

## HERITAGE STATEMENT

Removal of window and insertion of fire escape door to satisfy the requirements of Part B1 of the building regulations.

Vintage Court, Baldock. SG7 6AQ

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report assesses the impact of the proposed adaptation of a 20<sup>th</sup> century window to the rear of the property to form a new doorway. As a heritage asset the English Heritage have listed this as a Grade II listed building. The English Heritage listing is shown below:

*"Late C18 red brick front to C16 or C17 house. Steeply pitched tiled roof behind parapet and cornice of dentil and moulded brickwork. 2 storeys, slight central projection with ground floor glazed door in fielded panelled reveal, surround of Doric pilasters, entablature, and pediment. 2 wide Neo-Georgian shop windows either side. First floor 1:1:1 8asfi windows with glazing bars in reveals under flat arches. Narrow wing on left has exposed timber framework, ground floor carriageway, first floor oversailing on exposed corbels, with plaster infilling between closely spaced posts and flush 2 light lattice casement window. Steeply pitched old tiled roof with carved cornice. Gates of carriageway carved at top with initials S (for surname of owner) D E (for Christian names of owner and wife) and date 1632."*

Proposals to alter the building will affect the less significant elements and are consistent with advice and policies in NPPF.



Figure 1 - Hitchin Street circa 1910

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. HISTORY OF THE ASSET

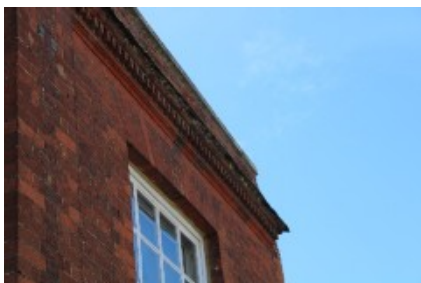
This report forms part of the application for planning approval and listed building consent to assess the impact of proposals for alterations to the interior of the property.

The building forms part of a collection of buildings extending perpendicular from Hitchin Street in a linear form around Vintage Court. This pattern of development is a significant feature of the towns layout and can be traced to the original setting out of the town with a cruciform layout of main streets with slender plot layouts stretching back from the main thoroughfares. Primary residential frontages with carriageways to long courtyards which would contain a mixture of residential and commercial properties, mostly linked to the main building.



**Figure 2 - Historic plan showing layout of Baldock**

The current collection of buildings dates from around the 17<sup>th</sup> Century as can be dated from the arch above the entrance to Vintage Court although it is likely that some form of development would have been present on the site from the origin of the town in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century. It is understood that like many properties in the town it once housed a brewery which was served from Victory Court with the primary residence for the brewery owner on Hitchin Street.



**Figure 4 - Brick corbel and detail**

In the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century, the main façade to Hitchin Street was updated from what was most likely a rendered building like the premises at 25 and 27 Hitchin Street to masonry. The new brick frontage was a substantial development and is a statement of wealth and status as well as one of civic pride. The neoclassical design was the prevailing style at the time of construction and the quality of the brickwork corbelling and evidence of tuck-pointing sets this building out as a considerable asset when constructed.



**Figure 3 - Mortar joints**



**Figure 5 - 25-27 Hitchin Street**

Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> Century we have little evidence of changes other than the buildings to Vintage Court would have been adapted to suit the varying needs of the commercial interest on the site. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century though we see many changes which have altered the character of the buildings. The main building to Hitchin Street had a change of use, likely in the early part of the century, which involved the removal of the bay windows to the main elevation and insertion of large casement windows. We also see

evidence of internal alterations with the removal of the partitions which would have formed the residential accommodation and insertion of an incongruous fireplace in the corner of the now open plan space. To the rear of the property in Vintage Court significant alterations to the roof have altered the appearance of the building but internally evidence of original trusses and timber exists as well as masonry structures. These look likely to have taken place post war as can be seen from the extensive planning record for the property listed below taken from the Local Authority website.



**Figure 6 - Original timbers to existing residential accommodation**

External flue to the new bathroom boiler  
Flat 1 Vintage Court 31 Hitchin Street Baldock SG7 6AQ

Ref. No: 03/01252/1LB | Received: Tue 29 Jul 2003 | Validated: Fri 12 Sep 2003 | Status: Decided

Semi-detached dwelling, 2 parking spaces, and ancillary works  
Land R/O 31 Hitchin Street Baldock SG7 6AQ

Ref. No: 89/00055/1 | Received: Thu 12 Jan 1989 | Validated: Thu 12 Jan 1989 | Status: Appeal decided

Change of use of part of ground floor from restaurant to 2 bedroom dwelling.  
31 Hitchin Street Baldock SG7 6AQ

Ref. No: 87/00660/1 | Received: Sat 04 Apr 1987 | Validated: Sat 04 Apr 1987 | Status: Decided

Installation of new side windows and one door bricking up of one entrance door and internal alterations to facilitate use of part of ground floor as 2 bedroom dwelling.  
31 Hitchin Street Baldock SG7 6AQ

Ref. No: 87/00661/1LB | Received: Sat 04 Apr 1987 | Validated: Sat 04 Apr 1987 | Status: Decided

Application for Listed Building Consent to enlarge side roof window.  
31 Hitchin Street Baldock SG7 6AQ

Ref. No: 87/00315/1LB | Received: Mon 02 Feb 1987 | Validated: Mon 02 Feb 1987 | Status: Decided

Application for Listed Building Consent for construction of three dormer extensions to north east elevation to provide additional hotel rooms in roof space.  
31 Hitchin Street Baldock SG7 6AQ

Ref. No: 86/00138/1LB | Received: Sun 23 Feb 1986 | Validated: Sun 23 Feb 1986 | Status: Decided

Application for Listed Building Consent to enlarge window on south elevation.  
31 Hitchin Street Baldock SG7 6AQ

Ref. No: 86/00139/1LB | Received: Mon 20 Jan 1986 | Validated: Mon 20 Jan 1986 | Status: Decided

Construction of dormer extension to north east elevation to provide additional hotel rooms in roof space.  
31 Hitchin Street Baldock SG7 6AQ

Ref. No: 86/00137/1 | Received: Mon 20 Jan 1986 | Validated: Mon 20 Jan 1986 | Status: Decided

Erection of first floor extension to garage to facilitate its use as a 2 bedroom dwelling.  
31 Hitchin Street Baldock SG7 6AQ

Ref. No: 86/00140/1 | Received: Mon 20 Jan 1986 | Validated: Mon 20 Jan 1986 | Status: Decided

Rearrangement of existing parking and garden area to form new car park for 19 cars.

31 Hitchin Street Baldock SG7 6AQ

Ref. No: 84/01815/1 | Received: Sat 17 Nov 1984 | Validated: Sat 17 Nov 1984 | Status: Decided

Construction of first floor office above existing garage.

31 Hitchin Street Baldock SG7 6AQ

Ref. No: 84/01031/1 | Received: Sat 02 Jun 1984 | Validated: Sat 02 Jun 1984 | Status: Decided

Construction of first floor above garage for use as offices in connection with wine bar and hotel administration.

31 Hitchin Street Baldock SG7 6AQ

Ref. No: 84/00219/1 | Received: Sun 26 Feb 1984 | Validated: Sun 26 Feb 1984 | Status: Decided

Conversion and adaption of existing residential accommodation to private 5 bedroom hotel and self contained owners accommodation and the provision of three additional parking spaces at rear.

31 Hitchin Street Baldock SG7 6AQ

Ref. No: 83/01140/1 | Received: Fri 01 Jul 1983 | Validated: Fri 01 Jul 1983 | Status: Decided

Application for Listed Building Consent for internal alterations to facilitate conversion of dwelling to hotel.

31 Hitchin Street Baldock SG7 6AQ

Ref. No: 83/01139/1LB | Received: Sun 12 Jun 1983 | Validated: Sun 12 Jun 1983 | Status: Unknown

Application for Listed Building Consent for installation of rear dormer window and reconstruction of part of roof.

31 Hitchin Street Baldock SG7 6AQ

Ref. No: 83/00280/1LB | Received: Sun 03 Apr 1983 | Validated: Sun 03 Apr 1983 | Status: Decided

Installation of rear dormer window and reconstruction of part of roof.

31 Hitchin Street Baldock SG7 6AQ

Ref. No: 83/00279/1 | Received: Sat 03 Apr 1982 | Validated: Sat 03 Apr 1982 | Status: Decided

Internal alterations to facilitate change of use of outbuildings to function room with associated bar, store and toilets.

31 Hitchin Street Baldock SG7 6AQ

Ref. No: 82/00038/1 | Received: Mon 11 Jan 1982 | Validated: Mon 11 Jan 1982 | Status: Decided

Application for Listed Building Consent for installation of internal partitions in outbuildings to provide function room with associated bar, store and toilets.

31 Hitchin Street Baldock SG7 6AQ

Ref. No: 82/00039/1 | Received: Mon 11 Jan 1982 | Validated: Mon 11 Jan 1982 | Status: Decided

Internal alterations involving creation of new opening in walls installation of two replacement staircases and lowering of floor level to facilitate use of basement as an extension to wine bar.

31 Hitchin Street Baldock SG7 6AQ

Ref. No: 81/00860/1 | Received: Wed 27 May 1981 | Validated: Wed 27 May 1981 | Status: Decided

Use of basement as extension to ground floor wine bar.

31 Hitchin Street Baldock SG7 6AQ

Ref. No: 81/00859/1 | Received: Wed 27 May 1981 | Validated: Wed 27 May 1981 | Status: Decided

Reconstruction of roof and installation of 3 dormer windows to provide additional living accommodation.

31 Hitchin Street Baldock SG7 6AQ

Ref. No: 81/00743/1 | Received: Fri 01 May 1981 | Validated: Fri 01 May 1981 | Status: Decided

Application for Listed Building Consent for reconstruction of roof and installation of 3 dormer windows to provide additional living accommodation.

31 Hitchin Street Baldock SG7 6AQ

Ref. No: 81/00744/1 | Received: Fri 01 May 1981 | Validated: Fri 01 May 1981 | Status: Decided

Erection of projecting signboard illuminated on both sides by spot lamps.  
31 Hitchin Street Baldock SG7 6AQ

Ref. No: 81/00566/1AD | Received: Tue 24 Mar 1981 | Validated: Tue 24 Mar 1981 | Status: Decided

Application for Listed Building Consent for alterations to doors and windows on North East elevation.  
31 Hitchin Street Baldock SG7 6AQ

Ref. No: 81/00123/1 | Received: Sat 27 Dec 1980 | Validated: Sat 27 Dec 1980 | Status: Decided

Application for Listed Building Consent for first floor rear extension and internal alterations.  
31 Hitchin Street Baldock SG7 6AQ

Ref. No: 80/01813/1 | Received: Wed 05 Nov 1980 | Validated: Wed 05 Nov 1980 | Status: Decided

Internal alterations to facilitate the use of existing shop area (two ground floor front rooms) as wine bar and the provision of car parking facilities.  
31 Hitchin Street Baldock SG7 6AQ

Ref. No: 80/00833/1 | Received: Sat 03 May 1980 | Validated: Sat 03 May 1980 | Status: Decided

Change of use of three first floor rooms from residential to offices & provision of 7 off street parking spaces at rear.  
31 Hitchin Street Baldock SG7 6AQ

Ref. No: 80/00439/1 | Received: Sat 16 Feb 1980 | Validated: Sat 16 Feb 1980 | Status: Decided

## 1.2 PROPOSALS

The proposed works are intended to maintain the commercial use (Class E) to the ground floor and the residential use (Class C) for the flat tot he rear. As they are to be sperate accommodation the access to the two properties are required to be separate. They currently share an access on vintage court which is contrary to requirement B1 of the building regulations and paragraph 3.5 of the approved documents. In order to rectify this we have indicated the removal of an existing window and spandrel and the insertion of a door to provide separate access.

## 2. SIGNIFICANCE (HERITAGE)

### 2.1 Assessing significance

Assessing the relative heritage significance of heritage assets is now a fundamental part of conservation and decision-making in relation to historic buildings. Significance is defined as 'the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest' (NPPF). Historic England (previously English Heritage) has provided some guidance on the four main types of heritage value: evidential, historical, aesthetic, and communal (Conservation Principles, 2008).

**Evidential value:** the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity.

**Historical value:** the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present - it tends to be illustrative or associative.

**Aesthetic value:** the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.

**Communal value:** the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory.

Significance can also be defined in relation to levels:

- **Exceptional** – an asset important at the highest national or international levels, including scheduled ancient monuments, Grade I and II\* listed buildings and World Heritage Sites.
- **High** – a designated asset important at a national and a regional level, including Grade II listed buildings and conservation areas.
- **Medium** – an undesignated asset important at a local to regional level, including local (non-statutory) listed buildings or those that make a positive contribution to the setting of a listed building or to a conservation area. May include less significant parts of listed buildings. Buildings and parts of structures in this category should be retained where possible, although there is usually scope for adaptation.
- **Low** – structure or feature of very limited heritage or other cultural value and not defined as a heritage asset. May include insignificant interventions to listed buildings, and buildings that do not contribute positively to a conservation area. The removal or adaptation of structures in this category is usually acceptable where the work will enhance a related heritage asset.
- **Negative** – structure or feature that harms the value of a heritage asset. Wherever practicable, removal of negative features should be considered, taking account of setting and opportunities for enhancement.

## 2.2 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (HERITAGE)

The site has clear evidential and historical value in tracing its development from the 12th Century through the 17th Century to the modern day as described in section 1.1. The main building fronting Hitchin Street is an important element in a group of buildings which run along Hitchin St. The neoclassical design and craftsmanship are noteworthy and although it would benefit from sympathetic restoration it has a high overall aesthetic value and is therefore of high significance. The building has a medium to low communal value, it functioned for several years as a wine bar and restaurant and will have some meaning to its past patrons but will not have a significant impact on the community at large.

The buildings to the rear which form Vintage Court have some evidential and historical value, but the years of redevelopment have reduced the aesthetic and communal value and would be of low significance as historical assets. Some archaeological interest may be evident in the site in general, particularly as it falls in an area of known archaeological significance but as no invasive works or excavations are planned this is not relevant to this study.

The interior has unfortunately been substantially altered over the years and while the timber frame and certain elements have survived when assessed using the conservation principles the overall significance of the interiors is low. Although some individual elements are of high significance none of them are affected by the development so therefore, we have not created an extensive list.

## 3. SUMMARY (HERITAGE)

### 3.1. JUSTIFICATION FOR THE PROPOSALS

As noted previously the building in its current form is not compliant with building regulations and the shared means of escape and lack of fire separation between the residential and commercial properties poses a fire risk which needs to be addressed. The window which is proposed to be removed is a 20<sup>th</sup> century single glazed casement of no significance and the structure beneath the window, while original fabric, is not significant and care will be taken to protect the original timbers and structure during the course of the works.



### 3.2 IMPACT OF THE PROPOSALS ON THE LISTED BUILDING (HERITAGE)

External works – The proposed alterations will have a low impact on an area with low significance and therefore when assessed against the requirement for fire safety should be deemed an acceptable intervention to the heritage asset.

## 4 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

### 4.1 RELEVANT POLICY.

The proposals have been considered under the following relevant policies within the North Herts District Local Plan (no2 with alterations), North Hertfordshire Draft Local Plan 2011-2031 and more generally the NPPF.

#### North Herts District Local Plan (no2 with alterations)

Policy 8 – Development in towns.

#### North Hertfordshire Draft Local Plan 2011-2031

Policy SP4 – Town and local centres.

Policy SP8 – Housing

Policy SP13 – Historic environment.

Policy HE4 - Archaeology

## 5. CONCLUSION

It is considered that the proposed alterations are sensibly designed, proportioned, and respects the setting, character, and appearance of the listed building.

The building is a Grade II listed building: this reflects its evidential and historical value to the town as well as its aesthetic value in the group of properties forming the streetscape. The proposals involve minor changes to the building's exterior and will not adversely affect its setting but instead provide a safe compliant building.

Site Photographs

