

CONSERVATION TEAM CONSULTATION APPLICATION RESPONSE

APPLICATION REF:	25/03239/FP
CASE OFFICER:	Thomas Howe
APPLICATION SITE:	Maintenance House 3 - 4 Portmill Lane Hitchin Hertfordshire SG5 1DJ
DESCRIPTION OF WORKS:	Installation of front canopy, front access ramp and solar panels to existing front, rear and side roofslopes. Alterations to fenestration.

RECOMMENDATION:

There is **NO OBJECTION**. The scheme will satisfy the provisions of Sections 16(2) (LBC) and /or 66(1) (FP/FPH) and/or 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.

SUGGESTED CONDITIONS:

None.

SHORT SUMMARY:

Impact on character and appearance of the conservation area –

The site is located within the Hitchin Conservation Area. The significance of this Conservation Area derives from its historic street plan, plots divisions all referencing its medieval core and legacy.

The building in question is from the 1980s and not listed and make no positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation.

It is located off Bancroft and on Portmill Lane which is a mix of commercial and residential buildings in an urban are of Hitchin. The surrounding area is a mix of different architectural styles from different periods and there is no overriding character.

Impact on setting of heritage assets and how this affects significance – None.

Does the proposal occasion harm or preserve or enhance – The proposed alterations are considered to have no impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Site Context:

[Hitchin CA Character Statement 26-07-11.indd](#)

DETAILED ANALYSIS AND CONSIDERATIONS:

[Please see comments above.](#)

HERITAGE POLICY ASSESSMENT:

Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990:

North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031:

NPPF (December 2024):

The Local Plan and NPPF

North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 and the policies contained within it i.e., Policy HE1. The plan was adopted November 2022.

The relevant paragraph numbers at Section 16 of the July 2021 version of the NPPF have been changed as follows:

197. In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*

199. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

200. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.....

202. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

206. Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.

The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition) – December 2017

At para 14 under the sub-heading 'Landscape Assessment and Amenity' it states that
*"Analysis of setting is different from landscape assessment. While landscapes include everything within them, the entirety of very extensive settings may not contribute equally to the significance of a heritage asset, if at all. **Careful analysis is therefore required to assess whether one heritage asset at a considerable distance from another, though intervisible with it – a church spire, for instance – is a major component of the setting, rather than just an incidental element within the wider landscape.**"*

At para 17 it states (my emphasis in bold): *"All heritage assets have significance, some of which have particular significance and are designated. The contribution made by their setting to their significance also varies. **Although many settings may be enhanced by development, not all settings have the same capacity to accommodate change without harm to the significance of the heritage asset or the ability to appreciate it.** This capacity may vary between designated assets of the same grade or of the same type or according to the nature of the change. It can also depend on the location of the asset: an elevated or overlooked location; a riverbank, coastal or island location; or a location within an extensive tract of flat land may increase the sensitivity of the setting (i.e. the capacity of the setting to accommodate change without harm to the heritage asset's significance) or of views of the asset. This requires the implications of development affecting the setting of heritage assets to be considered on a case-by-case basis."*

Relevant National Guidance i.e. Historic England:

Other relevant documents (Please specify):

CONCLUSION:

There are no objections for the reasons stated above.

OFFICER: Tricia Craggs

DATE: 4.3.2026.