

CONSERVATION TEAM CONSULTATION APPLICATION RESPONSE

APPLICATION REF:	25/02330/FP & 25/02331/LBC
CASE OFFICER:	AHD
APPLICATION SITE:	1 John Street, Royston, Hertfordshire SG8 9BE
DESCRIPTION OF WORKS:	Change of use of existing offices into 6 bed HMO (Class C4). Internal alterations to facilitate change of use of existing offices into 6 bed HMO (Class C4).

RECOMMENDATION:

Mr previous concerns regarding the location of the WC in the 'middle room' and the poor natural light to the open passage as access to the HMO, have been addressed. Paragraph 215 of the NPPF states that 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. The low level of less than substantial harm that I have identified should in my opinion be weighed against ensuring a viable use of the upper floors to this building. On balance, it is considered that the proposal satisfies the provisions of Sections 16(2) (LBC only), 66(1) (FP only) and 72(1) (both) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Section 16 of the NPPF and Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031, to merit **SUPPORT**.

SHORT SUMMARY:

Impact on listed building's special character and the character and appearance of Royston Conservation Area

The proposal will have some impact upon the listed building's special character. The works are internal only, therefore, there would be no impact upon the character or appearance of the RCA.

Harm, preserve or enhance.

The proposal will occasion a small amount of less than substantial harm to the listed building's special character.

SITE CONTEXT:

No. 1 John Street is grade II listed and is located in the Royston Conservation Area. The buildings and the area are Designated Heritage Assets for the purpose of applying the aims of Section 16 of the NPPF. The building is described in the link below and was added to the Statutory List on 11 June 1976: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1174570?section=official-list-entry>

DETAILED ANALYSIS AND CONSIDERATIONS:

I previously commented on 4 December 2025 following which there have been discussions mechanical ventilation, secondary glazing, ground floor WC and intrducign natural light to side covered passageway.

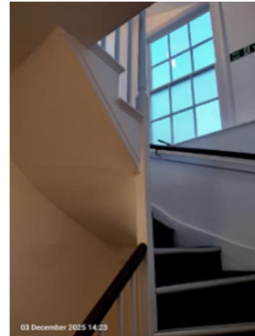
At ground floor, three internal doorways are proposed to be closed off, a stud wall introduced alongside the existing staircase and a WC inserted in to the 'middle' room which is also annotated as new HMO Laundry Room.

I previously stated that there are three aspects of the proposed ground floor layout that are of concern:

- Enclosing the staircase,
- Potentially underdrawing/fire protection of staircase as it rises over the corridor serving the office, and
- Location of WC serving HMO

I previously raised concerns regarding the relationship between a section of proposed stud to be erected hard up against the stair balustrade. This detail is not able to be addressed if the HMO and office use are to share the ground floor. There would be a degree of harm here but as I have said previously at least this scheme would secure a viable use to the first and second floors. I am wary that only today I have registered an objection to a pyro-glazed stud wall sitting alongside a staircase at no. 44 Kneesworth Street (grade II) under refs: 25/03190/FP & 25/03191/LBC. However, the circumstances there are different in that the building has an existing C3 use which if continued would not require fire compartmentation details to be installed.

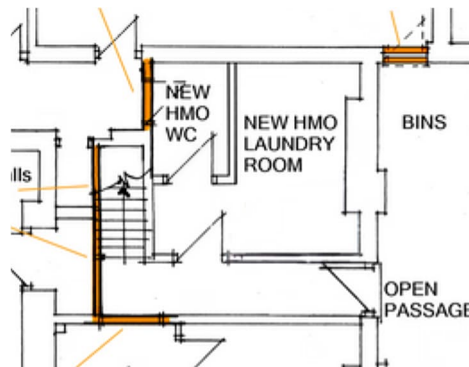
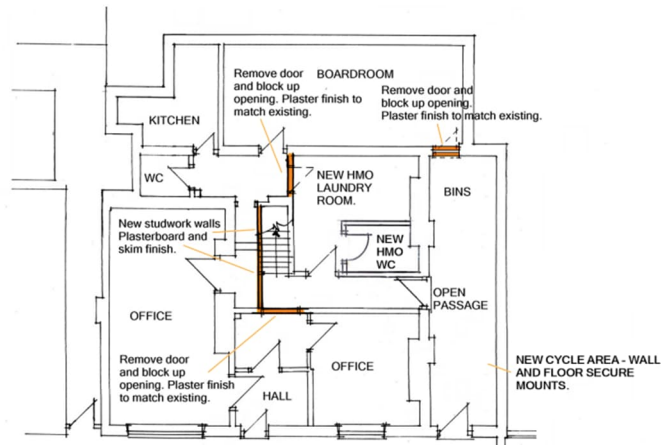
Returning to the current proposal, the underside of the stair (as it rises) is curved and probably lath-and-plaster. It has almost a sculptural presence that I would not wish to see modified or removed but I am conscious of a potential compatibility issue with Building and Fire Regs.



I previously stated that the WC serving the HMO would impact upon the proportions of the central room and which also includes a fire surround which is in the style of the most common Regency fireplace pattern with reeded jambs and corner roundels. I note that the ground floor plan has been amended and the agent has confirmed that a WC would remain on the ground floor plan but would only be implemented, if specifically asked to do so by the local authority for the HMO license application.



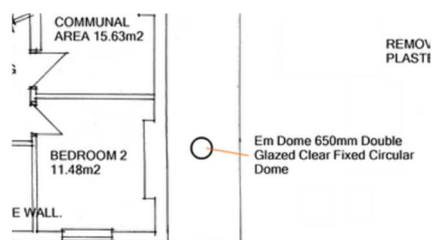
The revised plan below is unobjectionable.



I have previously suggested that the applicant be encouraged to introduce a roof light onto the single-storey flat roof and which would then provide natural light to the HMO entrance door in what is currently an unappealing covered area.

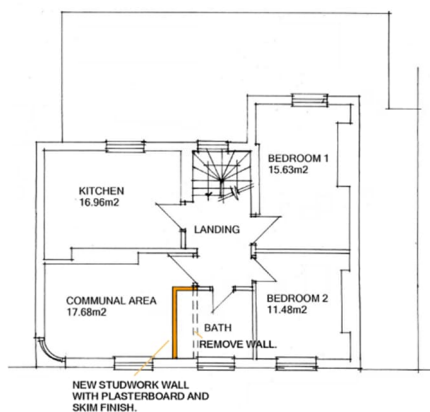


I am pleased to note the proposed double-glazed dome over this passageway on the revised drawing extract below and is unobjectionable.

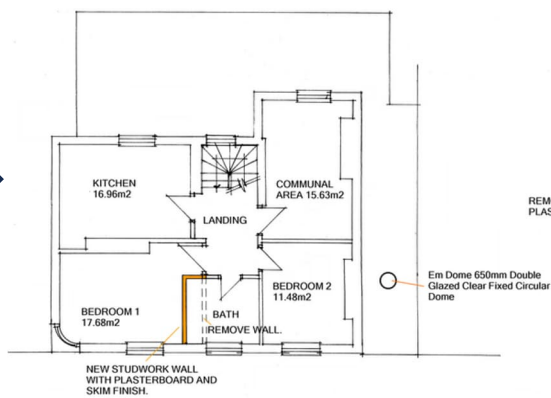


At first floor floor a wall is proposed to removed and a new studwork wall introduced to create a bathroom.

Following my communications with the Planning and Environmental Health Officers in recent weeks I note that the bedroom and communal room have been swapped on the first floor and I am happy with proposed secondary glazing as detailed on drawing no. 102 Rev D albeit the detail is a little basic.



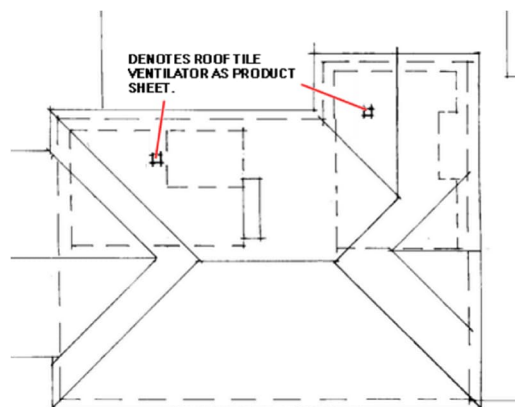
PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR PLAN. 1:100.



PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR PLAN. 1:100.

At second floor, two doors and a small section of non-original wall is proposed to be removed and a sliding door introduced.

With reference to the same communications with the Planning and Environmental Health Officers I am aware that a System 4 mechanical extract ventilation with heat recovery (MVHR) system is proposed to be installed. I note that vents are in situ in both of the top rear rooms, and are 125 mm in diameter and that there are no period features on either of the top floor ceilings. Furthermore, the roof vents would be on rear roof slopes and would not be visible from the street as indicated on the roof plan below. This is considered unobjectionable.



Suggested conditions (LBC only)

Notes:

- I. I have still included Condition 4 as I don't think I have seen a response to my email on 30 January concerning internal door type.
- II. I have left Condition 7 on the list but you may consider that confirmation that a System 4 mechanical extract ventilation with heat recovery (MVHR) system will be used, is sufficient for this condition to be omitted.

1. The work to which this consent relates shall be begun by not later than the expiration of the period of 3 years from the date of this notice.

Reason: To comply with the provisions of Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out wholly in accordance with the details specified in the application and supporting approved documents and plans listed above.

Reason: To ensure the development is carried out in accordance with details which form the basis of this grant of permission.

3. The existing original side entrance door shall be retained as the entrance to the HMO from the open passage unless otherwise agreed and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to protecting the special architectural and historic interest and integrity of the grade II listed building under Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy HE1 of the Local Plan.

4. All 4-panel doors at first and second floor level shall be retained in situ unless otherwise agreed and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Where new doors are required or where plain faced doors exist at first and second floor, the openings shall receive a 4-panel door to match the appearance of retained 4-panel doors at these levels.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to protecting the special architectural and historic interest and integrity of the grade II listed building under Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy HE1 of the Local Plan.

5. The bannister rail, spindels and newel post to the stairs at ground floor level shall be retained in-situ alongside the new studwork wall.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to protecting the special architectural and historic interest and integrity of the grade II listed building under Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy HE1 of the Local Plan.

6. Full details of any fire and acoustic floor separation details including any proposed works to the underside of the stairs at ground floor, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of that part of the development and the works shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to protecting the special architectural and historic interest and integrity of the grade II listed building under Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy HE1 of the Local Plan.

7. Full details of any mechanical ventilation systems shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of

that part of the development and the works shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to protecting the special architectural and historic interest and integrity of the grade II listed building under Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy HE1 of the Local Plan.

HERITAGE POLICY ASSESSMENT:

Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990:

Sections 16(2), 66(1) and 72(1).

North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031:

Policy HE1

NPPF (December 2024):

The following paragraphs are relevant:

- **135 c)** (*sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment*),
- **207** (*local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting*)
- **210** (*desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness*),
- **212** (*great weight should be given to the asset's conservation*),
- **213** (*clear and convincing justification*), and
- **215** (*harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use*).

CONCLUSION:

The proposal is considered **UNOBJECTIONABLE**.

OFFICER: Mark Simmons

DATE: 11/03/2026