



1 Bedford Street

May 2026
Heritage Impact Assessment



Michael Collins Architects
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Note - Do not scale from this document, scales indicative.

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This statement, in accordance with the guidance, will:

1./ Demonstrate how the proposals relate to the site context and the impacts upon it.

2./ Explain the design principles and concepts and how they are applied to the proposals, including taking into account the local planning guidance and mitigating measures to minimise effects upon neighboring amenity and heritage assets.

The content of this statement is proportionate to the scale, complexity and nature of the application. It will tell the story by explaining the design thinking behind the proposal and how issues relating to access have been addressed using images, plans and diagrams to supplement the text.

Note to be read in conjunction with the planning statement

1.0 Summary

This pre-planning application document relates to 1 Bedford Street, Hitchin, SG49PJ

The description of the proposal is: Stepped rear extension including a loft conversion, creation of a new loft extension, associated internal remodeling, new staircase, and rear kitchen extension into the garden.



Location plan 1:1250 @ A3

1.1 Site Photographs



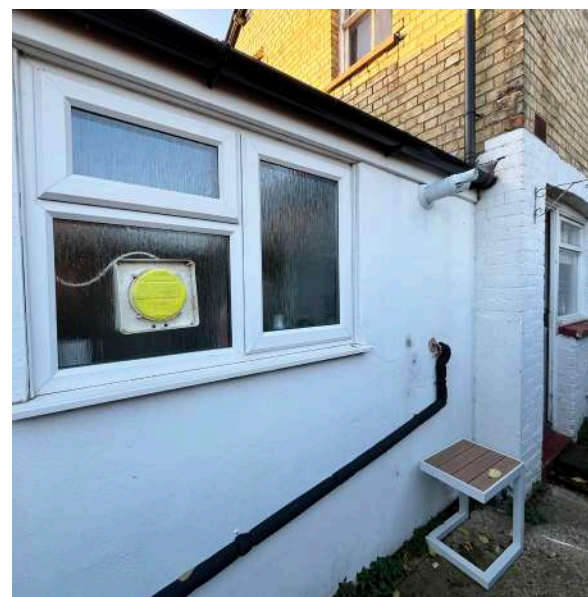
Street View from Bedford Street



Rear view from garden



Rear view from garden



Existing extension



Garden looking East



Garden looking South

1.2 Building Use

1 Bedford Street is a late Victorian semi detached dwelling set over two floors.

1.3 Character Appraisal

The site is located within the Butts Close Conservation Area. The area is characterised by a varied townscape comprising late 19th and early 20th century residential development set around significant areas of open green space.

The surrounding properties are of an eclectic composition and vary in a number of aspects including:

Materials and façade treatments;
Window types and proportions;
Roof forms, including both pitched and flat roofs;
Architectural styles ranging from Victorian and Edwardian to inter-war and later 20th century development.

According to the Butts Close Conservation Area Character Statement, the area is notable for its “well detailed historic buildings”, mature trees, and views across the open landscape of Butts Close. Positive features identified within the appraisal include:

Well detailed houses of varying sizes;
The use of red brick, painted render and tile hanging;
Bay and oriel windows, porches and decorative joinery;
Strong landscape character with mature planting and open green space.



a.



b.



c.



d.



e.

f.

g.

a. Butts Close (Hitchin Conservation Area Townscape Appraisal Map)
b. Butts Close (Hitchin Character Statement)
c. Butts Close Pond
e. Elmside lodge, building of local interest within Butts Close, retrofit by MCA Architects
d. View towards the pond
g. Oughton Head Way modern materials



1.4 Case Study within Butts Close Conservation Area, Elmside Lodge

Elmside Lodge is noted as a local Building of Interest within Butts Close Conservation area. Michael Collins Architects completed a low energy retrofit and extension of the lodge in 2025. The project was shortlisted for the RIBA Regional Awards 2025.

The existing building dates from the late 1800s and home to prominent reformist. A wraparound extension includes new stair and a tall kitchen space. An openable corner faces south over new terracing and a pool. The existing building includes sensitive low energy

upgrades and a new heat pump system linked to a large solar array to a new outbuilding. A new wildflower roof, deep overhangs and passive shading features helps to keep the interior cool.

The design was sensitive to the conservation area whilst envisioning contemporary spaces, incorporating light and legibly new materials. Historic elements such as the existing chimney stack detail and leaded windows were retained and repaired whilst the introduction of new elements brought the building into a new contemporary use.

The design and delivery of Elmside Lodge demonstrates a contemporary continuation of the local history of craftsmanship associated with the conservation area. 1 Bedford Street holds the same design principles, proposing contemporary interventions

which are clearly identifiable and subservient to historic fabric. Historic fabric of greater value is to be retained and repaired, ultimately supporting the long-term viable use of the dwelling.



1.5 Conservation Response

- The existing property is located at the end of a short terrace of three late 19th century dwellings which sit adjacent to the boundary of the Butts Close Conservation Area. Pitched slate roofs face the street, with prominent chimney stacks across the terrace. The street elevation presents detailed flemish brickwork and timber framed windows which are to be retained and conserved.
- The rear of the house has undergone a number of alterations, including a rendered rear extension with PVC windows, which is not considered to be of historic significance.
- The proposed alterations to 1 Bedford Street form part of a sympathetic strategy of modern intervention, intended to enhance the existing accommodation in an exemplary and well-crafted manner.
- The works aim to upgrade the existing property, improve the thermal performance and energy efficiency of the dwelling and enhance the rear of the property in a manner complementing to the surrounding streetscape.

- The proposals respect the history of craftsmanship associated with the conservation area in a contemporary manner. Materials such as aluminium and brickwork are used with proportions and detailing that reference the surrounding context whilst avoiding pastiche approaches.

1.6 Design Principles:

- The principal heritage significance of the building is its front elevation, roof tiling, chimney stacks, timber windows, and brick detailing visible within the public realm. The rear of the property has undergone previous alteration and is considered to have a lower degree of heritage significance, making it a more appropriate location for carefully considered contemporary intervention.
- The proposed rear extension is stepped and responds to the existing building silhouette, tucked behind the end gable so as to remain clearly subservient and read as part of the existing composition in accordance with Policy D1. The majority of the works are nestled within 1 Bedford Street's existing side

corridor.

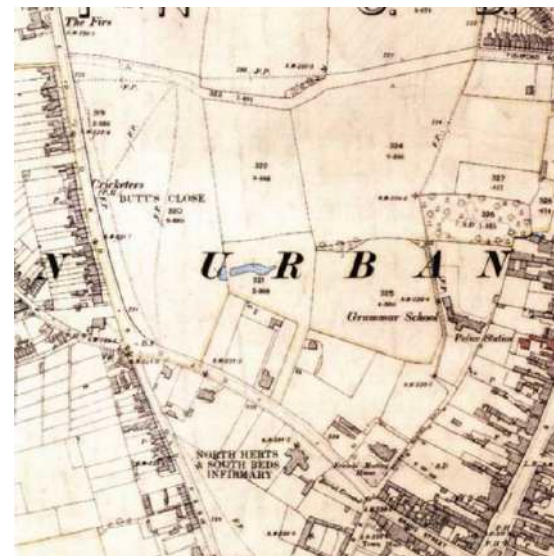
- The majority of the proposal is to the building's rear, facing South and to the end of the conservation area. Minimal works are proposed to the Northern elevation which faces into the conservation area to mitigate impact.
- The alterations enable light to penetrate deep into the property through the introduction of a central spiral staircase, full-height glazing and rooflights. The roof space is utilised to provide an additional bedroom and first floor bathroom. The rear kitchen extension improves the relationship with, and outlook onto, the garden. This contemporary intervention is inline with Butts Close Conservation Area's historic connection between the natural and built environment.
- The form is stepped to reduce its bulk, avoid visibility from the street, and prevent a box-like appearance. These attributes aim to create a positive contemporary addition when viewed from the garden.
- In line with the conservation area appraisal, which identifies a "variety of styles" from the late 19th, early and mid-20th century,

the proposal adopts a mixture of traditional materials used in a contemporary and well-crafted manner. Examples include detailed brickwork at ground floor level and a contemporary slim aluminium parapet detail at the building's rear.

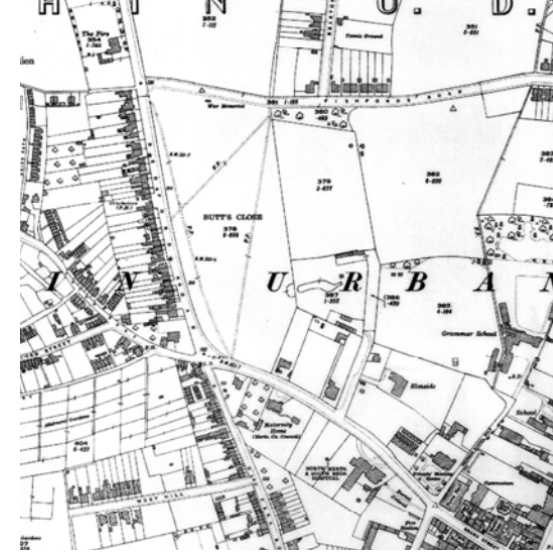
- The appraisal references a mix of elevation forms and window types throughout the conservation area. The existing street-facing bay and sash windows at 1 Bedford Street are considered positive features and are therefore retained.
- At the front elevation, new rooflights are framed and divided to align with the proportions of the Victorian window divisions. Contemporary aluminium windows have been used elsewhere within the conservation area.
- At the rear, full-height glazed aluminium windows open views onto the garden. The green aluminium rainscreen at ground and first floor complements the surrounding brick tones and sits sensitively within the natural landscaped setting central to the character of the Butts Close Conservation Area.



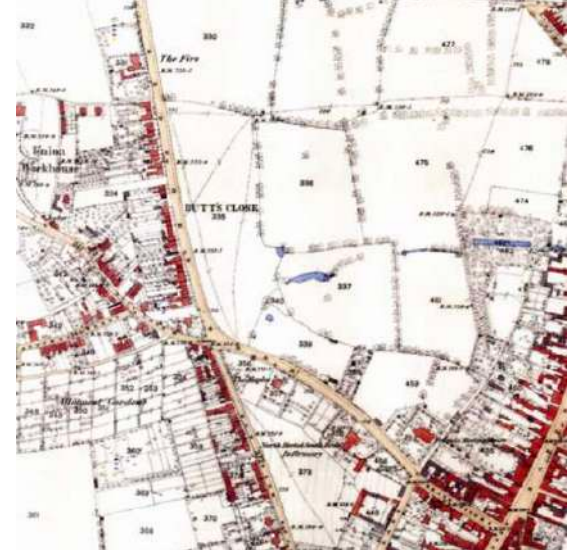
1881



1898

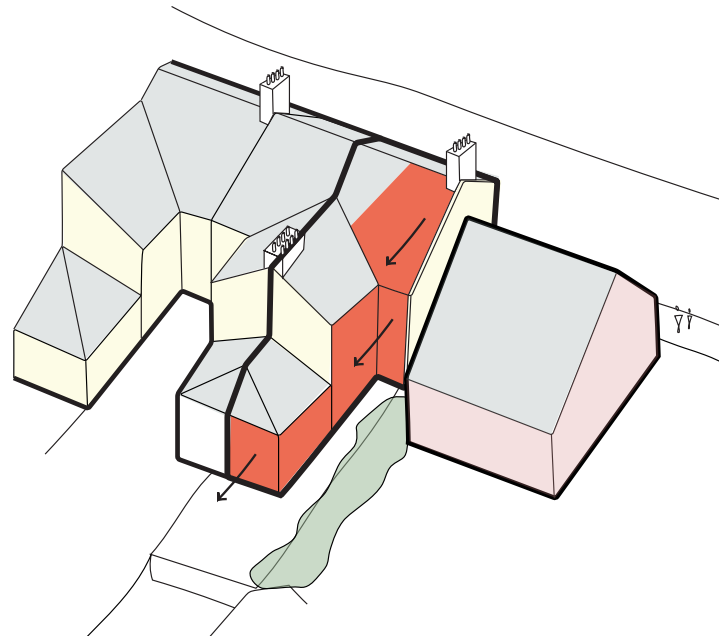


1923

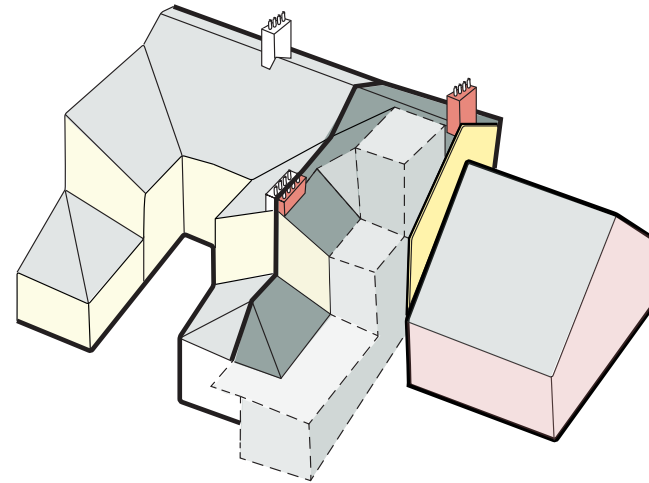


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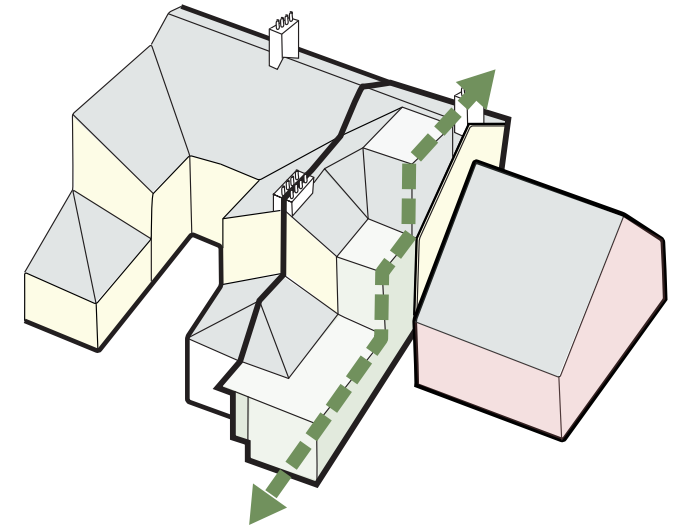
1.7 Illustrative Design Approach



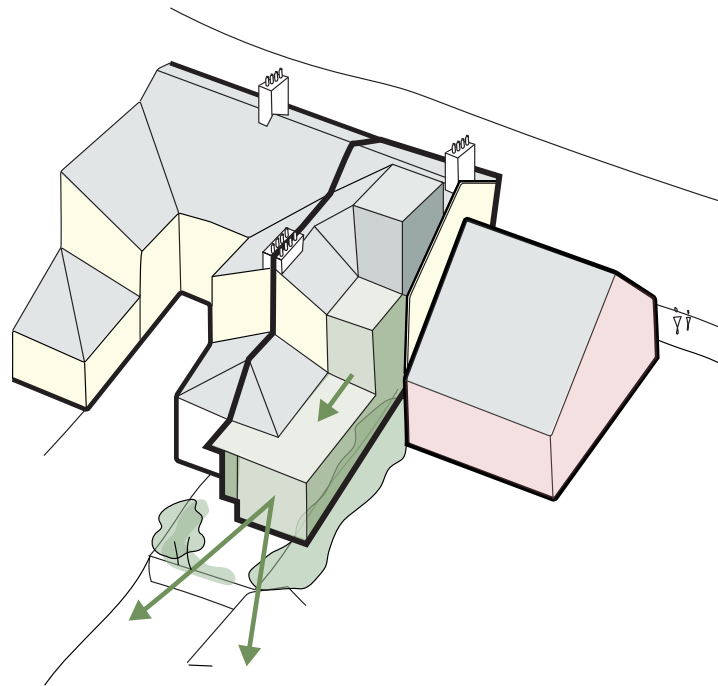
Works restricted to building's rear



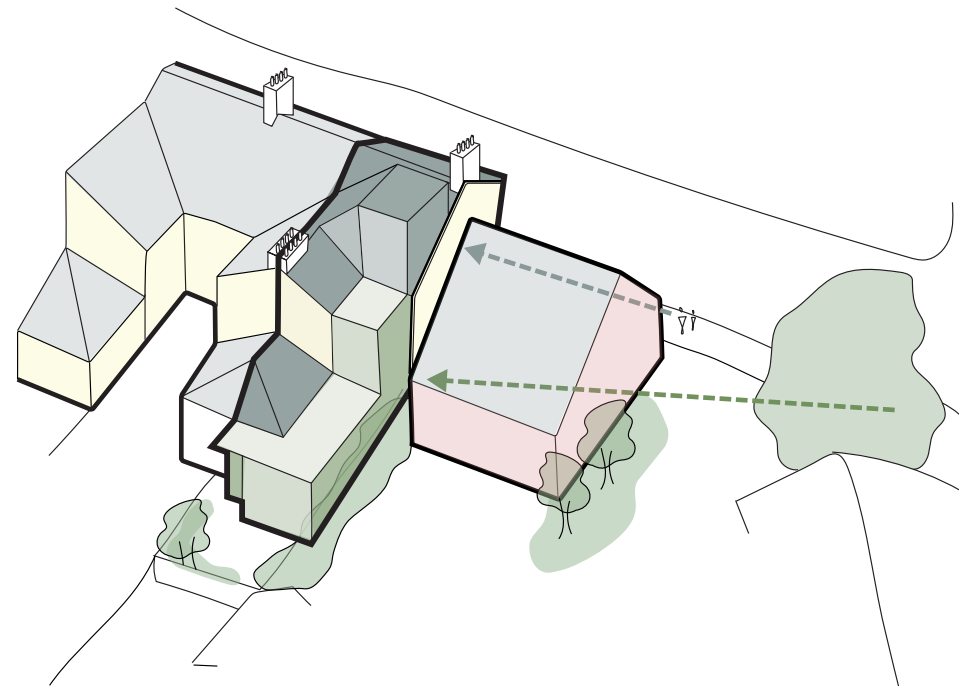
Extension nestled within existing fabric, subservient and read as part of the existing composition



Stepped form responds to existing building silhouette and reduces the perceived mass and allows the original dwelling to remain visually dominant.



Muted green at lower levels to blend with planting, slate grey at roof level to blend with existing roof tiles



A muted matt green finish reduces visual prominence against the landscaped context of mature planting, slate grey at roof level to blend with existing roof tiles

2.0 Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment

As stated by BS 7913, The purpose of heritage impact assessments (HIAs) is to gain an understanding of the effect of developments and changes on the historic asset, and how the impact of change might be mitigated. HIAs can be carried out at various levels of scale and complexity, from the effects of building works on a small structure to the effects of major development in a world heritage site.

HIAs should identify the significance of the element concerned on the relative scale of values, the nature of the proposed change, an assessment of whether the change needs to be mitigated and if so how this can be achieved. The mitigation measures should be justified on the basis of the heritage asset's significance.

To follow is a detailed critical analysis of the proposed changes to the building in the form of an assessment of each major individual alteration or intervention. The purpose of this analysis is to manage the change methodology as advocated within BS 7913 and Historic England Planning Advice Note, "Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment", 2015. Each analysis will be undertaken as follows:

Proposal: Brief description of the proposal together with an assessment to establish whether there is enough information to comprehensively understand the impact of the proposals on the character and historic significance of the building.

Impact: Consideration of the effects of the proposal on the authenticity and integrity of the heritage values attributed to the building.

Reversibility: Whilst the quality of the architecture and intended specification is intended to last the test of time, this is not always a given. Should the proposal not perform as expected, consideration is given to the ease of reversibility so as not to prejudice alternative future solutions.

Mitigation: Consideration of the necessary to mitigate the impact of loss of any element of historic significance resulting from the proposals such as recording and archiving.

Compensation: Consideration of any consequential conservation based benefits resulting from the proposal.

Outcome: Evaluation of the anticipated outcome of the proposal given the information available.

2.0 Formal Scope of Work

1. The removal of ground floor rear extension
2. Removal of two rear timber windows
3. Removal of internal partitions and staircase
4. New spiral staircase
5. New rear ground floor extension comprising of new kitchen, pantry, dining, and garden connection
6. New first floor extension comprising of new double bedroom
7. New roof extension comprising of master bedroom
8. New heritage roof lights to northern elevation
9. Repair and retention of existing historic timber framed windows on northern elevation
10. Overhaul and repair of existing slate roof tiles
11. Stepped extension of overall form

2.01 Proposal

The removal of rear extension, including PVC window

Impact

Positive - The alteration results in no harm to the significance of the building and removes harmful elements, a later rendered extension.

Reversibility

Limited.

Mitigation

Survey work has been undertaken to determine quality of extension which is considered poor and of no historic significance. Removal of material will be carried out with care to prevent damage to historic elements.

Compensation

Building fabric which is considered not inkeeping with the conservation area is to be removed. Works are limited to the building's rear.

Outcome

This will result in no harm to the significance of the heritage asset and will provide a minor heritage benefit through the removal of unsympathetic later additions.



Existing extension and PVC window

2.02 Proposal

The removal of three rear windows; including two timber framed sash windows.

Impact

Medium - It is recognised that works undertaken to these elements results in the loss of some timber framed windows. Window removal and replacement is only proposed on the rear elevation where the windows are considered to be in poor condition, and are not considered to be principal heritage features due to their lack of street presence. Their removal results in a minor heritage impact.

Reversibility

Low.

Mitigation

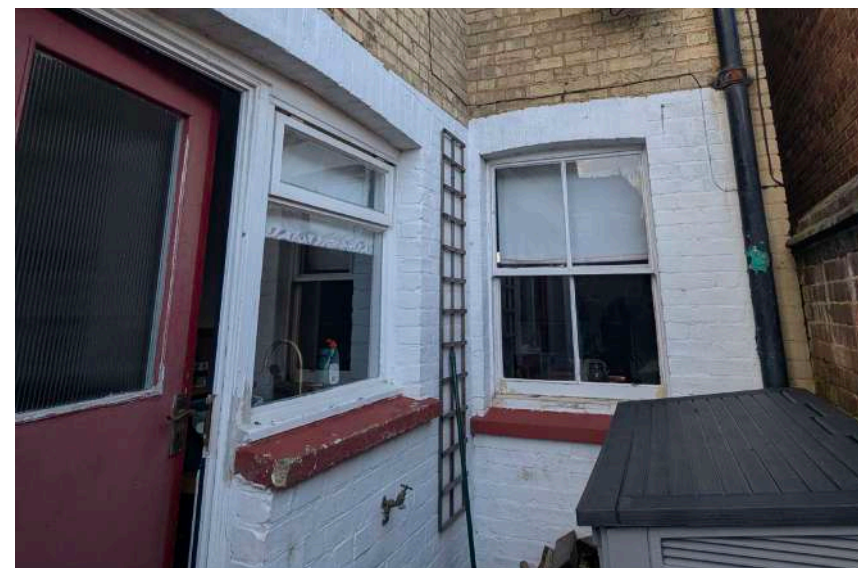
New slimline aluminium glazing windows will retain views out of the property whilst improving building performance. Timber windows of greater historic significance on the northern facade are to be retained and repaired, considered significant due to their street presence.

Compensation

The property will have improved energy performance, improving both environmental and the longevity of the building's use will be prolonged.

Outcome

The exterior elevations and internal environment will be enhanced.



Existing timber framed windows

2.03 Proposal

Removal of internal partitions and staircase

Impact

Low - Existing staircase and balustrade are considered to have no historical significance in relation to Butts Close Conservation Area, Internal partitions have no key historical features. The works are not considered to adversely affect the principal character of the building.

Reversibility

Low, although internal layouts are inherently adaptable and future reconfiguration remains possible.

Mitigation

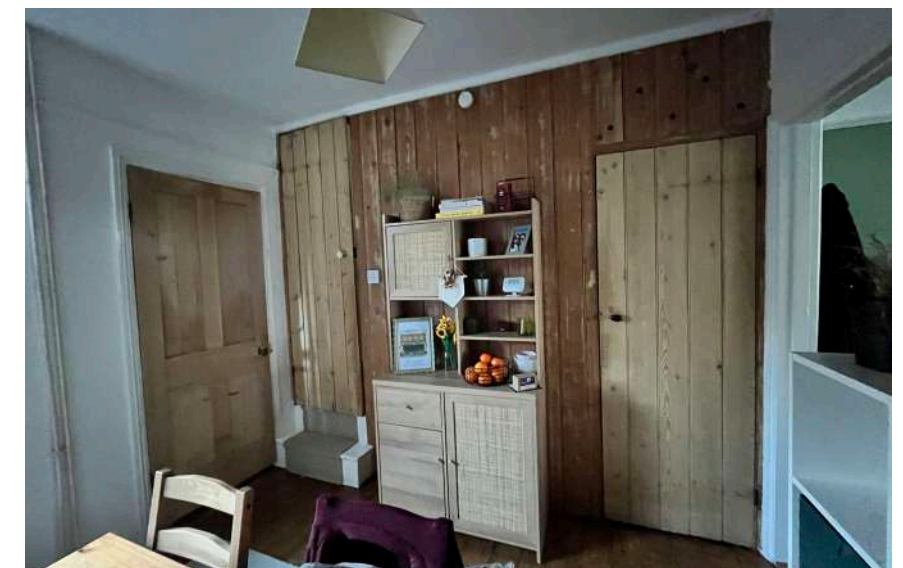
Historic fabric will be retained where practical and structural interventions minimised.

Compensation

The proposals allow for improved usability, natural lighting and long-term residential viability of the property, including improved circulation and accessibility to WC.

Outcome

The interventions are considered proportionate and support the continued use and longevity of the building.



Existing internal partition and stair access to be removed

2.04 Proposal

New spiral staircase

Impact

A new spiral staircase is proposed centrally within the plan to improve vertical circulation and bring natural light deeper into the dwelling.

Reversibility

The staircase introduces a contemporary intervention within the interior, clearly legible as a modern addition. A roof light at the top introduces light into the centre of the building plan.

Mitigation

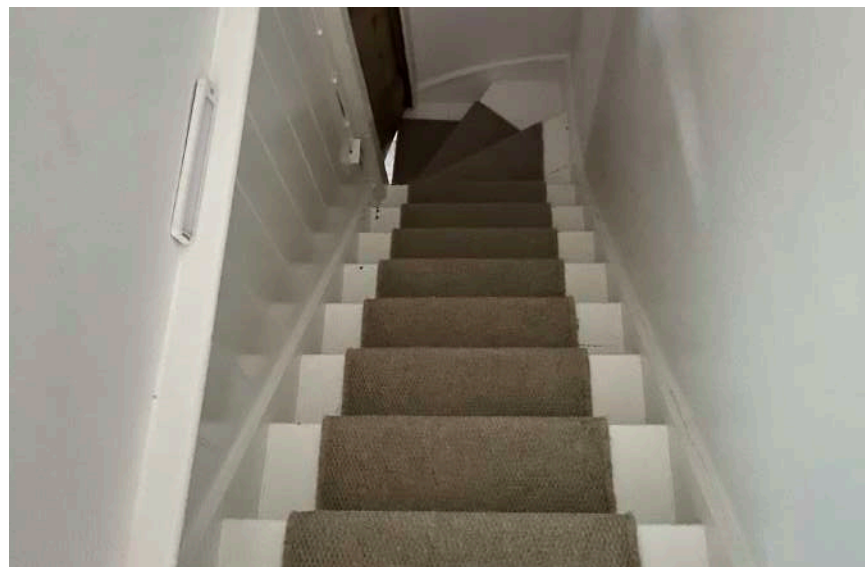
The staircase could be removed or altered in the future with limited impact to the primary historic structure.

Compensation

The staircase design has been carefully considered to minimise structural intervention and it does not affect the principal facade.

Outcome

The proposal significantly improves circulation, daylighting and spatial quality within the property.



Existing staircase

2.05 Proposal

New rear ground floor extension comprising of new kitchen, pantry, dining, and garden connection

Impact

The extension introduces a contemporary addition to the rear of the property within an area already altered by previous extensions. The stepped form and material palette have been designed to remain subservient to the building's historic fabric and minimise visibility from the public realm.

Reversibility

Limited, although the extension could be removed in the future without significant harm to the principal historic form of the original dwelling.

Mitigation

The extension is located to the rear, uses sympathetic materials and involves no direct alteration to significant front elevations.

Compensation

The proposal replaces a poor quality later extension with a well-crafted contemporary intervention that better responds to the character of the conservation area.

Outcome

The proposal preserves the significance of the existing building whilst enhancing functionality and architectural quality. The building's relationship with its garden is greatly improved.



Proposed rear extension connecting to garden

2.06 Proposal

New first floor extension comprising of new double bedroom

Impact

The extension is set back and stepped to reduce bulk, visual prominence, and maintain the dominance of the existing building form.

Reversibility

Limited, although the extension could be removed in the future without significant harm to the principal street facing elevation.

Mitigation

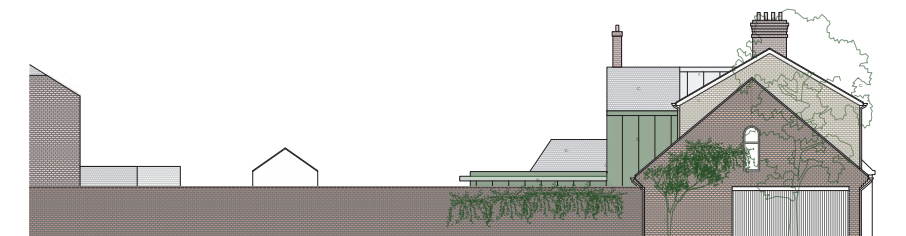
The scale, massing and materiality have been carefully controlled to minimise heritage impact. The muted green tone at ground and first floor is clearly identifiable and honest as a contemporary intervention. This muted green tone seeks to complement the surrounding brick tones blend within the landscaped setting.

Compensation

The proposal enhances the long-term viability and usability of the dwelling for contemporary occupation.

Outcome

The proposals are considered to preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area, as there is limited visibility of the extension from the conservation area.



Proposed site elevation

2.07 Proposal

New roof extension comprising of master bedroom

Impact

Moderate, the intervention utilises existing roof volume whilst minimising changes to the principal street elevation.

Reversibility

Limited.

Mitigation

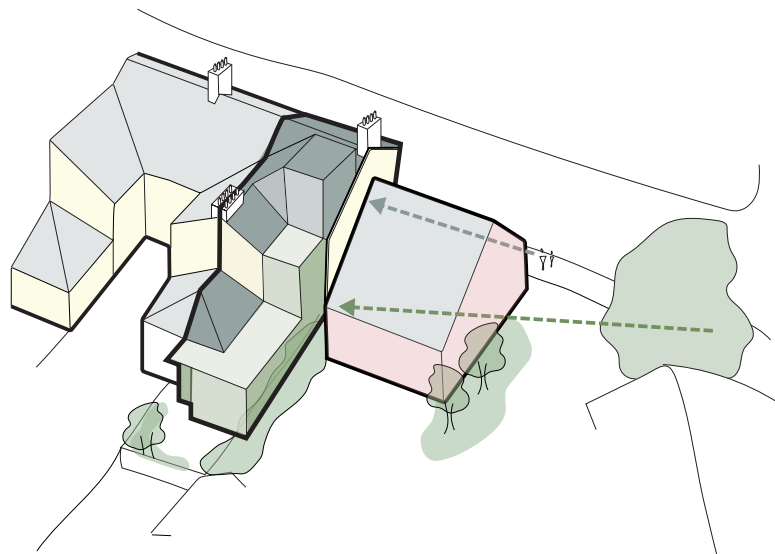
The extension has been designed to sit sensitively within the existing roof form, connecting to the existing pitches to avoid excessive prominence. A slate grey colour and tone seeks to sit subtly within the roof scape.

Compensation

The proposal achieves improved residential accommodation whilst retaining the historic character of the dwelling. The building enjoys an increased floor area and is suitable for more occupants or a growing family.

Outcome

The proposal is considered proportionate and compatible with the character of the conservation area.



Proposed stepped massing and slate tone roof extension

2.08 Proposal

New heritage roof lights to northern elevation

Impact

Low/medium - New rooflights introduce limited visual change and are designed to sit flush within the roof plane although are on the street facing elevation.

Reversibility

Limited although the roof lights could be removed, altered or closed over with slate roof tile build up.

Mitigation

Rooflights have been carefully positioned to align with the proportions of the existing fenestration. Heritage rooflights with dividing bars are specified to respond to existing proportions within the conservation area.

Compensation

The proposal improves daylighting and residential amenity within the upper floor accommodation.

Outcome

There is some heritage impact as the roof lights will be partially visible from parts of the street scape. This is considered negligible as they are rarely visible and continue a rhythm from a neighbouring property.



Existing north roof lights on neighbouring property

2.09 Proposal

Repair and retention of existing historic timber framed windows on northern elevation

Impact

The works will positively preserve historic fabric and maintain the character of the building.

Reversibility

Repair works are inherently conservative and retain maximum historic material.

Mitigation

Traditional repair techniques and matching materials should be employed.

Compensation

The works contribute positively to the preservation of the architectural character of the property and conservation area.

Outcome

The proposal results in a positive heritage outcome.



Existing timber frame windows of historic significance

2.10 Proposal

Overhaul and repair of existing slate roof tiles

Impact

The works preserve an important historic feature of the building and support its continued longevity.

Reversibility

Limited.

Mitigation

Existing slate tiles will be retained and reused where practical, with matching replacements introduced only where necessary.

Compensation

The works improve weather protection and long-term conservation of the building fabric.

Outcome

The proposal results in a positive heritage and conservation outcome.



Existing slate tiled roof

2.11 Impact Summary

It is considered that the proposals preserve the character and appearance of the Butts Close Conservation Area in accordance with Sections 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Any visual change arising from the proposal is considered to result in less than substantial harm, clearly outweighed by heritage benefits associated with removal of unsympathetic additions, repair of historic fabric, enhancement of energy performance and the long-term viable use of the dwelling. The proposal present a contemporary continuation of the local history of craftsmanship and landscape connection associated with the conservation area.

3.0 Key Views

3.1 View from Oughton Head Way / Bedford Street Junction

Junction to Bedford Street within Butts Close Conservation Area



Summer

Base image from Google Street View June 2015
Majority of extension concealed by trees, flora, and fauna in the summer. First floor muted green RAL blends within its planted context



Winter

Base image from Google Street View March 2019, flora and fauna has grown further since image capture.
Roof extension partially visible from junction to conservation area. Slate grey RAL to be selected as a mitigation. Lower tiers concealed from viewpoint.



Street view location on Butts Close Conservation Area Map

- 1 Bedford Street Proposed Extension Visible
- 1 Bedford Street Proposed Extension Concealed

3.2 View Facing West Bedford Street

Junction to Bedford Street within Butts Close Conservation Area



Summer

Base image from Google Street View June 2015

Roof extension partially visible. Slate grey RAL to be selected as a mitigation. Lower tiers concealed from viewpoint.



Winter

Base image from Google Street View March 2019

Roof extension partially visible, north lights visible. Slate grey RAL to be selected as a mitigation. Lower tiers concealed from viewpoint. Heritage rooflights with dividing bars are specified as a mitigation to respond to existing proportions within the conservation area.



Street view location on Butts Close Conservation Area Map

- 1 Bedford Street Proposed Extension Visible
- 1 Bedford Street Proposed Extension Concealed

3.3 View Facing East Bedford Street

Bedford Street on boundary of Butts Close Conservation Area



Summer

Base image from Google Street View June 2015

Extension not visible from street. North lights partially visible. Heritage rooflights with dividing bars are specified as a mitigation to respond to existing proportions within the conservation area.



Winter

Base image from Google Street View March 2019

Extension not visible from the street. North lights partially visible. Heritage rooflights with dividing bars are specified as a mitigation to respond to existing proportions within the conservation area.

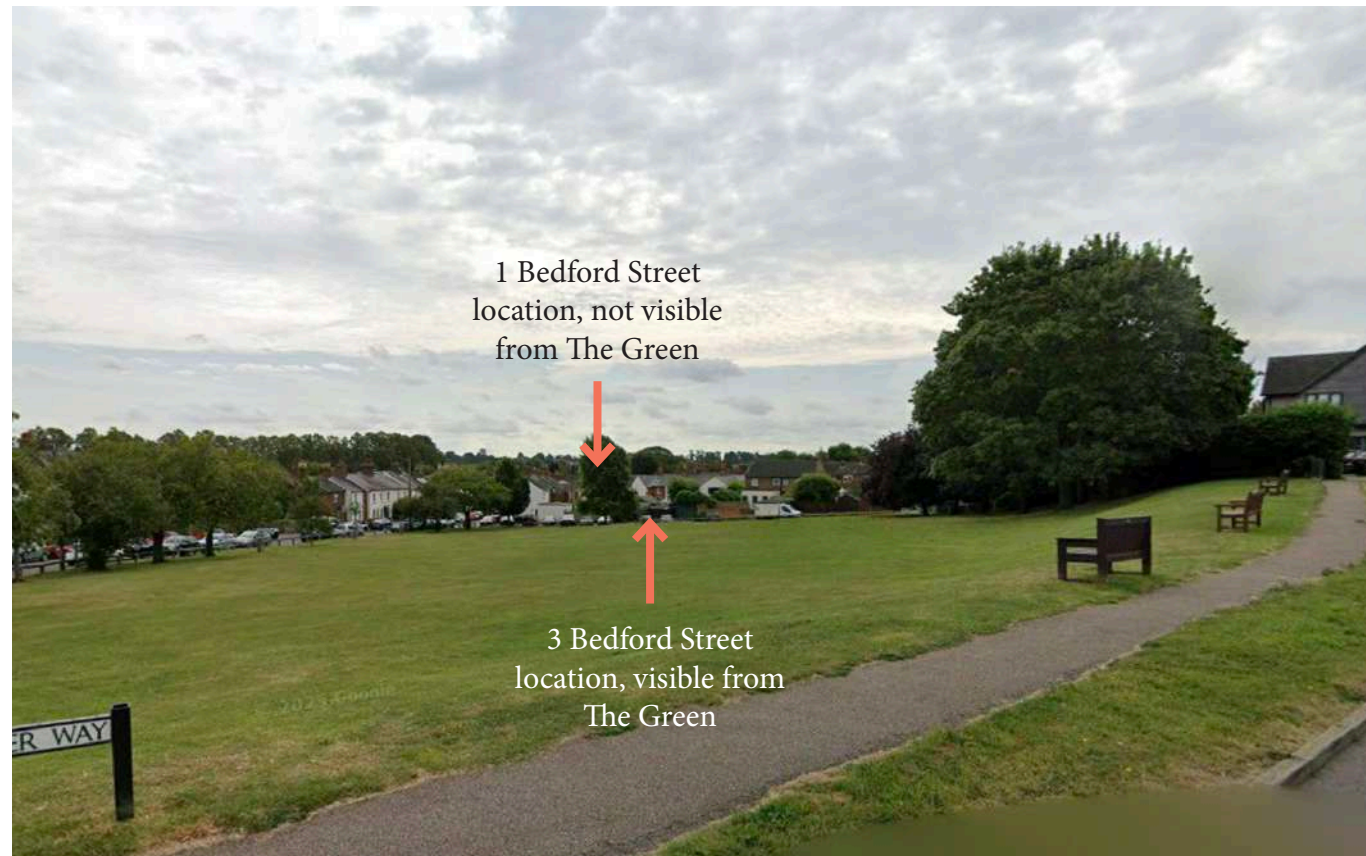


Street view location on Butts Close Conservation Area Map

- 1 Bedford Street Proposed Extension Visible
- 1 Bedford Street Proposed Extension Concealed

3.4 View from top of The Green

Junction between Lavendar Way and Victoria Road



Summer

Base image from Google Street View June 2015

1 Bedford Street is not visible from this high viewpoint at the top of the green, concealed by both trees and the northern row of properties on Bedford Street. There is first story gap between properties 49 and 47 Bedford Street, bringing minimal visibility to the southern row of terraces street elevations. Heritage impact mitigated as minimal works are proposed to the northern elevation.



Winter

Base image from Google Street View March 2019, flora and fauna has grown further since image capture.

1 Bedford Street is not visible from this high viewpoint at the top of the green, concealed by northern row of properties on Bedford Street. There is first story gap between properties 49 and 47 Bedford Street, bringing minimal visibility to the southern row of terraces street elevations. Heritage impact mitigated as minimal works are proposed to the northern elevation.



Street view location on Butts Close Conservation Area Map



Michael Collins Architects

Second Floor, 99 Bancroft
Hitchin, SG5 1NQ

01462 236866

info@michaelcollinsarchitects.com
www.michaelcollinsarchitects.com