

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...Saffron Loasby.....

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
26/01098/LBC	Internal alterations to facilitate the change of use from Restaurant Class E(b) to office Class E(c)	23A Market Place Hitchin Hertfordshire SG5 1DT

Submitted Plan Nos

Location Plan 283-001 283-010 283-020

1.0 Policies

2.0 **Site History**

2.1 No previous planning or Listed Building history.

26/01097/FP – Change of Use from Restaurant Class E(b) to Office Class E(c) – Pending consideration

3.0 **Policies**

3.1 Section 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment of the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021). Relevant paragraph numbers at Section 16 are as follows: 135 c), 207, 210, 212, 213 and 215.

3.2 Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990: Sections 16(2), 66(1) & 72(1)

3.3 Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031.

4.0 **Representations**

4.1 **Site notice** – erected 22/05/2026

4.2 **Press Advert** – published 21/05/2026

4.3 **Heritage Officer:** Concurs with the Heritage Benefits set out in the HS/DAS/AHIA and agrees that the proposed internal alterations target moderate/low-sensitivity fabric, preserves high-significance elements and will support a sustainable, sympathetic use. Officers are satisfied that the proposed works would not occasion harm, therefore, this proposal is unobjectionable and other than the standard 3yr condition no other conditions are offered.

5.0 **Planning Considerations**

5.1 **Site and Surroundings**

5.1.1 The site is located on the South side of Hitchin's historic Market Square; the street is occupied predominantly by commercial premises at street level and a mixture of office accommodation and other uses at first floor. Nos.22 and 23 Market Place are grade II listed and located in the Hitchin Conservation Area. Both the building and the area are Designated Heritage Assets for the purpose of applying the aims of Section of the NPPF and Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031. The proposed works are entirely internal and therefore there is no impact on the conservation area.

5.1.2 The list entry is copied below.

1. 5255 MARKET PLACE (South Side) Nos 22 & 23 TL 1829 SW 1/63 13.4.51. II GV

2. Late t/18 or early C19 stucco front to earlier structure, Steeply pitched roof with M shaped gable to front, tiles. 3 storeys, wide moulded eaves cornice. Shop windows including canted bay in C19 modern frames. 3 sash windows with glazing bars in

reveals. Glazing bars to shop bay windows.

All listed buildings in Market Place form a group.

Listing NGR: TL1839029021

5.2 **Proposal**

5.2.1 The application proposal is described as:

Internal alterations to facilitate the change of use from Restaurant Class E(b) to office Class E(c)

5.3 **Key Issues**

5.3.1 The main issue is to consider the impact of the works on the significance of the listed building.

5.3.2 As stated in the submitted Heritage Statement/ DAS/ AHIA (April 2026), the works are described as '*Change of use from Restaurant Class E(b) to office Class E(c), Internal partitions, linings repairs, services, decoration, and minor alterations to facilitate this further to application reference 26/00859/LBC*'. The HS/DAS/AHIA goes on to say:

Both properties are designated listed buildings located within the historic core of Hitchin, contributing positively to the character and appearance of the Market Place and the wider conservation area. The proposals facilitate occupation by a single tenant, supporting viable use and enabling a programme of repair and enhancement (subject to separate Listed Building Consent).

5.3.3 At 2.1 of the HS/DAS/AHIA it describes the proposed works as:

- ☐ Change of use from restaurant to office.
- ☐ Formation of New stud partitions to reinstate walls removed by previous restaurant fit out.
- ☐ New plasterboard wall linings set on battens to reinstate existing damaged plasterboard wall linings.
- ☐ New ceiling linings to replace asbestos (already removed).
- ☐ New timber infills set between existing timber studs.
- ☐ New internal services, wiring and removable radiators generally.
- ☐ Two reversible timber steps to accommodate a level change in No. 23.
- ☐ Internal decoration generally.
- ☐ **New sliding door to the stud partition area.**
- ☐ Existing plasterboard linings removed from existing timber beams to be exposed and repaired.
- ☐ Carpet laying over existing flooring.

Impact on the listed building

- 5.3.4 The new partitions have a negligible impact upon plan form and in fact reinstate fragments of wall lost as part of the previous restaurant fit-out at first floor level. Impact is low and arguably a heritage gain in terms of re-instatement.
- 5.3.5 The infill of plaster panels to the existing areas of exposed studwork are seen as an honest and evidential approach to creating the necessary fire and acoustic separation where existing timber studs are exposed. These timber studs would have had plaster and lath coverings or potentially brick infills historically, retaining their presence but recessing reversible walls between ensures that these remain legible features.

Summary: Low/Neutral impact

Impact on the Historic Fabric

- 5.3.6 Limited to infill panels set between timbers. mechanical fixings to be carefully installed to existing fixing(sic) holes where possible with shallow wood screws to ensure these can be removed without damage. There is no loss of high-significance elements.
- 5.3.7 Existing timber framed elements to be coated in a matt clear fire-retardant coating. This is to enable the building to meet modern fire standards for structural integrity. The existing timbers have been varnished, and existing layers will need to be abraded prior to application.
- 5.3.8 New electrical services will be run between timber battens, and no new penetrations are proposed to historic linings or plaster and lath ceilings or walls. New wall linings will replace existing damaged plastered linings and will be set off existing historic fabric using timber battens to create service zones. Existing timber beams to the rear existing first floor kitchen area will be exposed creating a heritage gain.
- 5.3.9 A new sliding door will be incorporated to the existing stud partitions to the front office area. This is a modern intervention that deliberately avoids creating a new conventional door where one did not exist previously and retains the legibility and openness of this element.

Summary: Low/Moderate impact

5.4 Alternative Options

- 5.4.1 None

5.5 Pre-Commencement Conditions

- 5.5.1 None applicable.

5.6 Conclusion

- 5.6.1 It is considered that the proposal will not occasion harm to the listed building's special character or interest. The proposal, thereby, satisfies the provisions of Sections 16(2) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the aims

of Section 16 of the NPPF and the aims of Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031.

6.0 **Recommendation**

6.1 I recommend that listed building consent be **GRANTED**.

1. The work to which this consent relates shall be begun by not later than the expiration of the period of 3 years from the date of this notice.

Reason: To comply with the provisions of Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Signed  Anne McDonald	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Determining Officer Date: 15 July 2026	

