

CONSERVATION TEAM CONSULTATION APPLICATION RESPONSE

APPLICATION REF:	25/01124/FP & 25/01125/LBC
CASE OFFICER:	TR
APPLICATION SITE:	24A Bucklersbury, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG5 1BG
DESCRIPTION OF WORKS:	FP - Insertion of rooflight to the existing rear roof pitch facing the existing integrated courtyard, installation of bi-fold glazing doors and sliding doors to the courtyard. Replacement of the existing corrugated fibre-cement roof. LBC - Internal and external alterations.

RECOMMENDATION:

I raise **NO OBJECTION** on the basis that a potentially amended scheme may satisfy the provisions of Sections 16(2) (LBC), 66(1) (FP) and 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.

SHORT SUMMARY:

Impact on listed building's special character and its setting

I concur with the architect's view that courtyard intervention will have a moderate impact on the historic significance of the building, and this may even be a low impact considering its location. I also consider the roof repairs, replacing the existing modern fibre-cement roofing with a new corrugated metal roof, new roof light and internal alterations to have a low impact.

Impact on character and appearance of the conservation area –

Limited impact upon character and appearance.

Harm, preserve or enhance.

The proposal would not harm the building's special character or harm the character or appearance of the Hitchin Conservation Area.

SITE CONTEXT:

No.24 Bucklersbury is grade II listed and is located in Hitchin Conservation Area (HCA). The building and area are Designated Heritage Assets for the purpose of applying the aims of Section 16 the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The list entry can be found at the following link:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1102197?section=official-list-entry>

DETAILED ANALYSIS AND CONSIDERATIONS:

The key heritage issues are to consider the impact of the proposal upon:

- The special character of the listed building and
- The character and appearance of the Hitchin Conservation Area.

At 5.2 of the submitted Design and Access Statement (DAS) it states that the proposals broadly comprise the following:

External alterations:

- Alteration of the existing courtyard, including the removal of the existing wall and existing French doors facing the courtyard, to be replaced with new glazed bi-fold and sliding doors and new column to support existing beam.
- New landscaping for the courtyard
- Installation of a new rooflight to the existing single-storey section at the rear of the building. (Not visible from the public)
- Replacement of existing fibre cement roofing to corrugated metal roof and future installation of solar panels to the rear section of roof.

Internal alterations:

- Relocated and new fitting for WC and boiler
- Removal of the existing internal wall to open the space for new sitting area and kitchen space.
- New fitting/bookshelf alongside of the hallway.

The applicant's architect has articulated the impact, significance, reversibility, mitigation, and compensation of each element of the scheme and which is copied below:

Alteration to courtyard and new landscape at courtyard

The removal of an existing external wall (render finish) and timber French doors facing the courtyard is to be replaced with new glazed bi-fold and sliding door systems. A new structural column and beams will be introduced to support the existing valley beam. In the courtyard, the floor finish will also be replaced with new stone pavings or similar, and rainwater goods will be upgraded.

Impact: *The intervention is considered to have a moderate impact on the historic significance of the building. The courtyard is not visible from any public space, which limits the visual impact of the proposed changes. The original party wall and the external wall of the main part of the building are retained in their existing condition, ensuring that the core historic fabric remains unaffected.*

Significance: *Moderate*

Reversibility: *Visually reversible if required to reinstate a similar finish to the original rendered wall.*

Mitigation: *Although the courtyard is not original, appropriate mitigation measures will be implemented to minimize any potential impact on the heritage asset.*

Compensation: *The installation of the new glazing system will improve thermal insulation and increase natural light within the living spaces, enhancing the comfort and energy efficiency of the building while preserving its historic aesthetic.*

Forming a new rooflight and the local repair of the existing roof (if necessary)

The proposal involves the formation of a new rooflight on the existing slate roof at the rear, which faces the courtyard. This modification will also be invisible from any public space.

Impact: *This will require the trimming of a number of rafters and the insertion of new timber rafters. The existing slates where the rooflight is proposed, and felt roof membrane would be stripped. All timbers to the other pitch facing to courtyard and the existing ridge and valley beam would be retained. The form of the existing rear pitch would not be altered as a result of the proposals.*

Significance: *Moderate*

Reversibility: *Limited as the alterations will be permanent, the rooflight could be removed and the integrity of the front roof pitch and ridge retained.*

Mitigation: The existing roof timbers whilst original do not carry a high level of significance and there is evidence of last century additions, alterations and repairs.

Compensation: The new roof alterations are not visible from the public space but will be visible from the adjacent property. The characteristic of the building from the public will be retained.

Replacement of existing roof

The proposal involves replacing the existing modern fibre-cement roofing with a new corrugated metal roof, finished in RAL 6007, to match the colour of the new glazing.

Impact: This will involve the removal of the existing modern roofing fabric; however, most of the roofing structure and rafters will remain as existing unless repairs are considered necessary.

Significance: Low

Reversibility: Limited as the roof alteration is partially permanent; however, it is reversible to put back a similar material and visual.

Mitigation: The existing fibre-cement roofing is in modern status, and as there is evidence that the rear part of this building was configured and modified in the last century, this roof does not harm the heritage context.

Compensation: The new corrugated metal roof can be seen in the neighbouring context, and this material is versatile within the heritage buildings. The characteristics of the building will remain within the context.

Internal alterations

The proposal includes the removal of a non-original internal wall located between the hall/library and kitchen area within the single-storey rear portion. This alteration aims to improve internal circulation and spatial efficiency. The principal structural roof elements, including the existing beam and ridge beam, will be retained, ensuring the original form of the slate roof remains unaffected. Hence, a new internal partition will be introduced to accommodate a relocated WC and cupboard for boiler space and integrated library shelving.

Impact: The works are considered to have minimal impact on the historical significance of the building, as they involve alterations to a modern section and preserve key historic fabric and structural elements.

Significance: Moderate

Reversibility: Limited as the alteration is permanent.

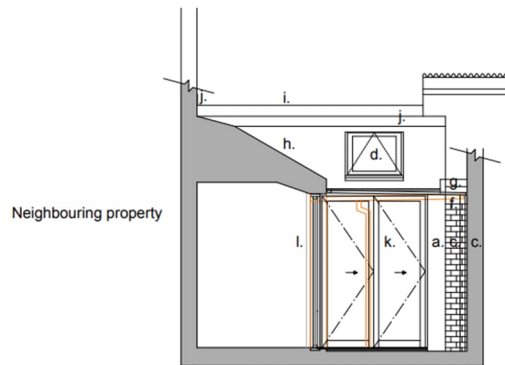
Mitigation: The proposed internal alterations are limited to the modern parts of the later addition to the original building and do not involve the removal of the existing rear wall fabric. As this part was added in the last century, the proposed changes will maintain the legibility of the original design and reinstate its original form. The current status of the slate roof will also be preserved in its original condition.

Compensation: The internal alterations will enhance spatial circulation to suit contemporary living without compromising the building's historic character. The proposal also supports upgrading energy performance, contributing to long-term energy efficiency while maintaining architectural integrity.

I do not disagree with any of the above.

Having said that, whilst noting that there are two standard Velux type (as opposed to conservation-type) roof lights on the rear elevation it is disappointing that a similar roof

light type is proposed to the inner courtyard (see below). In my opinion, there are insufficient grounds to go back to the applicant requesting better quality conservation roof lights.



Proposed Section A

HERITAGE POLICY ASSESSMENT:

Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990:

Sections 16(2) – LBC only, 66(1) – FP only and 72(1) – LBC and FPH

North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031:

Policy HE1

NPPF (December 2024):

The following paragraphs are relevant:

- **135 c)** (sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment),
- **207** (local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting)
- **210** (desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness),
- **212** (great weight should be given to the asset's conservation),
- **213** (clear and convincing justification), and
- **215** (harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use).

CONCLUSION:

The areas affected by the proposal possess low or moderate significance (see 2.6 of DAS). This proposal is clearly set out and well-articulated and there is no need to seek amendments and I do not see the need in heritage terms to impose any conditions other than the standard 3-year condition.

OFFICER: Mark Simmons

DATE: 26/06/2025