

December 2025

203 Heritage Impact Assessment

Kitchen Extraction System

32 Sun Street, Hitchin

Heritage Impact Assessment

Michael Collins Architects Ltd

Contents

- 1.0: Summary**
- 1.1: Site Description and Use**
- 1.2: Application Context**
- 2.0: Statement of Heritage Significance**
- 2.1: Understanding of Place**
- 2.2: Appraisal**
- 2.3: Approach to Significance**
- 2.4: Assessment of Cultural Values**
- 2.5: Summary of Key Significances**
- 2.6: Level of Significance**
- 3.0: Relevant Matters**
- 3.1: Relevant Planning Policy**
- 3.2: Environmental Health Requirements**
- 3.3: Pre-Existing Extraction System**
- 4.0: Description of the Installed System**
- 4.1: Technical Specification**
- 4.2: Installation Methodology**
- 4.3: Location and Visibility**
- 5.0: Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment**
- 5.1: Introduction**
- 5.2: Assessment of the Extraction System**
- 5.3: Conclusion**

1.0 Summary

1.0 Summary

This Heritage Impact Assessment has been prepared by Michael Collins Architects Ltd on behalf of the operator of The Shack Kitchen & Bar, 32 Sun Street, Hitchin. It has been prepared in response to a request by North Hertfordshire District Council for further justification of the kitchen extraction and supply ventilation system installed at the rear of the listed building.

The assessment considers the impact of the extraction system on the significance of the Grade II listed building and its setting within the Hitchin Conservation Area (Character Area 2c), and demonstrates that the installation constitutes less than significant harm to the heritage asset.

This document should be read as a standalone assessment focusing specifically on the extraction system. It draws on the heritage background established in the Design and Access Statement (document reference 202, July 2024, Michael Collins Architects Ltd) prepared in support of the broader listed building consent application for the refurbishment of 32 Sun Street.

1.1 Site Description and Use

The site is located at 32 Sun Street, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG5 1AH. The property occupies the ground floor and basement of a three-storey building on Hitchin's historic Sun Street, just off Market Place. The building is Grade II listed (NGR: TL1839628996) and falls within the Hitchin Conservation Area, Character Area 2c.

The building has been refurbished and is now in use as The Shack Kitchen & Bar, a street food restaurant. The wider ground floor fit-out and listed building works received consent. The local authority subsequently requested this standalone Heritage Impact Assessment to justify the kitchen extraction system at the rear.

1.2 Application Context

The kitchen extraction system was installed as part of the refurbishment of The Shack restaurant. It replaces a previous extraction system that served the same function when the building was in use as an earlier restaurant. The system was installed by Fusion Hot Ltd (October 2025) and serves a new commercial kitchen canopy.

The extraction system is located on the flat roof of a single-storey rear extension constructed in the 1960s. This extension is not of historic significance in its own right, though it falls within the curtilage of the listed building. The system cannot be seen from Sun Street, Market Place, or any public vantage point.

Location Plan

1.0 Summary

The following is the description of the proposals:

Internal alterations to create a new restaurant and kitchen, new external signage, the addition of a new ventilation system on the roof at the rear of the property, and enlarging the existing roof light/roof hatch.

1.1 Site description & use

The site is located along Hitchin's historic Sun Street. Located just off Market Place, the street is occupied predominantly by commercial premises at street level.

As will be elaborated on in the heritage statement, the site has a rich 600-year history and varied character containing several buildings from the 17th-century (and earlier) concealed behind 18th-century frontages.



Copyright - Google 2024 (Not to scale)



Scale: 1:500
 Date: 10/12/24
 01453 226666

Note: This drawing is copyright.
 Note: These details are preliminary until further surveys are undertaken.
 Note: Scale and boundaries are indicative.
 Note: Ownership boundary indicated based on OS data.
 Note: Red dotted line is shown as site boundary.
 Note: Elevation key plan not to scale.

Michael Collins Architect LLP

The Shack, Sun Street, Hitchin

202 Location Plan

001

10/12/24 10/12/24

10/12/24 10/12/24

Fig. 1 — Location plan and aerial view, 32 Sun Street, Hitchin (outlined in red). Source: Michael Collins Architects Ltd, Design and Access Statement, July 2024 / © Google 2024.

2.0 Statement of Heritage Significance

2.1 Understanding of Place – The Context of the Property

Sun Street takes its name from the Sun Hotel (formerly the Sun Inn) – a Grade II* listed building dating from around 1700, replacing the earlier Sun Inn first documented in 1575. The street had previously been named Angel Street after the medieval Angel Vaults Inn, which stood on the northern side of the Sun Hotel until it collapsed in 1956.

The land upon which Sun Street is situated was originally part of Hitchin's open-air informal market. By 1470, there were at least two stalls with continuous tenures (Hitchin Historical Society, 2009). This large space was gradually encroached upon until the 16th century with two blocks of new buildings, creating what is now Bucklersbury, Sun Street, and Churchyard (Hitchin Conservation Area: Character Statement, 2011).

These medieval buildings of timber-framed construction hosted a mixture of commercial premises and houses stretching back at right angles to the street, forming continuous frontages with rear yards, back gardens or courts. Carriage entrances to these yards are still visible today along Bucklersbury, Sun Street, High Street and Bancroft. Through cartographic analysis, these rear courts have been progressively infilled by backland developments over the last century.

The property at no. 32 Sun Street has an 18th-century frontage and modern shop fronts. The old tiled roof and wide eaves suggest a timber-framed original behind. The bay windows on the first and second floor were later additions made between 1852 and the 1880s (Hitchin Historical Society, 2009).

Sources: Historic England Listed Building Register; Digimap Historic Maps; 'A Walk Along Sun Street' Hitchin Historical Society, 2009; Hitchin Conservation Area: Character Statement, 2011.

The Grade II Listing reads: "C18 front with later alterations. Stucco, old tiled roof with wide eaves and box dormer. 3 storeys, modern shop fronts, 2 upper floor windows and 2 storey canted oriel bay window on left. Nos 13 to 34 (consec) form a group."

2.2 Appraisal

Key features of the existing fabric include: the 18th-century stucco front elevation; the rear elevation with stucco finish and 1980s timber-framed windows; the pitched clay-tiled roof at the front; and the felt flat roof at the rear covering the 1960s single-storey rear extension. The photographs below illustrate the pre-refurbishment condition of the rear facade and flat roof, showing the existing aged extraction ductwork and the established pattern of plant and services in this backland location.



Existing Rear Facade and Roof



Fig. 2 — Pre-refurbishment condition of the rear facade and flat roof, showing the existing aged extraction ductwork, plant equipment and felt roof surface. Source: Michael Collins Architects Ltd, Design and Access Statement, July 2024.

2.3 Approach to Significance

The basis of protection for buildings of cultural heritage significance is understanding their unique identity expressed as a collection of values. 32 Sun Street embodies a range of values relating to historic, cultural, social and associational aspects of its past. The following assessment is laid out in accordance with Historic England Conservation Principles, 2008 and British Standard 7913: Conservation of Historic Buildings, 2013.

2.4 Assessment of Cultural Values

BS Standard 7913 identifies four categories of primary values:

1. Evidential Value

Physical evidence about past human activity, including standing structures, documentary sources, pictorial records and artefacts.

2. Historical Value

Associations with notable people, historical events or developments. Historical values are less vulnerable to change than evidential values.

3. Aesthetic Value

The sensory and intellectual stimulation people draw from a historic asset, including its appearance and setting. Particularly sensitive to change over time.

4. Communal Value

The meanings an historic asset holds for those who relate to it as part of a collective experience or memory, including emotional links to collective history and heritage.

2.5 Summary of Key Significances related to the Extraction System

Area	Contribution to Overall Significance	Sensitivity to Change	Key Elements of Significance	Additional Comments
Rear Roof (1960s flat roof extension)	Low	Low	Evidential/Historical: The flat roof covers what was once a small rear yard, progressively infilled from the 1960s onwards. The roof surface, felt membrane, and associated plant are modern and of no heritage value. Cartographic evidence confirms this space was already substantially developed upon during the 1960s. The roof is not part of the historic building fabric.	Substantial alterations were made during the 1960s at the rear of the property. The relatively recent additions of plant equipment and felt roof surface are of low heritage value. The flat roofs around the site are primarily utilised for services with elements of plant visible.
Rear Elevation (historic fabric at first floor and above)	Considerable	Considerable	Evidential/Historical: The rear elevation at first floor provides evidence of the former upper-level uses historically. The articulation of the rear elevation and its roof form evidences the use of timber framing and pargetting/stucco. This elevation has been modified during the last century.	The new extraction system has no fixings or attachments to the historic rear elevation. The ductwork runs horizontally across the 1960s flat roof only and does not rise to or interact with the historic rear elevation above.
Front Elevation	Moderate (Low Level) & Exceptional (High Level)	Moderate (Low Level) & Exceptional (High Level)	Evidential/Historical/Aesthetic/Communal: Recognised by Historic England for its C18 front, stucco, old tiled roof with wide eaves and box dormer. Significant to the overall character of Sun Street and the history of its timber buildings.	The extraction system is entirely invisible from Sun Street and has no impact on the front elevation or its significance.
Setting – Backland Area	Low	Low	The backland area has been progressively infilled over the last century. Multiple roof-mounted plant items, AC units, and ductwork are already present across this area serving adjacent commercial businesses. The character is one of functional servicing rather than heritage display.	The extraction system contributes to an established pattern of roof-mounted plant in this backland area. It is not visible from the public realm.

2.6 Level of Significance

The rear flat roof upon which the extraction system is installed is assessed as being of Low significance. The historic rear elevation above is of Considerable significance but is unaffected by the installation. The front elevation and interior – which contain elements of Exceptional and Considerable significance including the historic timber frame – are entirely unaffected by the extraction system.

3.0 Relevant Matters

3.1 Relevant Planning Policy

The following policy designations and guidance are relevant to this assessment:

- The site falls within the designated Hitchin Archaeological Area.
- The site falls within the Hitchin Conservation Area, Character Area 2c – The Market Place, Bridge Street, Tilehouse Street and Upper Tilehouse Street.
- The host building is Grade II listed.
- Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990: special regard shall be had to the desirability of preserving the building, its setting, and any features of special architectural or historic interest.
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Chapter 16: proposals causing less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
- Historic England, 'Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment', Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2, 2015.
- Historic England, 'The Setting of Heritage Assets', Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3, 2017.
- Hitchin Conservation Area: Character Statement, 2011.

3.2 Environmental Health Requirements

The installation of a commercial kitchen extraction system of this specification is a requirement of Environmental Health legislation for food service businesses in England. The system must comply with HVCA DW/172 (Kitchen Ventilation Systems), Building Regulations Approved Document F, and DEFRA Guidance (2010) on Air Discharge and Dispersion Principles.

The extraction system is the minimum size required to serve a commercial kitchen of this nature. A reduced specification would not satisfy Environmental Health requirements and would render the restaurant unable to operate lawfully. The system is therefore an enabling requirement for the continued viable use of this heritage asset.

Other food and beverage businesses operating from listed and historic buildings on Sun Street and Market Place have comparable extraction systems. The operation of such businesses from historic town centre buildings necessarily requires adequate servicing infrastructure, contributing to the vitality of Hitchin's historic town centre.

3.3 Pre-Existing Extraction System

Prior to the refurbishment, the premises operated with an existing extraction system serving the previous restaurant use. This consisted of aged galvanised ducting and a roof-mounted fan in poor condition, with no grease filtration or noise control measures. Internal ducting was corroded, showing grease and condensate leakage, with inadequate fan performance. The arrangement did not comply with DW/172 kitchen ventilation standards.

Critically, the new extraction system occupies openings previously used by the old ductwork. The installation does not introduce new penetrations in a previously unaffected location; rather it replaces an existing arrangement in the same general position with a modern, compliant, and better-performing system. The old system was removed in full prior to installation of the new equipment.

Pre-Installation Condition – Photographic Record



Fig. 3 — Pre-installation condition of the flat roof showing the old, non-compliant extraction system mid-removal. The dilapidated ductwork, corroded components, and general state of disrepair are evident. The new system connects to the same pre-existing roof openings. Source: Fusion Hot Ltd, October 2025.

4.0 Description of the Installed System

4.1 Technical Specification

The following information is drawn from the Kitchen Extract Ventilation Report prepared by Fusion Hot Ltd, October 2025.

Extract Air System:

- 1 x CVAT/4-560 ND acoustic box fan (main extract)
- 1 x 560 mm vertical discharge cowl positioned at roof level
- Ductwork fabricated from galvanised steel to DW/144 standards
- All components mounted on Unistrut anti-vibration support frames

Supply Air System:

- 1 x 500 mm CVAT acoustic box fan
- 1 x G4 filter box for intake air filtration
- Supply ductwork supported on Unistrut anti-vibration frames with flexible connections

The system serves a 4,450 mm x 1,200 mm x 500/500 mm stainless-steel kitchen canopy fitted with removable baffle filters and LED lighting. The 560 mm duct diameter and matching CVAT 560 fan provide the correct airflow for the kitchen's extract demand, with face velocity and airflow rates typical of similar commercial kitchens.

Compliance standards met:

- HVCA DW/172 – Kitchen Ventilation Systems
- HVCA DW/144 – Ductwork Fabrication and Installation
- Building Regulations Part F – Ventilation Requirements
- DEFRA Guidance (2010) – Air Discharge and Dispersion Principles

4.2 Installation Methodology

All roof works, penetrations, and reinstatement were carried out by others prior to Fusion Hot Ltd's installation. Fusion Hot Ltd installed the mechanical components only, connecting to the pre-prepared openings. Fan units and duct supports are installed on non-penetrative Unistrut frames to protect the new roof membrane. All connections are mechanical and reversible.

Acoustic box fans minimise operational noise. Anti-vibration mounts and flexible connectors reduce structure-borne noise. The system operates within typical restaurant limits of below 55 dB(A) at 3 m from discharge.

4.3 Location and Visibility – Photographic Record

The photographs below illustrate the installed system. The aerial view confirms the extraction system is fully screened from Sun Street and Market Place by the historic pitched roof of the listed building. Ground-level views from the upper storey of the neighbouring property at no. 23 Market Place – the only vantage point from which the system is visible – demonstrate that it sits within an established backland context of roof-mounted plant and services.

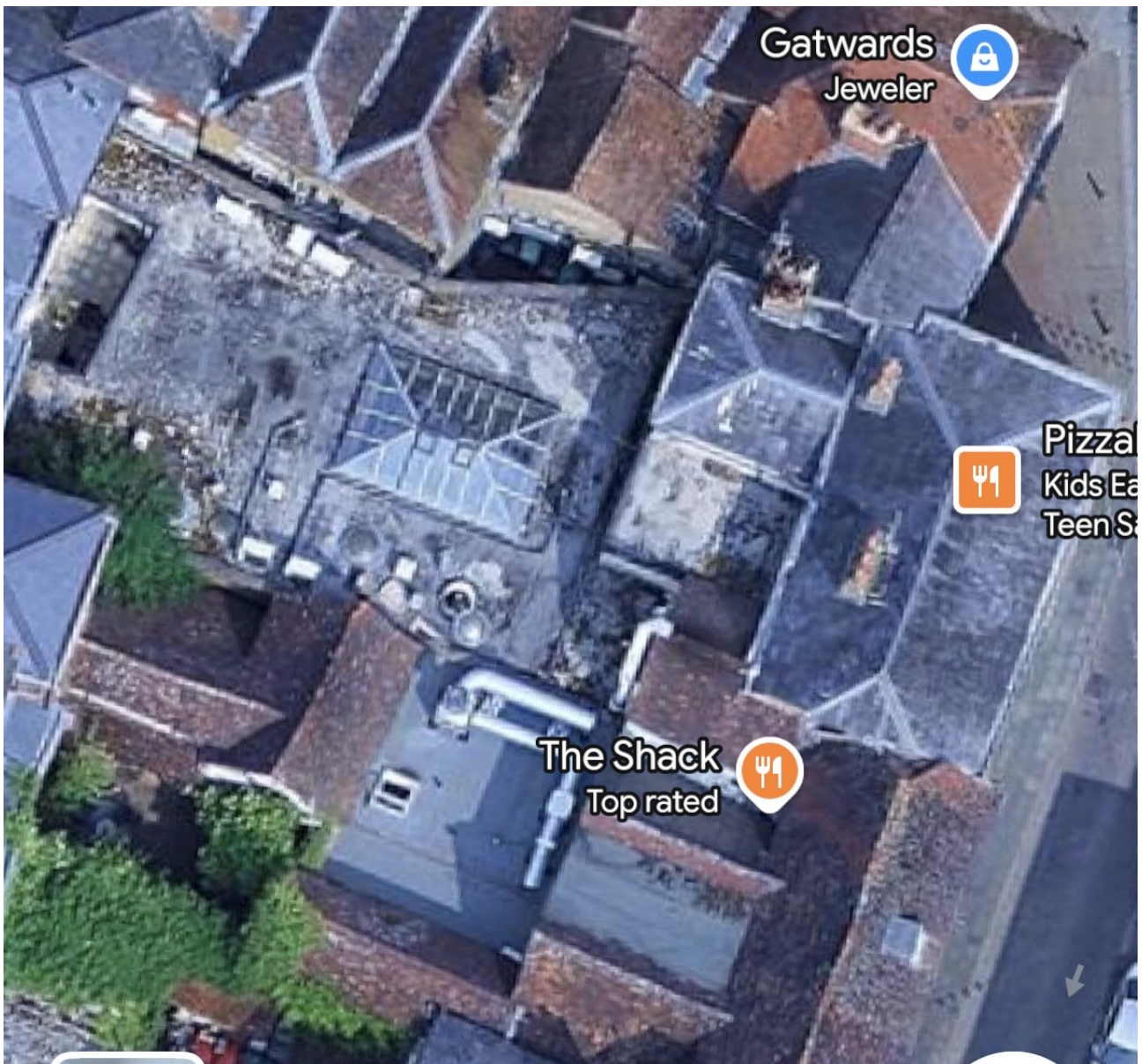


Fig. 4 — Aerial view showing the location of the extraction system on the flat roof to the rear of 32 Sun Street (The Shack, labelled). The system is fully screened from Sun Street and Market Place by the historic pitched roof of the listed building. © Google Maps 2025.

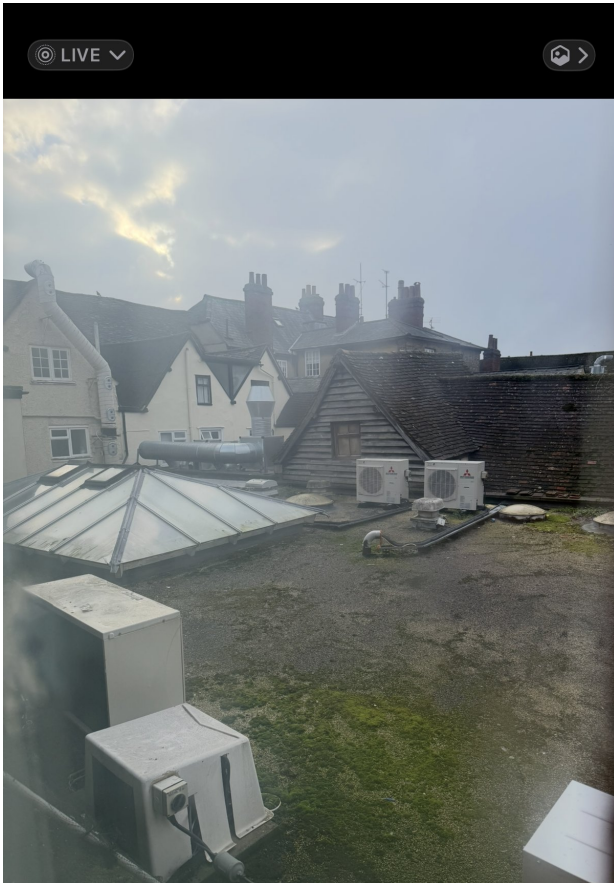


Fig. 5 — The installed extraction system on the flat roof of the 1960s rear extension, viewed from the upper storey of 23 Market Place (December 2025). The system sits clear of the historic rear elevation of the listed building.



Fig. 6 — Context view of the installed system showing the wider backland area. Multiple existing roof-mounted plant items and AC units are visible on neighbouring properties, demonstrating the established servicing character of this area.



Fig. 7 — The installed extraction system viewed from the upper storey of 23 Market Place, December 2025. The galvanised ductwork and 560 mm discharge cowl are visible on the 1960s flat roof extension, away from the historic rear elevation.



Fig. 8 — Wider context view of the backland area from 23 Market Place showing the concentration of roof-mounted plant, AC units and services across neighbouring commercial properties.

5.0 Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment

5.1 Introduction

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. This assessment follows the methodology set out in Historic England's Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2, 'Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment' (2015), structured around the four tests of impact, reversibility, mitigation, and compensation.

5.2 Assessment of the Extraction System

Kitchen Extraction and Supply Ventilation System

Impact

The extraction system is located on the flat roof of the 1960s single-storey rear extension, a surface assessed as being of Low heritage significance. The system has no fixings to, and makes no contact with, the historic rear elevation of the listed building or the adjacent historic outbuilding. The ductwork occupies openings previously used by the prior extraction system and does not introduce new penetrations in previously unaffected locations. The system is invisible from all public viewpoints, including Sun Street and Market Place. From the only viewpoint from which it can be seen – upper-storey windows of neighbouring properties overlooking the backland – the system is seen in the context of an existing dense concentration of roof-mounted plant and services. The impact on the significance of the listed building is assessed as Less Than Substantial, at the lower end of that category.

Reversibility

The extraction system is fully demountable. All ductwork and supports are mechanically fixed and can be dismantled without structural damage. Unistrut anti-vibration frames are non-penetrative to the roof membrane. Roof penetrations were sealed by others and can be reinstated if required. The equipment can be removed in full, restoring the roof to its pre-installation condition. Reversibility is assessed as High.

Mitigation

The following mitigation measures have been applied: (1) The system is located on the lowest-significance area – the 1960s flat roof extension – rather than on the historic rear elevation or roof slope. (2) The system has no fixings to any historic surface. (3) Routing ductwork across the flat roof avoids the alternative of mounting it on the historic rear facade and running it to ridge level – as has been done on the neighbouring property to the north – which would represent a significantly greater intrusion on the historic fabric. (4) The vertical high-velocity discharge cowl directs fumes upward and away from the windows of residential occupiers on upper floors of neighbouring buildings, improving amenity compared to the previous system. (5) The system cannot be seen from any public vantage point.

Compensation – Heritage Gains

The broader refurbishment of 32 Sun Street represents a substantial heritage gain. Historic beams, lath and plaster ceilings, and timber framing that had been concealed or obscured by inappropriate late 20th-century fit-out have been revealed, conserved, and expressed. The extraction system is an enabling element of this wider programme: without a compliant extraction system, the restaurant use could not lawfully continue, and the financial basis for the maintenance and conservation of this heritage asset would be removed. The public benefit of retaining and enhancing a Grade II listed building in active, sustainable commercial use – contributing to the vitality of Hitchin's historic Market Place and Sun Street – is a material consideration that weighs in favour of the installation.

5.3 Conclusion

This Heritage Impact Assessment has been prepared to demonstrate the justification for the kitchen extraction and supply ventilation system installed at the rear of The Shack Kitchen & Bar, 32 Sun Street, Hitchin. The assessment concludes that:

- The extraction system is located on the 1960s flat-roof rear extension, a part of the site of Low heritage significance.
- The system has no fixings to, and makes no contact with, any historic fabric of the listed building.
- The system replaces a previous extraction system that occupied the same openings and performed the same function in an inadequate and non-compliant manner.
- The system is entirely invisible from all public vantage points and causes no harm to the character or appearance of Sun Street, Market Place, or the Hitchin Conservation Area as experienced from the public realm.
- The system is fully reversible and can be removed without structural damage.
- The system is the minimum size necessary to comply with Environmental Health requirements and is an enabling condition for the sustainable continued use of this heritage asset as a restaurant.
- The acoustic specification and vertical high-velocity discharge cowl represent an improvement on the previous installation in terms of noise and amenity impact on neighbouring occupiers.
- The wider refurbishment of the building represents a heritage gain, with the extraction system serving as an enabling element of that gain.

Having regard to the above, the installation of the extraction system is assessed as causing Less Than Substantial harm to the significance of the Grade II listed building and its setting. In accordance with paragraph 208 of the NPPF, this harm is clearly outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal, including the contribution of The Shack to the vitality of Hitchin's historic town centre and the enabling of the long-term sustainable use and maintenance of a heritage asset of special architectural and historic interest.

Michael Collins Architects Ltd

Suite 4a, 30 Bancroft, Hitchin, SG5 1LE

T: 01462 236866 | E: michael@michaelcollinsarchitects.com

www.michaelcollinsarchitects.com

December 2025