

Oswick Ltd (Head Office)
5/7 Head Street, Halstead
Essex, CO9 2AT



Tel: 01787 477559
Email: info@oswicks.co.uk
Web: www.oswicks.co.uk

**Natwest Hitchin
12 High Street
Hitchin
Hertfordshire
SG5 1BH**

Design & Access Statement

April 2026



Our Reference: 26-035-BS-DAS



CONTENTS

1. Introduction	3
2. Land Use	4
3. Development Amount	4
4. Site Layout	5
5. Development Scale Relationship	6
6. Landscaping	6
7. Design Rationale	6
8. Professional Involvement	7
9. Planning Policies Assessment	8
10. Site Access	8
11. Conclusion	8
12. Bibliography	9
13. Appendix I – Photographic Schedule	10

The copyright of this document is vested with Oswick Ltd and may not be reproduced in part or whole without express written permission. No beneficial rights to its content or the usage thereof shall accrue to the client until full payment has been received. The report and the contents thereof are subject to Oswick Ltd standard terms and conditions.

The document and the information contained herein are for the exclusive use of the client and Oswicks Architectural Services accepts no responsibility for any consequences arising from unauthorised use by any other person(s).

1. Introduction

The following Design and Access Statement has been prepared to accompany the full planning application for the proposed works at Natwest Hitchin, 12 High Street, Hitchin, SG5 1BH. It has also been prepared with reference to the following documentation:

- 25-035-BS-RS – Photographic Condition Report
- Drawing number: 26-035-BS-01: Existing & Proposed Site Plans
- Drawing number: 26-035-BS-02: Existing & Proposed Floor Plans
- Drawing number: 26-035-BS-03: Existing & Proposed Elevations
- Drawing number: 26-035-BS-04: Existing & Proposed Roof Plan

An existing photographic schedule is included in Appendix I of this document.

This statement has been prepared to explain the design rationale behind the proposed works and is intended to demonstrate the applicant's commitment to design and accessibility.

Good quality design is an integral part of sustainable development. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) recognises that design quality matters and that planning should drive up standards across all forms of development. Achieving good design is about creating places, buildings, or spaces that work well for everyone, look good, last well and will adapt to the needs of future generations.

The 'access' component refers to both interior design and management issues to demonstrate compliance with the design principles of the Access Design Guide SPD and how the applicant intends to discharge their duties under the Equality Act 2010, including:

- Approaches to and around the site, including transport links
- Car-parking, setting down points, location of dropped kerbs (if required)
- All entrances, including visibility
- General horizontal/vertical circulation and layout arrangements

Summary of proposals

The building is situated on a corner plot at the junction between Brand Street and the High Street within the town centre of Hitchin in Hertfordshire, surrounded by a number of commercial and listed buildings of mixed styles and heights.

The building is principally arranged over two storeys and extended to the rear. Retail banking is provided at ground floor level, surmounted by office/ storage accommodation above.

The Proposed works can be summarised as follows:

- A. Full refurbishment of main roof including pitched and central crown portions.
- B. Full refurbishment of flat roofs.
- C. Localised repairs to pitched roof projection.
- D. Repair and decoration of cast iron rainwater goods to front elevations.
- E. Replacement of rainwater goods to rear elevations.
- F. Repair and decoration of louvre screen and door leading to Plant Room.
- G. Replacement of defective roof-lights and roof window.

- H. Repair defective edge protection to rear flat roof.
- I. Brickwork repairs and re-pointing to chimneystack.
- J. Repair and decoration of high-level section of render to party wall.
- K. Monitor internal cracking at first floor level.
- L. Refurbishment of pavement lights.
- M. Damp proofing works at basement level.
- N. Cost option to repair and decorate the windows to upper floor on front facing elevations.
- O. Internal making good and decoration.

The works are limited solely to repair and refurbish and aim to maintain the aesthetic character of the original building.

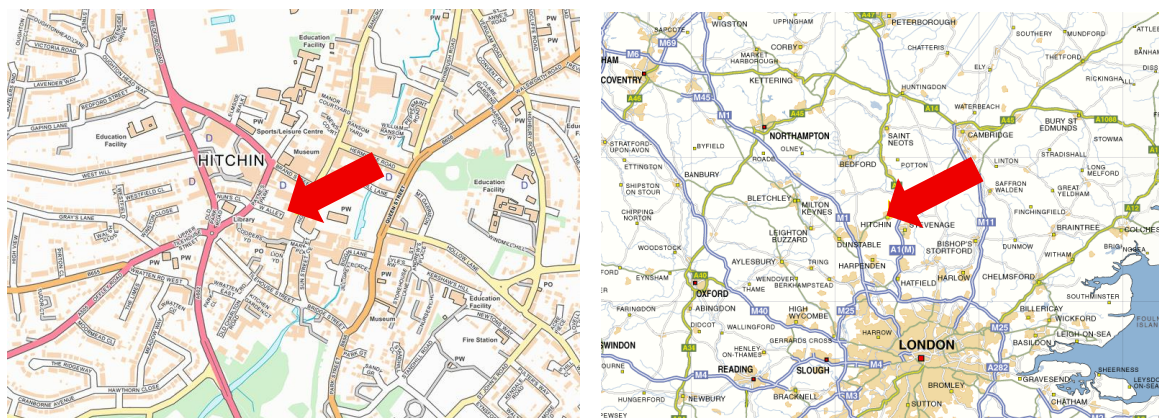
The existing building footprint will not be altered as a result of this proposal.

The building is located in a Conservation Area as designated under the Planning (Listed Buildings/ Conservation Areas) Act 1990, accordingly Planning permission would be required for any material alterations.

2. Land Use

The building is a retail banking branch attached to adjoining properties, adjacent to the west and south facing elevations. It is principally arranged over two storeys with additional accommodation located within the main roof space and at basement level.

The building is located in a Conservation Area as designated under the Planning (Listed Buildings/ Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The proposals do not involve an application for change of use and the existing use is to be maintained.



Figures 1 & 2: Site location plans – Not to scale

3. Development Amount

The application relates to repairs and refurbishment of elements on the building that are dilapidated and in need of work. A condition survey has been submitted within this application with images and recommended repair details.

The natural slate covering to the main pitched roof is exhibiting a number of defects, including missing and damaged slates, poorly dressed and missing leadwork, together with undulation to the timber frame. Discolouration was noted within the main roof-space, raising concerns regarding the risk of rot infestation and it is recommended the roof be fully refurbished on this basis.

The majority of the flat roofs are weathered in asphalt that was visibly rucking and blistered, with perforations result in water ingress. Full refurbishment is recommended with the installation of a built-up elastomeric felt waterproofing system, ensuring adequate water proofing is achieved while increasing thermal performance.

No significant structural alterations are to be undertaken. There is no proposal for any extension, or adaptation within this application.

4. Site Layout

The property occupies a corner plot at the junction between Brand Street and the High Street within the centre of Hitchin in Hertfordshire. It is surrounded by similar commercial premises including retail outlets, cafeterias, restaurants and office space. St Mary's Church lies within approximately a quarter mile to the east, accessed via Bancroft.

It is estimated the building was originally constructed circa 1900, with later additions to the rear. The main roof is dual pitched, timber framed and weathered in a natural slate covering, with a central crown weathered in asphalt. Lower flat roof portions are also timber framed and weathered in asphalt, housing a number of rooflights which are redundant and have been over boarded.

External walls are of solid masonry construction formed from brickwork laid in English bond with stone fenestrations including banding, window surrounds and a pediment detail to the main entrance. Windows and doors are of solid timber manufacture fitted with single glazing.

The proposals do not include for any alterations to the existing site layout. The existing layout of the site is to be retained, with continuity in terms of use, location and access.



Figure 3: Aerial photograph – Not to scale

The proposals do not include for any alterations to the existing site layout. The existing layout of the site is to be retained, with continuity in terms of use, location and access.

5. Development Scale Relationship

There is no proposal within this application to change the scale, or massing of the site.

6. Landscaping

No proposed alteration of the landscaping is required, with the retention of the existing pedestrian and vehicular access routes.

7. Design Rationale

The proposal within this application is for the repair, refurbishment and the replacement of existing elements to the building. A subsequent condition survey has been submitted within this application that should be read in conjunction with the submitted plans.

Repairs to the building include the following:

- Repairs and refurbishments to main roof and flat roof
- Rooflight replacement
- Leadwork replacement
- Roof joinery repairs and decoration
- Inspection, repair, re-bedding and re-jointing of coping stones to flat roofs.
- Refurbishment of louvre screen including re-hanging of slates
- Repair of existing free standing edge protection to rear flat roof
- Repair and decoration of gas supply pipework with damp proofing works
- Internal making good, plaster repairs decoration and replacement of suspended ceiling tiles due to water ingress

- Brickwork repairs and re-pointing
- Window repairs
- Timber joinery repairs
- Rainwater goods repairs
- Metalwork repairs
- Cleaning of the external brickwork with isolated repairs and repointing

The building envelope has been found to be in reasonable condition following inspections, with evidence that the front facing elevations had been refurbished within the two-year period prior to the inspection. However, water ingress was visible in multiple locations, emanating from a combination of defective roof coverings, windows and pavement lights.

The natural slate covering to the main pitched roof is exhibiting a number of defects, including missing and damaged slates, poorly dressed and missing leadwork, together with undulation to the timber frame. Discolouration was noted within the main roof-space, raising concerns regarding the risk of rot infestation and it is recommended the roof be fully refurbished on this basis.

The majority of the flat roofs are weathered in asphalt that was visibly rucking and blistered, with perforations result in water ingress. Full refurbishment is recommended with the installation of a built-up elastomeric felt waterproofing system, complete with insulation.

Despite being in serviceable condition, the decorative coating to the timber framed windows to the front facing is flaking excessively, with early evidence of rot infestation. Given the need to erect a scaffold to enable access to the main roof, repair and decoration of the windows is recommended.

The water ingress at basement level is emanating from a combination of defective pavement lights and the high-water table, with refurbishment recommended. Damp proofing works are also required within close proximity to gas supply pipework.

A full scope of works has been submitted within the condition report that details the proposed works in order to bring the building back up to a sound condition. All repairs and refurbishment work will visually be like for like and therefore enhancing the look of the listed building without changing its appearance. Suitable external paint will be used on all the existing windows and metal work to match the existing while adding a suitable weather protection for years to come.

8. Professional Involvement

This report has been produced following the prescribed structure as set out in "Design and Access Statements: how to read, write and use them" produced by CABE in 2006 for the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (reprinted 2007).

Due to the simplistic nature of the application, no external community members or professionals have been consulted prior to the application.

9. Planning Policies Assessment

Relevant local and national government policies have been reviewed in relation to this application.

10. Site Access

The existing access to the property will not be altered, or adapted.

11. Conclusion

The proposed works are deemed to have minimal aesthetic impact to the external façade of the building in terms of material alteration.

The existing layout of the site is to be retained, with continuity in terms of use, location and access.

12. Bibliography

- Design and access statements guide, CABI, 2007
- <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk>
- <http://www.planningportal.gov.uk>
- <http://www.communities.gov.uk>

13. Appendix I – Photographic Schedule



1. Main roof



2. Roof joinery



3. Party wall



4. Main roof-space



5. Main roof



6. Roof to rear projection



7. Second floor accommodation



8. Flat roof to rear



9. Damaged slates



10. Loose slates



11. Poor flashing detail



12. Water ingress from main roof



13. Water ingress from main roof



14. Water ingress from main roof



15. Main roof-space



16. Water ingress from central crown



17. Cracking at first floor level



18. Cracking at first floor level



19. Penetrating moisture ingress at basement level



20. Penetrating moisture ingress at basement level



21. Timber decay to supporting post



22. Timber decay to supporting post



23. Defective ductwork



24. Defective edge protection

VERIFICATION
APPROVED FOR ISSUE:
DC
DATE
20-04-2026

OSWICKS PROPERTY SERVICES

5/7 HEAD STREET

HALSTEAD

ESSEX

CO9 2AT

TELEPHONE: 01787 477559

EMAIL: INFO@OSWICK.CO.UK