's architectural form, retain historic fabric, and reflect traditional detailing.



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The proposals represent a sustainable and sensitive reuse of an underutilised space within a highly sustainable location. It is therefore respectfully submitted that both planning permission and listed building consent should be granted.