



FAO: Planning Department,
North Herts Council

Ref: 24/01926/FPH
Date: 30/10/2024

BUILT HERITAGE ADVICE

Dear Sir / Madam,

RE: 24 Benslow Lane Hitchin Hertfordshire SG4 9RE

Built Heritage Advice pertaining to an application for: Replacement ground floor front bay window and windowsill; first floor front window and ground floor rear window.

The adopted Hitchin Conservation Area: Character Statement (2011) has designated the application site as being within *Character Area 6: Benslow Lane, Trevor Road and part of Radcliffe Road and Verulam Road*. This Character Area relates to Hitchin's expansion after the railway arrived in the mid-nineteenth century. Benslow Lane is characterised by terraced houses, two or three storeys high, dating to the mid to late nineteenth century.

The *Character Area 6* assessment highlights the positive features as being the high concentration of well detailed mid to late nineteenth century houses, mainly retaining their original materials and details. The negative features highlighted are the use of modern materials and details, such as concrete roof tiles or uPVC windows, mostly facing Walsworth Road. The recommendations are that the buildings in Benslow Lane should be afforded greater protection and that an Article 4 Direction should be served as an enhancement opportunity.

The site is now covered under the Hitchin Article 4 Area adopted in 2013, wherein Class A Permitted Development Rights are removed for alterations to fenestration.

The age, condition and significance of the existing windows has not been clarified in the submission and they have potential to be original or historic timber windows of historic and aesthetic value. The submitted photographs do not suggest any obvious problems with the condition of the windows that would justify repair or replacement.

The submitted replacement window plans show a similar glazing pattern to the existing. However, the specification brochure shows uPVC windows with a depth of 24mm, which is similar to standard double-glazing and also appears to show stuck on glazing bars. The proposal would clearly not replicate the existing timber framed traditional windows to an acceptable degree.

It is noted from a recent site visit that nearly all houses on this section of Benslow Road from No's 16 to 34 (even) have timber windows, many of which appear to be historic and/or single glazed.



The proposal for uPVC windows would be harmful to the historic and architectural significance of the Conservation Area and contrary to the guidance within the Hitchin Conservation Area Character Statement.

The proposal would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, contrary to Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. With regards to the National Planning Policy Framework the level of harm is 'less than substantial' as per paragraph 208. 'Great weight' should be given to the heritage asset's conservation as per paragraph 205.

Yours sincerely,

David Buckley BA (Hons) MA MRTPI IHBC
Historic Environment Team
Place Services

Note: This letter is advisory and should only be considered as the opinion formed by specialist staff in relation to this particular matter