



FAO: Planning Department,
North Herts Council

Ref: 24/02568/FP & 24/02569/LBC
Date: 18/12/2024

BUILT HERITAGE ADVICE

Dear Sir / Madam,

RE: Vintage Court Hitchin Street Baldock Hertfordshire SG7 6AQ

Built Heritage Advice pertaining to an application for:

Insertion of fire escape door to northeast elevation following removal of existing window

The property is a Grade II listed building, the main house is sixteenth or seventeenth century with a late eighteenth century red brick front. The application relates to the Doctors Cottage which is a smaller attached section to the rear, forming part of a courtyard around Vintage Court.

The buildings serves a commercial use Class E and residential use. Externally the elevation to be impacted has a central door with a window either side on the ground floor and larger dormers to the tiled roof. The proposal is to replace a modern ground floor window with a fire door, as the ground and first floor are separate accommodation, and the submission states that the new door will enable the building to meet Building Regulations in relation to fire. The proposal would also include internal partitioning at the ground floor.

NPPF paragraph 207 requires applicants to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected to a level of detail proportionate to the assets' importance to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. Only limited information has been provided as to the significance of the area to be impacted. However, the Doctors Cottage forms part of the listed building and is likely to hold historic and evidential significance in relation to the listed building overall.

The existing window is modern and so its replacement is likely to be acceptable in principle. However, its replacement with a door would require a larger opening, which would be likely to result in the loss of original fabric and would materially alter the external appearance of the property which would harm the historic and evidential significance of the property. The proposal would also alter the internal layout and only limited information has been provided as to the significance or history of this.

Sections 16 (2) and 66 (1) of the of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires special regard to preserving listed buildings, their setting and any special architectural or historic interest they possess. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 212 states great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The NPPF paragraph 215 states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm,



this would be weight against the public benefits of the proposal including securing its optimum viable use.

The proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the listed building. It would be beneficial to understand if any alternatives that did not result in harm to historic fabric and layouts have been considered. Planning Officers should weigh the less than substantial harm against the public benefits including optimum viable use.

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