

Heritage Statement: 8-9 Bridge Street

Site address:

8-9 Bridget Street, Hitchin, Herts, SG5 2DE

Heritage Category:

Listed Building

Grade II

List Entry Number: 1102189

Date first listed: 17-Jun-1974

List Entry Name: 8, 9 AND 9A, BRIDGE STREET

Statutory Address 1: 8, 9 AND 9A, BRIDGE STREET

National Grid Reference: TL 18469 28860

Nature of the Heritage assets:

C16, restored, Timber frame, plaster infilling, steeply pitched tiled roof with central cross gable, 2 back gabled, 2 storeys and attics, 2 lattice casement box dormers. C19 shop windows in reeded frames. 2 gables, to south front and west side, have elaborately carved bargeboards dated 1935. Carved corbels to south west corner recessed porch.



Significance of the Heritage assets:

This building sits within the Hitchin Conservation area and is typical of the area.

The special interest that justifies designation of the Hitchin Conservation Area derives from a number of architectural, historic and environmental factors, including:

- Large market town with Saxon origins;
- Hitchin is one of the oldest continually inhabited towns in the county and arguably the historic centre of north Hertfordshire;
- One of only five towns in Hertfordshire identified as being of national importance by the Council for British Archaeology;

- The town's long history as an agricultural, market and service centre for the region, as well as some more limited industrial heritage;
- The undulating topography and the location on the modestly sized River Hiz provides the townscape with interest and definition;
- The designated conservation area encompasses the historic town centre as well as public or private parkland and high quality residential suburbs;
- The variety of closed and more open spaces, lined with mainly listed buildings of a relatively modest scale, provides the town centre with a particularly appealing character;
- The survival of medieval burgage plots to the western side of High Street, and to both sides of Bancroft, which in places are reflected by the creation of alley ways, carriage entrances and courts;
- The current pattern of roads and footpaths preserves a network of rights of way over the former medieval open fields that has significantly influenced the development of the town's layout;
- The very high quality of the many historic buildings, the most important of which are The Priory, listed grade I (a former Carmelite priory) and the medieval church of St Mary's, also listed grade I;
- A few purpose-built larger commercial buildings, such as the Corn Exchange in the Market Place;
- The use of timber framing or red brick for many of the historic buildings adds variety and visual interest;
- Priory Park, Windmill Hill and Bancroft Recreation Ground are all close to the town centre and are important open green spaces;
- The late 19th century residential suburb based on The Avenue lies to the east of the town centre, close to the railway station, and provides a number of substantial family houses, built mainly of the local red brick;
- The construction of a town centre Relief Road in 1981 removed through traffic, which once ran along Tilehouse Street;
- From 1993 onwards, the town centre has been partially pedestrianised;
- The high quality environment, and the provision of a wide range of both local and national shops within Hitchin, as well as the regular street markets, makes the town popular with shoppers and visitors.

This building specifically has additional features in the carved bargebells and corbels that are of particular interest.

The proposed works:

In line with the value of Hitchin Conservation area continuing to be a thriving high street and shopping area, these works seek to update the exterior of the building to make the current occupant visible to passers by. Careful thought has been given to the design to remain in keeping with the historic character of the building.

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.

Relevant planning history:

81/00435/1LB: 19 Jan 1981

Application for Listed Building Consent for the erection of a single storey rear extension following partial demolition at rear. – Consented

Impact on the asset:

The painting and sign will have minimal impact and will only take place over painting by the previous tenant. The vinyl signage and all security measures will be easily removable before the departure of the current tenant.

Preserving or enhancing the asset:

The proposed painting and signage is in keeping with the neighbours on Bridge Street. New paint will provide a much needed refresh and be undertaken in high-quality weatherproof paint to preserve the façade.