

CONSERVATION TEAM CONSULTATION APPLICATION RESPONSE

APPLICATION REF:	25/02759/FPH
CASE OFFICER:	Vicki Wood
APPLICATION SITE:	68 Queen Street Hitchin SG4 9TS
DESCRIPTION OF WORKS:	Single storey rear extension with associated access steps. Insertion of two rear rooflights to facilitate loft conversion into habitable space and erection of detached timber shed following demolition of existing shed

RECOMMENDATION:

There is **NO OBJECTION**. The scheme will satisfy the provisions of Sections 16(2) (LBC) and /or 66(1) (FP/FPH) and/or 72(1) (both) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the aims of Section 16 of the NPPF and Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031.

SUGGESTED CONDITIONS:

Details and/or samples of materials to be used for the works, hereby granted consent, shall be submitted to and agreed, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority before any works are commenced.

Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of the listed building to which this consent relates and to comply with Policies SP13 and HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 to 2031.

Full joinery details of the proposed new timber doors/windows to a metric scale and 1:1 scale drawings of the proposed glazing bars hereby granted consent, shall be submitted to and agreed, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority before any works are commenced/prior to manufacturing of the doors.

Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of the listed building to which this consent relates and to comply with Policies SP13 and HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 to 2031.

SHORT SUMMARY:

Impact on listed building's special character – 68 Queens Street is a Grade II listed building and the link to the list description is copied below.

[66-68, QUEEN STREET, Non-Civil Parish - 1173621 | Historic England](#)

This group of listed properties date from 1860-70 with unusual detailing which form a strong group.

The proposal will retain much of the group value. The rear single storey flat roof extension will not be overly dominant of the rear elevation. The scheme should seek to retain the first-floor single window which is part of the historic fabric while the loss of a similar window on the ground floor is being supported to enable the proposal rear extension on this proviso.

Any new windows should be in timber and subject to details requested as a condition.

The loft conversion seeks the insertion of conservation style rooflights which are appropriate and as they are located to the rear roof slope will not have a harmful impact of the front elevation where presently the roof scape is intact and where the group value of these terraces are appreciated.

The internal interventions e.g. removal of doors between existing living room and proposed rear extension are reversible and therefore can be assessed to have a low level of harm.

The proposed detached timber shed to replace the existing to be demolished is supportable so long as it is used as ancillary to the main dwelling.

The overall proposal is considered to cause less than substantial harm at the lower end of the that scale for the reasons stated above.

Impact on character and appearance of the conservation area – The property is location in Character Area 3 of Hitchin Conservation Area and the link to the character statement is copied below.

[Hitchin CA Character Statement 26-07-11.indd](#)

Relevant extracts

Queen Street, which runs parallel to the River Hiz, was once called Dead Street and Back Street, the name being changed in the 19th century. This was originally a densely developed area with buildings and back courts to match those in the western part of the town. Degenerating into slums, of which Chapman's, Seymour's and Thorpe's Yards were the most notorious, nearly all were demolished by the Council in the 1920s to make way for St Mary's Square, a new lake and, at a time when car use was beginning to grow, for new public car parks. At the same time, Portmill Lane was downgraded into an access road for new shops along Hermitage Road.

Positive characteristics

Positive characteristics:

- A number of important listed buildings survive, particularly, The Biggin (grade II*) and the British Schools buildings (partly grade II* and partly grade II);
- Nos. 7 and 9 Portmill Lane are red brick Georgian houses listed grade II;
- St Mary's Square and the adjoining lake provide an attractive 'entrance' to the town centre for visitors using the public car park;
- Attractive views along the river next to The Biggin, and most notably, up Windmill Hill from both Queen Street and Hermitage Road;

- *Cohesive 1920s buildings along the north side and the south east side of Hermitage Road, most locally listed.*

Important views:

View 1: Northwards along Queen Street taking in the British School complex on the right;

View 2: From Queen Street, looking westwards down Biggin Lane towards the grade II* listed almshouses, with the mature trees which lie close by

The proposal is considered to have a minimal impact of the character and appearance of the conservation area as none of the development will affect the positive characteristics or important views detailed above due to the locations of the proposal and interventions.

Site Context:

[66-68, QUEEN STREET, Non-Civil Parish - 1173621 | Historic England Hitchin CA Character Statement 26-07-11.indd](#)

DETAILED ANALYSIS AND CONSIDERATIONS:

[Please see summary section above.](#)

HERITAGE POLICY ASSESSMENT:

Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990:

North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031:

NPPF (December 2024):

The Local Plan and NPPF

North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 and the policies contained within it i.e., Policy HE1. The plan was adopted November 2022.

The relevant paragraph numbers at Section 16 of the July 2021 version of the NPPF have been changed as follows:

197. In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*

199. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

200. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.....

202. 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.

206. Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.

The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition) – December 2017

At para 14 under the sub-heading 'Landscape Assessment and Amenity' it states that "Analysis of setting is different from landscape assessment. While landscapes include everything within them, the entirety of very extensive settings may not contribute equally to the significance of a heritage asset, if at all. **Careful analysis is therefore required to assess whether one heritage asset at a considerable distance from another, though intervisible with it – a church spire, for instance – is a major component of the setting, rather than just an incidental element within the wider landscape.**"

At para 17 it states (my emphasis in bold): "All heritage assets have significance, some of which have particular significance and are designated. The contribution made by their setting to their significance also varies. **Although many settings may be enhanced by development, not all settings have the same capacity to accommodate change without harm to the significance of the heritage asset or the ability to appreciate it.** This capacity may vary between designated assets of the same grade or of the same type or according to the nature of the change. It can also depend on the location of the asset: an elevated or overlooked location; a riverbank, coastal or island location; or a location within an extensive tract of flat land may increase the sensitivity of the setting (i.e. the capacity of the setting to accommodate change without harm to the heritage asset's significance) or of views of the asset. This requires the implications of development affecting the setting of heritage assets to be considered on a case-by-case basis."

Relevant National Guidance i.e. Historic England:

Other relevant documents (Please specify):

CONCLUSION:

[Please see summary section above.](#)

OFFICER: Tricia Craggs

DATE: 8 December 2025