

PLANNING SUPPORT STATEMENT INCORPORATING DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

**PROPOSED RETENTION OF COLD ROOM
EXTENSION; REPLACEMENT HIGHER
TIMBER FENCE WITH AN INSET GATE; NEW
ESTATE FENCING GATE; FESTOON
LIGHTING SUPPORTED ON TIMBER POLES;
NEW HANGING LIGHT PENDANT TO LOBBY;
FORM NEW EXIT FROM EXISTING LEAN-TO
TIMBER EXTENSION; TOGETHER WITH
INTERNAL ALTERATIONS**

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Support Statement has been prepared to accompany applications for planning permission and listed building consent for the proposed retention of internal and external alterations at The Banyers Hotel, 16 Melbourn Street, Royston, SG8 7BZ. The application premises now trade as the Chalk Hare public house and restaurant.
- 1.2 The application proposals comprise the proposed retention of a cold room extension; replacement higher timber fence with an inset gate; new estate fencing gate; festoon lighting supported on timber posts; new hanging light pendant to lobby; a new exit from existing timber extension; together with internal alterations. The application proposals are detailed within the accompanying application drawings. This Planning Support Statement includes the necessary Design and Access Statement. A separate Heritage Statement also accompanies these applications.
- 1.3 The application works were commenced on site on 05/01/2026 and were completed on 09/03/2026. These planning and listed building consent applications are therefore made retrospectively and follow contact and advice from Cormac Hosie, the LPA's Planning Compliance Officer (LPA reference: 26/00044/1LB). Their advice was that retrospective planning permission and listed building consent should be sought for these works.
- 1.4 The Statement is set out in seven sections and comprises:
 - 1.0 Introduction
 - 2.0 Site Description & Surrounding Area
 - 3.0 Proposals & Planning History
 - 4.0 Relevant Planning Policies
 - 5.0 Assessment of Planning Issues
 - 6.0 Summary
 - 7.0 Design and Access Statement

2.0 Site Description & Surrounding Area

2.1 The application site comprises existing public house/restaurant premises that are located in Royston town centre. The property itself is a grade II listed building. The application site is also situated within the designated Royston Conservation Area. In addition, the neighbouring building at No. 18 Melbourn Street is a grade I listed building.

2.2 The application building itself is a grade II listed building, dating from the early nineteenth Century. The Historic England listing description for the application building reads as follows:

1. 5255 MELBOURN STREET (North Side) No 16 (The Banyers Hotel) TL 3540 1/163 II

2. Early C19 refronting in Neo-classical style of much earlier building. Timber framed structure refaced in gault brick. Welsh slated roof behind parapet. 2 storeys, tall Greek Ionic pilasters to pediment right of centre. Doric pilasters at angles. 7 sash windows with glazing bars under flat arches. Doric porch has cast iron balcony railings, entablature with triglyphs, mutule cornice. Road side elevation has pediment 1st floor cast iron balconette, ground floor bay window. North projecting wing has ground floor 3 light pedimented window.

2.3 The neighbouring building at No. 18 Melbourn Street is a grade I listed building. The Historic England listing description for this neighbouring building reads as follows:

TL 3540 1/71 14.6.64 5255 MELBOURN STREET (North Side) No 18 I

C18 front of channelled plaster, red tiled roof behind parapet with central open pediment. 3 storeys, 7 sash windows in moulded flush frames. Fine central doorway has 6 fielded panelled door and oblong fanlight with ornamental monogram glazing in fielded panelled reveal, surround of Roman Doric half columns, entablature with running fret frieze and dentil and mutule cornice, pediment. Interior contains remarkable early C17 decoration: 3 carved and painted chimneypieces with elaborate overmantels, painted ceilings with arabesques, oak panelling in 2 rooms, early C18 deal panelling in 1 room.

2.4 The application site is also located within the designated Royston Conservation Area. There are many buildings of good architectural quality and historic interest within the conservation area, a significant number of which are listed. The layout of Royston is predominantly medieval, and rebuilding has largely occurred in relation to the shape and constraints of these early plots. However, the overall appearance of the conservation area is mainly that of 18th century and early 19th century buildings following the classical design influences of the time (all taken from the Royston Conservation Area appraisal, dated 27 March 2007, published by North Hertfordshire District Council).

- 2.5 The application site lies within the town centre of Royston, which contains the usual range of mixed commercial and residential uses that would be expected in such areas. The part of Melbourn Street containing the application building is predominantly commercial in character, with residential properties beyond and a church and its grounds directly opposite. Other food and drink led business exist within the surrounding area, including 'USA Chicken and Pizza' restaurant/takeaway; 'The Manor House' public house; 'Domino's Pizza' takeaway; and 'Wing On' Chinese takeaway, all further west along Melbourn Street. Locally, the surrounding buildings range in date and styles, from historic buildings to modern infill developments.

3.0 Proposals & Planning History

3.1 The application proposals comprise the proposed retention of internal and external alterations at The Banyers Hotel, 16 Melbourn Street, Royston, SG8 7BZ. The application premises now trade as the Chalk Hare public house and restaurant.

3.2 A summary of proposed external works is as follows:

1. The retention of a cold room extension.
2. The retention of replacement higher timber fence with an inset gate.
3. The retention of a new estate fencing gate.
4. The retention of festoon lighting supported on timber posts.
5. The retention of a new hanging light pendant to lobby; and
6. The retention of a new exit from existing timber extension.

3.3 A summary of the proposed internal alterations is as follows:

1. The retention of infills of previously formed apertures to the pizza kitchen area, finished with plasterboard and skimmed to match the adjacent wall.
2. The retention of an infill to kitchen area with part open stud wall and door.
3. The retention of an infill to bar area to create a new cleaners' store.
4. The retention of the replacement of elements of the existing bar servery, including new timber tops and upper backfitting.
5. The retention of new doors off existing glazed internal lobby to secure building post trading.
6. The retention of replacement vanity units in all toilet areas and redecoration of all painted surfaces.
7. The retention of a new retractable glazed screen.
8. The retention of the replacement of the LVT ceramic tiling and laminate flooring to ground floor areas with engineered oak flooring.
9. The retention of a new exit from the existing lean-to timber extension.
10. The retention of a studwork wall subdivision to a second-floor room to create a secondary office space and store.

- 3.4 The application works were commenced on site on 05/01/2026 and were completed on 09/03/2026. These planning and listed building consent applications are therefore made retrospectively and follow contact and advice from Cormac Hosie, the LPA's Planning Compliance Officer (LPA reference: 26/00044/1LB). Their advice was that retrospective planning permission and listed building consent should be sought for these works.
- 3.5 In the main, the proposed internal and external alterations generally avoid works to the historic parts of this listed building and instead mainly concern works affecting recent extensions and fabric. The proposed alterations are detailed in the accompanying plans and documents.
- 3.6 The available planning history for the site on the LPA's online records is limited to two previous applications in 2017. Application 17/00145/1NMA proposed the installation of roof plant to the kitchen area and amendments to the fire escape, as a non-material amendment to planning permission 14/01196/1, which was granted on 02/09/2014. Application 17/00145/1NMA was agreed on 09/03/2017.
- 3.7 Application 17/00146/1LB proposed the retention of external works to provide roof plant to kitchen and revisions to the fire escape. This application was approved on 13/03/2017.
- 3.8 This planning history of the application site pre-dated the applicant's ownership of the application premises. Since the applicant has taken over the operation of this site, further revisions to the internal accommodation and external items were required by the applicant.

4.0 Relevant Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework, December 2024

- 4.1 The December 2024 Framework reiterates the presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11) which requires development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan to be approved without delay. Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless in conflict with the December 2024 Framework. The December 2024 Framework also requires LPAs to approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way and to work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible (all paragraph 39).
- 4.2 The December 2024 Framework requires planning policies and decisions to help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development (paragraph 85).
- 4.3 The December 2024 Framework requires planning policies and decisions to promote social interaction and opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other (paragraph 96). The December 2024 Framework adds that in order to provide the social and recreational facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces and meeting places, such as public houses (paragraph 98).
- 4.4 The December 2024 Framework states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development (paragraph 131). Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments function well and add to the overall quality of the area; are visually attractive; are sympathetic to local character and history, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change; create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places; optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development and support local facilities and transport networks; and create safe, inclusive and accessible places that do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience (all paragraph 135).
- 4.5 The December 2024 Framework requires that heritage assets are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance (paragraph 202). Heritage assets should be put to viable uses consistent with their conservation and development should make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness (paragraph 203). Development proposals should avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal (paragraph 208). In determining applications, LPAs should take account of: the desirability of sustaining and

enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness (paragraph 208). 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, irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance (paragraph 212). Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification (paragraph 213). Where a development would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use (paragraph 215).

Development Plan Policies

- 4.6 The adopted Development Plan document for the application site comprises the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031.
- 4.7 Policy SP1 of the Local Plan reiterates the December 2024 Framework's presumption in favour of sustainable development. This policy also seeks to both provide the necessary infrastructure required to support an increasing population and protect key elements of North Hertfordshire's environment including biodiversity, important landscapes, heritage assets and green infrastructure.
- 4.8 Policy SP4 of the Local Plan addresses town centres, local centres and community shops. This policy states that the LPA is committed to protecting the vitality and viability of all centres and will actively promote, protect and enhance cafes, restaurants, pubs and drinking establishments, amongst others; with Royston town centre included within the top sector of the retail hierarchy across the North Hertfordshire District.
- 4.9 Policy SP9 of the Local Plan covers design and sustainability. This policy states that the LPA will consider good design to be a key aspect of sustainable development. Development which is well designed and located and responds positively to its local context will be supported.
- 4.10 Policy SP10 of the Local Plan concerns healthy communities. This policy states that the LPA will provide and maintain healthy, inclusive communities for their residents, through supporting the retention of existing community, cultural, leisure and recreational facilities.
- 4.11 Policy SP13 of the Local Plan addresses the historic environment. This policy states that the LPA will balance the need for growth with the proper protection and enhancement of the historic environment. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight will be given to the asset's conservation and the management of its setting. The LPA will pursue a positive strategy for the conservation and

enjoyment of the historic environment through, amongst others, maintaining a strong presumption in favour of the retention, preservation and enhancement of heritage assets and their setting according to their significance.

- 4.12 Policy ETC3 of the Local Plan covers new retail, leisure and other main town centre development. This policy supports such development, provided that the sequential test is passed and the proposal is appropriate to the area in terms of use, size, scale, function, catchment area, and historic and architectural character, amongst others.
- 4.13 Policy D1 of the Local Plan concerns sustainable design. This policy states that planning permission will be granted provided development proposals respond positively to the site's context and take all reasonable opportunities, consistent with the nature and scale of the scheme to create or enhance the public realm and maximise accessibility, legibility and physical and social connectivity both internally and with neighbouring areas, amongst others.
- 4.14 Policy HE1 of the Local Plan addresses designated heritage assets. This policy states that planning applications relating to designated heritage assets or their setting shall be accompanied by a Heritage Assessment which: i. Assesses the significance of heritage assets, including their setting; ii. Justifies and details the impacts of any proposal upon the significance of the designated heritage asset(s); and iii. Informs any necessary measures to minimise or mitigate against any identified harms. Planning permission for development proposals affecting designated heritage assets or their setting will be granted where they: a) Enable the heritage asset to be used in a manner that secures its conservation and preserves its significance; b) Incorporate a palette of materials that make a positive contribution to local character or distinctiveness, where it is appropriate and justified; and c) Will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset, and this harm is outweighed by the public benefits of the development, including securing the asset's optimum viable use. Where substantial harm to, or loss of significance, of a designated heritage asset is proposed the LPA will refuse consent unless it can be demonstrated that the scheme is necessary to deliver considerable public benefits that outweigh the harm or loss.

5.0 Assessment of Planning Issues

- 5.1 The implications and impacts of the application proposals upon the historical and architectural significance and fabric of this listed building, the settings of the neighbouring heritage assets and upon the character and appearance of the designated Royston Conservation Area are assessed within the accompanying Heritage Statement.
- 5.2 The implications of the application proposals upon historic fabric and the remaining historic planform of the host building are very modest and considered to be appropriate and justified. In the main, the internal and external alterations have generally avoided works to the historic parts of this listed building and instead mainly concern works affecting more recent extensions and fabric.
- 5.3 The internal and external alterations to the host building itself are modest and appropriate in nature and detail. Their implications for the historic fabric and the remaining historic planform are minimal and considered to be acceptable.
- 5.4 The retention of a cold room extension is perhaps the most significant element of the application works, and this is linked to the host building via an existing lean-to, timber-framed extension, such that it avoids historic fabric. Similarly, the associated new exit necessitated by the placement of the cold room extension, affects the same lean-to, timber-framed extension, again avoiding direct impact upon historic fabric. Associated with these elements of the application proposals, all located within the south-eastern sector of the application site, the previously existing timber access gates were replaced with a higher timber fence with an inset gate. The replacement fence and gate effectively screen the cold room extension from the public realm, thereby reducing any direct visual implications for the character and appearance of this part of the Royston Conservation Area. Similarly, the implications of the cold room extension upon the setting of the grade I listed No. 18 Melbourn Street is mitigated by the screening effects of the replacement higher timber fence and inset gate.
- 5.5 The remaining external elements of the application proposals are considered to be modest and minor in nature. The new estate fencing gate is comparable and sympathetic to the existing estate fencing on site. The new hanging light pendant to the lobby is modest and appropriate in siting, design and detail. The festoon lighting supported on timber posts are located within an external customer area and provide modest and appropriate visual interest for this part of the site. All of these works are also easily removed from the application site when no longer required and thereby comply with conservation best practice of reversibility.
- 5.6 The internal alterations are also considered to be modest and appropriate in nature. The most significant of these comprise: the retention of infills of previously formed apertures to the pizza

kitchen area, finished with plasterboard and skimmed to match the adjacent wall; the retention of an infill to kitchen area with part open stud wall and door; the retention of an infill to bar area to create a new cleaners' store; and the retention of a studwork wall subdivision to a second-floor room to create a secondary office space and store. The works within the pizza kitchen area restored the historic wall depth within this room through the removal of these previously formed apertures. The retention of an infill to kitchen area with part open stud wall and door affects a more modern, timber studwork wall and thereby avoids historic fabric. The retention of an infill to bar area to create a new cleaners' store has not resulted in any significant intervention to historic fabric and is modest in nature. Finally, the retention of a studwork wall subdivision to a second-floor room to create a secondary office space and store only affected more modern studwork walling and therefore avoided historic fabric.

- 5.7 The other internal alterations are all considered to be modest and appropriate in nature. These comprise: the retention of the replacement of elements of the existing bar servery, including new timber tops and upper backfitting; the retention of new doors off existing glazed internal lobby to secure building post trading; the retention of replacement vanity units in all toilet areas and redecoration of all painted surfaces; the retention of a new retractable glazed screen; the retention of the replacement of the LVT ceramic tiling and laminate flooring to ground floor areas with engineered oak flooring; and the internal elements of the retention of a new exit from the existing lean-to timber extension. Historic fabric is not directly affected by these remaining internal alterations. All items can be easily removed when no longer required and thereby comply with conservation best practice of reversibility.
- 5.8 The application proposals ensure the continued maintenance and upkeep of this listed building for its appropriate and beneficial continued use as a public house/restaurant; a use which is also publicly accessible and an appropriate town centre use for this part of Royston. There are therefore significant public benefits arising from these proposals. For the reasons rehearsed within the accompanying Heritage Statement, it is considered that the application proposals would respect the architectural and historic character, interest and fabric of this listed building, the settings of the neighbouring heritage asset, and the character and appearance of the designated Royston Conservation Area. The application proposals are therefore considered to be in compliance with the requirements of the December 2024 Framework and Policies SP13 and HE1 of the Local Plan, as rehearsed above in Section 4.0.
- 5.9 The internal and external alterations are considered to be appropriate to the character, form, materials and design of the host building and these would not comprise inappropriate alterations to the host building. The proposed works would allow the applicant to rationalise, improve and enhance the existing customer facilities and back of house accommodation and facilities, at this existing public house/restaurant. Furthermore, the design, materials and form of the alterations and associated works are considered to be sympathetic and appropriate to the existing character, architectural detailing and materials of the host building.

- 5.10 The wider design and visual impacts implications of the application proposals are considered to be appropriate and sympathetic to the host building and its local context within this part of the designated Royston Conservation Area. Overall, the proposed alterations and associated works are considered to be modest, sympathetic and appropriate to the existing public house/restaurant building. It is therefore considered that there would be no material conflict with the requirements of the December 2024 Framework and Policies SP13 and HE1 of the Local Plan, as rehearsed above in Section 4.0.
- 5.11 The site is already in use as a public house/restaurant, with associated external customer facilities, and the application proposals do not involve any change of use nor intensification of the existing use of these premises and site. The proposed works are both modest in scale and sympathetic in nature to the existing, historic and established public house/restaurant use and would result in no net material implications for the amenities of neighbouring occupiers nor the wider local area.
- 5.12 The existing public house/restaurant use of the application site would therefore continue, and the application proposals simply seek the appropriate enhancement and improvement of the customer facilities and back of house facilities, at this existing public house/restaurant. It is therefore not considered that the application proposals would result in the introduction of a use that does not already exist at the site. Consequently, it is considered that there would be no net material impacts upon the amenities of neighbouring properties, over and above that which already exist at the site. For all of these reasons, the application proposals are therefore not considered to result in any genuine detriment to the existing amenities of the neighbouring properties and the local area in general and are therefore considered to be compliant with the aims and aspirations of the December 2024 Framework and Policies SP9, ETC3 and D1 of the Local Plan, as rehearsed above in Section 4.0 of this Support Statement.
- 5.13 The appropriate alteration, refurbishment and enhancement of the existing customer and staff accommodation and facilities at this existing public house/restaurant are necessary in order to help attract continued custom and facilitate the continuing economic health of this valued and important community hospitality and leisure facility within Royston town centre. The application proposals have appropriately enhanced and improved customer and staff accommodation and facilities and the customer offer at this site and were an essential part of the applicant's investment into this public house/restaurant and a key part of the applicant's strategy to attract custom to ensure the continued economic viability of this existing commercial social and leisure facility.
- 5.14 The existing public house/restaurant facility is an important community hospitality and leisure facility within Royston town centre. It provides an established, valued and accessible community hospitality and leisure facility, which enhances the opportunities for social interaction (as advanced by paragraphs 96 and 98 of the December 2024 Framework) and directly helps to meet the economic and social needs of the local community. The application proposals would therefore support the wider social, leisure and community aims and aspirations of the December 2024

Framework, together with the wider aspirations of Policies SP4, SP10 and ETC3 of the Local Plan, as rehearsed above in Section 4.0.

- 5.15 In order to remain economically viable, commercial hospitality and leisure uses, such as public houses and restaurants, will need to continue to update and enhance their customer offer and the application proposals were required by the applicant as part of their investment into this public house/restaurant facility, to ensure its continued economic viability, that provides direct and indirect employment and generates local economic activity. The application proposals help facilitate the continuing operation of this public house/restaurant facility, for its established and beneficial hospitality and leisure use, which continues to add to and enhance the economic vitality and viability of Royston town centre.
- 5.16 During the continuing difficult economic climate, post pandemic and during the current cost of living crisis for its customers and staff, the application site has suffered from lost revenue and the application proposals were designed as a key element of the applicant's investment into improving customer and staff facilities at these premises, to attempt to attract more customers to the site and enhance its economic well-being. It was important that the site enhanced, updated and improved upon its customer offer and attraction, otherwise the site could have continued to suffer serious detrimental effects on the ability to attract customers, thereby subsequently further affecting sales and viability to the detriment of the continued economic vitality of the public house/restaurant; which ultimately led to the previous operators selling-up. Both full and part-time staff are employed at these premises and are reliant on it for their income. Any drop in sales would affect the ability of this property to maintain current staff levels. The LPA should therefore use its best efforts to support the recovery of their own hospitality and leisure sector in this regard.
- 5.17 The application proposals form an essential part of the applicant's strategy to attract custom to ensure the continued economic viability of this existing commercial social and leisure facility. The existing public house/restaurant facility is an important local community hospitality and leisure facility within Royston town centre. In order to remain economically viable, commercial hospitality and leisure uses, such as this, will need to continue to update and enhance their customer offer and the application proposals were required by the applicant to ensure the continued economic viability of this existing commercial hospitality and leisure facility that provides direct and indirect employment and generates local economic activity. The application proposals therefore help facilitate the continuing beneficial and sympathetic use of this listed building, which continues to add to and enhance the economic vitality and viability of Royston town centre.
- 5.18 Taking all of the above into account, it is therefore considered that the application proposals accord with the requirements and wider aims and aspirations of the December 2024 Framework and comply with the requirements of Policies SP9, SP13, D1 and HE1 of the Local Plan. Furthermore, the application proposals support the wider aspirations of Policies SP4, SP10 and ETC3 of the Local Plan. The application proposals are therefore considered to constitute sustainable

development, for which there is a presumption in favour. In accordance with the December 2024 Framework's presumption in favour of sustainable development, as reiterated by Policy SP1 of the Local Plan, the application proposals should be approved without delay

6.0 Summary

- 6.1 The implications of the application proposals upon historic fabric and the remaining historic planform of the host building are very modest and considered to be appropriate and justified. In the main, the internal and external alterations have generally avoided works to the historic parts of this listed building and instead mainly concern works affecting more recent extensions and fabric.
- 6.2 The internal and external alterations to the host building itself are modest and appropriate in nature and detail. Their implications for the historic fabric and the remaining historic planform are minimal and considered to be acceptable.
- 6.3 The retention of a cold room extension is perhaps the most significant element of the application works, and this is linked to the host building via an existing lean-to, timber-framed extension, such that it avoids historic fabric. Similarly, the associated new exit necessitated by the placement of the cold room extension, affects the same lean-to, timber-framed extension, again avoiding direct impact upon historic fabric. Associated with these elements of the application proposals, all located within the south-eastern sector of the application site, the previously existing timber access gates were replaced with a higher timber fence with an inset gate. The replacement fence and gate effectively screen the cold room extension from the public realm, thereby reducing any direct visual implications for the character and appearance of this part of the Royston Conservation Area. Similarly, the implications of the cold room extension upon the setting of the grade I listed No. 18 Melbourn Street is mitigated by the screening effects of the replacement higher timber fence and inset gate.
- 6.4 The remaining external elements of the application proposals are considered to be modest and minor in nature. The new estate fencing gate is comparable and sympathetic to the existing estate fencing on site. The new hanging light pendant to the lobby is modest and appropriate in siting, design and detail. The festoon lighting supported on timber posts are located within an external customer area and provide modest and appropriate visual interest for this part of the site. All of these works are also easily removed from the application site when no longer required and thereby comply with conservation best practice of reversibility.
- 6.5 The internal alterations are also considered to be modest and appropriate in nature. The most significant of these comprise: the retention of infills of previously formed apertures to the pizza kitchen area, finished with plasterboard and skimmed to match the adjacent wall; the retention of an infill to kitchen area with part open stud wall and door; the retention of an infill to bar area to create a new cleaners' store; and the retention of a studwork wall subdivision to a second-floor room to create a secondary office space and store. The works within the pizza kitchen area restored the historic wall depth within this room through the removal of these previously formed

apertures. The retention of an infill to kitchen area with part open stud wall and door affects a more modern, timber studwork wall and thereby avoids historic fabric. The retention of an infill to bar area to create a new cleaners' store has not resulted in any significant intervention to historic fabric and is modest in nature. Finally, the retention of a studwork wall subdivision to a second-floor room to create a secondary office space and store only affected more modern studwork walling and therefore avoided historic fabric.

- 6.6 The other internal alterations are all considered to be modest and appropriate in nature. These comprise: the retention of the replacement of elements of the existing bar servery, including new timber tops and upper backfitting; the retention of new doors off existing glazed internal lobby to secure building post trading; the retention of replacement vanity units in all toilet areas and redecoration of all painted surfaces; the retention of a new retractable glazed screen; the retention of the replacement of the LVT ceramic tiling and laminate flooring to ground floor areas with engineered oak flooring; and the internal elements of the retention of a new exit from the existing lean-to timber extension. Historic fabric is not directly affected by these remaining internal alterations. All items can be easily removed when no longer required and thereby comply with conservation best practice of reversibility.
- 6.7 The application proposals ensure the continued maintenance and upkeep of this listed building for its appropriate and beneficial continued use as a public house/restaurant; a use which is also publicly accessible and an appropriate town centre use for this part of Royston. There are therefore significant public benefits arising from these proposals.
- 6.8 The appropriate alteration, refurbishment and enhancement of the existing customer and staff accommodation and facilities at this existing public house/restaurant are necessary in order to help attract continued custom and facilitate the continuing economic health of this valued and important community hospitality and leisure facility within Royston town centre. The application proposals have appropriately enhanced and improved customer and staff accommodation and facilities and the customer offer at this site and were an essential part of the applicant's investment into this public house/restaurant and a key part of the applicant's strategy to attract custom to ensure the continued economic viability of this existing commercial social and leisure facility.
- 6.9 The existing public house/restaurant facility is an important community hospitality and leisure facility within Royston town centre. It provides an established, valued and accessible community hospitality and leisure facility, which enhances the opportunities for social interaction.
- 6.10 During the continuing difficult economic climate, post pandemic and during the current cost of living crisis for its customers and staff, the application site has suffered from lost revenue and the application proposals were designed as a key element of the applicant's investment into improving customer and staff facilities at these premises, to attempt to attract more customers to the site and enhance its economic well-being. It was important that the site enhanced, updated and improved

upon its customer offer and attraction, otherwise the site could have continued to suffer serious detrimental effects on the ability to attract customers, thereby subsequently further affecting sales and viability to the detriment of the continued economic vitality of the public house/restaurant; which ultimately led to the previous operators selling-up. The LPA should therefore use its best efforts to support the recovery of their own hospitality and leisure sector in this regard.

- 6.11 The site is already in use as a public house/restaurant, with associated external customer facilities, and the application proposals do not involve any change of use nor intensification of the existing use of these premises and site. The proposed works are both modest in scale and sympathetic in nature to the existing, historic and established public house/restaurant use and would result in no net material implications for the amenities of neighbouring occupiers nor the wider local area.
- 6.12 Taking all of the above into account, it is therefore considered that the application proposals accord with the requirements and wider aims and aspirations of the December 2024 Framework and comply with the requirements of Policies SP9, SP13, D1 and HE1 of the Local Plan. Furthermore, the application proposals support the wider aspirations of Policies SP4, SP10 and ETC3 of the Local Plan. The application proposals are therefore considered to constitute sustainable development, for which there is a presumption in favour. In accordance with the December 2024 Framework's presumption in favour of sustainable development, as reiterated by Policy SP1 of the Local Plan, the application proposals should be approved without delay.

7.0 Design and Access Statement

7.1 The application proposals comprise the proposed retention of internal and external alterations at The Banyers Hotel, 16 Melbourn Street, Royston, SG8 7BZ. The application proposals are detailed in the accompanying plans and documents.

7.2 A summary of proposed external works is as follows:

1. The retention of a cold room extension.
2. The retention of replacement higher timber fence with an inset gate.
3. The retention of a new estate fencing gate.
4. The retention of festoon lighting supported on timber posts.
5. The retention of a new hanging light pendant to lobby; and
6. The retention of a new exit from existing timber extension.

7.3 A summary of the proposed internal alterations is as follows:

1. The retention of infills of previously formed apertures to the pizza kitchen area, finished with plasterboard and skimmed to match the adjacent wall.
2. The retention of an infill to kitchen area with part open stud wall and door.
3. The retention of an infill to bar area to create a new cleaners' store.
4. The retention of the replacement of elements of the existing bar servery, including new timber tops and upper backfitting.
5. The retention of new doors off existing glazed internal lobby to secure building post trading.
6. The retention of replacement vanity units in all toilet areas and redecoration of all painted surfaces.
7. The retention of a new retractable glazed screen.
8. The retention of the replacement of the LVT ceramic tiling and laminate flooring to ground floor areas and replacement with engineered oak flooring.
9. The retention of a new exit from the existing lean-to timber extension.
10. The retention of a studwork wall subdivision to a second-floor room to create a secondary office space and store.

7.4 The application works were commenced on site on 05/01/2026 and were completed on 09/03/2026. These planning and listed building consent applications are therefore made retrospectively.

7.5 The Town & Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment) Order 2013 requires a Design & Access Statement for these works. Government advice is clear that the level of detail in a Design and Access Statement should be proportionate to the complexity of the application but should not be long.

Amount

7.6 The proposals comprise a scheme involving the retention of internal and external alterations at an existing public house/restaurant, in order to enhance, improve and refurbish the existing customer and staff facilities. The proposals are summarised in paragraphs 7.2 and 7.3 above and are fully detailed in the accompanying plans and documents.

Layout

7.7 The existing layout of parts of the existing building has been modestly revised as a consequence of the application proposals. The arrangement of the internal space is not materially changed within the host building as a consequence of these proposals. The proposed modest layout revisions to the host building are considered to rationalise, improve and enhance the existing layout, circulation and use of the accommodation at this site. Overall, these modest revisions to the proposed layout of the building have rationalised and improved the existing layout of the public house/restaurant building, whilst respecting and retaining the remaining historic layout of this listed building.

Scale

7.8 The overall scale of the host building has been generally retained through the application proposals, with the only modest addition being the cold room extension. All of the application proposals are contained within the existing curtilage of the public house/restaurant, and no material change of use of land is involved. The overall scale of the host building and site has remained otherwise unchanged.

Landscaping

7.9 The existing hard and soft landscaping at the site has been generally retained by the application proposals.

Appearance

7.10 The external appearance and setting of the host building is respected by the proposed alterations and associated works. The design, form and materials of the proposed alterations and associated works are considered to be sympathetic and appropriate to those of the host building

and its setting, together with the settings of the neighbouring heritage assets and the character and appearance of the wider conservation area. Furthermore, the overall scale and massing of the proposed alterations and works are considered to be subordinate to the scale and massing of the host building and its site. The application proposals have a sympathetic impact upon the character, appearance and setting of the host building and the site. The application proposals are not considered to give rise to any material, detrimental changes to the appearance and setting of the host building, the site in general, the setting of neighbouring heritage assets, the character and appearance of this part of the Royston Conservation Area, nor the wider street scene.

Use

- 7.11 The use of the building and its site remains unaltered as a public house/restaurant. The application proposals enhance and improve facilities provided at this site, in order to help facilitate the on-going economic viability of this existing beneficial and established use. The existing public house/restaurant use of this site comprises a beneficial and appropriate community hospitality and leisure use, which allows public access into this listed building and ensures the continued maintenance and upkeep of this listed building.

Access

- 7.12 Access arrangements into and around the building have not be generally altered as a result of the application proposals. The existing customer and staff facilities and accommodation has been enhanced and improved.

