



Re: Units 3–5 Bucklersbury, Hitchin SG5 1BB

Project No.1255

Re: Heritage Statement – Units 3–5 Bucklersbury, Hitchin SG5 1BB

1. Introduction

This Heritage Statement supports an application for Listed Building Consent relating solely to Units 3–5 Bucklersbury, Hitchin SG5 1BB. It accompanies an application made following the owner's discovery that elements of previous works were not undertaken in accordance with the approved listed building consent and/or approved details. The Local Planning Authority has advised that an application should be submitted explaining the situation and setting out how the owner proposes to remedy matters. This statement uses earlier heritage evidence prepared for the wider 2–8 Bucklersbury site as background context, but is re-scoped and focused only on Units 3–5 and the works now proposed.

2. The heritage asset and significance relevant to Units 3–5

Units 3–5 form part of the wider historic building at 2–8 Bucklersbury, within Hitchin's historic core and Conservation Area. The significance relevant to this application is primarily carried by historic structural fabric and load paths, historic masonry and party walls, any surviving historic floor structures, and evidence of the building's evolution.

The highest sensitivity is attributed to elements where historic structural fabric survives and where interventions could alter structural behaviour or moisture and ventilation performance, particularly at basement and roof level.

3. Consent baseline: 21/01164/LBC and approved drawings

The consent baseline for assessing this application is Listed Building Consent 21/01164/LBC (Decision Notice dated 17 June 2021). The approved works included retention of ground floor construction at No.5, an overlay steel-and-joist solution at No.4, and replacement of joists at No.8, as amended by MNP drawings MU-S-4027 (P1) and MU-S-4028 (P1) and Cooley Architects drawings 936-ES-XX21/XX22/XX23 Rev B. Condition 2 of the consent requires through-ventilation to each of the three basement areas prior to re-occupation. This consent and its conditions form the benchmark against which the current as-built position and proposed remedial scheme are assessed.

4. What is being proposed now (Units 3–5)

This application seeks Listed Building Consent for a remedial and corrective scheme affecting Units 3–5. The structural assessment confirms that, notwithstanding unauthorised departures from the original structural proposals during the 2022 works, the building is generally performing satisfactorily and that a light-touch, targeted approach is appropriate. The proposed works therefore focus on localised strengthening, repair and reinstatement, prioritising retention of historic fabric, reversibility and alignment with the intent of the approved consent.

5. Heritage impact assessment (Units 3–5)

The assessment of the proposed works is informed by the final Structural Statement for Remedial Works prepared by Mason Navarro Pledge (Ref. 225194-MNP-XX-XX-RP-S-0001, Rev P03, February 2026). The report reviews the existing as-built condition, confirms that the building is generally performing satisfactorily, and identifies a proportionate, conservation-led remedial approach to regularise earlier unauthorised departures from the approved consent.

The proposed works have been developed to follow the principles of minimum intervention, repair rather than replacement, reversibility where practicable, and retention of historic fabric, in accordance with the statutory duty to preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building.

5.1 Ground floor and low-level structure (including basement interface)

Listed Building Consent 21/01164/LBC approved the retention of the ground floor construction at No.5 and an overlay steel-and-joist solution to the ground floor construction at No.4. Subsequent inspection has confirmed that some elements of the works undertaken by the previous developer were not carried out in full accordance with the approved drawings.

The proposed remedial works seek to remove and replace those non-compliant elements with the previously approved, reversible structural solutions, together with a limited number of additional localised repairs identified in the structural report. This approach realigns the construction with the intent of the approved consent and avoids unnecessary loss of historic fabric.

The works are largely concealed within the existing floor build-up and will not alter the historic plan form or appearance of the listed building. As such, the impact on heritage significance is considered to be neutral.

5.2 Basement ventilation (Condition 2 of 21/01164/LBC)

Condition 2 of Listed Building Consent 21/01164/LBC requires the provision of through-ventilation to each of the basement areas prior to re-occupation of the ground floor units. This requirement was not implemented during earlier works undertaken by the previous developer.

The current application therefore includes a detailed basement ventilation proposal prepared by the project Mechanical Engineer. The submitted drawings demonstrate a through-ventilation strategy comprising reinstated air inlets via existing air brick openings to the Bucklersbury façade, reinstated internal baseboard air transfer ducts with high-level openings to the basement, and mechanical extract at high level.

Fresh air is drawn into the basement via the reinstated air bricks and baseboard ducts, with extract achieved through a network of internal ductwork terminating at a high-level exhaust grille within an open ground floor lobby. Mechanical extract is provided via an in-line low-energy TD160/100 ECOWATT fan operating at



approximately 20 litres per second, designed for continuous low-level operation. The fan and associated ductwork are housed within an accessible fire-rated enclosure with run and failure indication.

The proposal makes use of existing historic openings, avoids new penetrations to sensitive elevations, and is fully reversible. The provision of controlled ventilation improves environmental conditions within the basement and reduces the risk of moisture-related fabric decay. The works therefore represent a heritage benefit and fully deliver the intent of Condition 2 of the original consent.

5.3 Roof and upper-level structure (including loft space)

The roof structure serving Units 3–5 comprises medieval timber elements with later 1930s steelwork and subsequent interventions. The final structural inspection confirms that, notwithstanding unauthorised departures from the originally approved structural proposals during earlier works, the roof and supporting structure are generally performing satisfactorily, with no evidence of significant distress or overstress.

The structural report records that an historic internal wall within the loft space had already been removed prior to the current ownership. The absence of this wall informs the present structural behaviour of the roof and underpins the need for targeted strengthening rather than reinstatement.

The proposed works are limited to localised strengthening and checking of selected steel connections, ceiling joists and 'Y'-shaped purlin supports, together with further inspection and potential localised repair to specific elements where safe access is available. These inspections are precautionary in nature and intended to confirm detailing rather than to address identified failure.

The majority of existing remedial works are to be retained. This light-touch approach minimises intervention into historic fabric and results in no harm to the significance of the listed building.

5.4 Rear wall (historic timber stud wall)

The rear wall includes historic timber stud construction of high heritage significance. Inspection has identified areas of localised decay, missing studs and inappropriate temporary infill introduced during earlier works.

The proposed remedial works comprise traditional carpentry repairs, including scarfed oak repairs and half-lap joints, to reinstate missing or decayed elements and to repair the sole plate where required. These repairs will be carried out on a like-for-like basis using appropriate materials and techniques.

This repair-led approach prioritises the retention of original fabric, avoids unnecessary replacement, and represents a clear heritage benefit, securing the long-term conservation of the historic wall.



5.5 White box completion (Units 3–5)

This application also seeks Listed Building Consent for the completion of Units 3–5 to a white box condition, in order to provide a neutral, serviced shell suitable for future occupation following completion of the approved remedial and ventilation works.

The white box scope is limited to basic enabling works only, including making good of floors, walls and ceilings, provision of neutral service terminations, and removal of redundant or temporary elements associated with previous works. No internal subdivision, tenant-specific fit-out, fixed equipment or signage is proposed as part of this application.

As part of the white box completion, a reversible floor finish is proposed to the ground floor areas. The finish will comprise engineered timber flooring laid as a floating system on an acoustic underlay, installed over the approved structural floor build-up. The floor finish will be sacrificial and fully reversible, will not require mechanical fixing into historic fabric, and can be removed in the future without harm to the listed building.

The provision of a neutral floor finish allows the unit to be brought into immediate use without the need for a future tenant to apply for further listed building consent. The white box works are largely confined to areas of lower heritage sensitivity and result in no harm to the significance of the heritage asset.

6. Mitigation and recommended submission/conditions

The following measures are recommended to ensure the works preserve the building's special interest: where appropriate, details by condition, including method statements, schedules and photographic recording, before, during and after the works.

7. Conclusion

This Heritage Statement confirms the consent baseline established by 21/01164/LBC and assesses the Units 3–5 remedial proposal against that benchmark, informed by the final Structural Statement for Remedial Works prepared by Mason Navarro Pledge (Rev P03). With a minimum-intervention approach and controlled detailing, the proposals preserve the listed building's special architectural and historic interest while resolving non-compliance and enabling viable re-use.

Yours faithfully,

Egle Cozzo

Studio EC