

CONSERVATION TEAM CONSULTATION APPLICATION RESPONSE

APPLICATION REF:	26/01191/AD
CASE OFFICER:	Thomas Howe
APPLICATION SITE:	Vodafone 13 High Street Hitchin Hertfordshire SG5 1AT
DESCRIPTION OF WORKS:	Installation of replacement face panels on existing externally illuminated projecting sign.

RECOMMENDATION:

There is **NO OBJECTION**. The scheme will satisfy the provisions of Sections 16(2) (LBC) and /or 66(1) (FP/FPH) and/or 72(1) (both) 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.

SUGGESTED CONDITIONS:

None.

SHORT SUMMARY:

Impact on listed building's special character – Not applicable.

The building however is locally listed, but the proposals are not considered to cause harm to the character of the building.

Impact on character and appearance of the conservation area. The building is located in the Hitchin Conservation Area and also has an Article 4 in place.

The building is located in Character Area 2a of the appraisal statement and relevant extracts are copied below for reference.

Character Area 2a: High Street, Bancroft south and Brand Street General description This Character Area once formed part of the large market place to the west of St Mary's Church which was gradually encroached over, so that now the church is no longer visible from the High Street or from Bancroft, described by the architectural historian Sir Nicholas Pevsner as one of the best streets in of Hertfordshire. The street is wide and between Market Place and the junction with Brand Street, where High Street becomes Bancroft, has been subject to an environmental improvement scheme which provided a partially pedestrianised street. The uses are all commercial with residential uses above some of the shops. This is the major shopping area of Hitchin with national chains being represented. On-street short stay car parking is a useful shoppers' facility, but does encourage circulating traffic c looking for free parking – this can lead to pedestrian and vehicular confl ict. These issues were identifi ed by stakeholders in

relation to the Hitchin Urban Transport Plan that has been endorsed by Hertfordshire County Council's Highways and Transport Cabinet Panel

Survival of historic street layout, representing the location of the former livestock market; • Almost continuous frontages of high quality listed buildings, some of them listed grade II* (nos. 26/27 and nos. 105/106 Bancroft); • Former carriage entrances provide access to courts behind the frontage buildings; • Not every building has a shopfront, reinforcing the residential character of parts of the area; • Mixture of timber framed more vernacular buildings and high quality red or yellow brick Georgian townhouses; • Pitched tiled roofs and chimneys important; • Pleasantly domestic scale; • Principle shopping street in the town, well served by on-street car parking and adjoining surface car parks; • Traditional (though modern) stone paving and other features relating to the 1990s enhancement scheme

Impact on setting of heritage assets and how this affects significance – As result of the above analysis the proposal is considered not cause harm to character of the locally listed building nor to the character and appearance of the conservation area as the proposal seeks to replace existing with suitable materials, fixing methods and lighting.

Site Context:

Please see analysis above.

DETAILED ANALYSIS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Please see summary section above.

HERITAGE POLICY ASSESSMENT:

Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990:

North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031:

NPPF (December 2024):

The Local Plan and NPPF

North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 and the policies contained within it i.e., Policy HE1. The plan was adopted November 2022.

The relevant paragraph numbers at Section 16 of the July 2021 version of the NPPF have been changed as follows:

197. In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*

199. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important

the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

200. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.....

202. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

206. Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.

The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition) – December 2017

At para 14 under the sub-heading 'Landscape Assessment and Amenity' it states that *"Analysis of setting is different from landscape assessment. While landscapes include everything within them, the entirety of very extensive settings may not contribute equally to the significance of a heritage asset, if at all. **Careful analysis is therefore required to assess whether one heritage asset at a considerable distance from another, though intervisible with it – a church spire, for instance – is a major component of the setting, rather than just an incidental element within the wider landscape.**"*

At para 17 it states (my emphasis in bold): *"All heritage assets have significance, some of which have particular significance and are designated. The contribution made by their setting to their significance also varies. **Although many settings may be enhanced by development, not all settings have the same capacity to accommodate change without harm to the significance of the heritage asset or the ability to appreciate it.** This capacity may vary between designated assets of the same grade or of the same type or according to the nature of the change. It can also depend on the location of the asset: an elevated or overlooked location; a riverbank, coastal or island location; or a location within an extensive tract of flat land may increase the sensitivity of the setting (i.e. the capacity of the setting to accommodate change without harm to the heritage asset's significance) or of views of the asset. This requires the implications of development affecting the setting of heritage assets to be considered on a case-by-case basis."*

Relevant National Guidance i.e. Historic England:

Other relevant documents (Please specify):

CONCLUSION:

[There are no objections for the reason stated in the summary section above.](#)

OFFICER: Tricia Craggs

DATE: 23 June 2026