



FAO: Planning Department,
North Herts Council

Ref: 24/02686/FPH and 24/02687/LBC
Date: 10/02/2025

BUILT HERITAGE ADVICE

Dear Sir / Madam,

RE: 2 Tilehouse Street, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG5 2DW

Full planning and listed building consent applications for: Single storey rear glazed extension linking to existing outbuilding. Internal alterations

The property is part of a pair of Grade II listed eighteenth century cottages (No 1 and 2, Tilehouse Street List Entry Number: 1102151). The properties are finished in red brick with flared brick patterning. No. 1 has a small backyard and detached outbuilding.

It is located within the Hitchin Conservation Area. The adopted Hitchin Conservation Area: Character Statement 26 July 2011(CACS) allocates the site with The Town Centre Character Area 2c: The Market Place, Bridge Street, Tilehouse Street and Upper Tilehouse Street. This part of Hitchin retains the highest concentration of listed buildings along each of the main streets, which includes Tilehouse Street

The property is simple in terms of architectural details, but it has a coherent quality across both properties at the front, while the rear appears to have been extended across both properties at some point historically. It also has historic significance as part of the historic core of Hitchin and makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area.

The site is relatively open to public view to the rear, as there is an access road running south-west to northeast alongside No. 1 Tilehouse Street and there are limited existing boundary treatments at both No. 2 and its attached neighbour at No. 1 Tilehouse Street.

The proposed works to the house would comprise a glazed infill extension between the rear of the house and the existing outbuilding, with a new opening to both the outbuilding and the existing kitchen to facilitate connection and creation of a large open-plan kitchen. The submission states that there was a similar structure in this location previously, and this is supported by historic maps which show a structure connecting directly to the rear of the property during the nineteenth century.

The proposed glazed structure would be a subordinate contemporary addition, modest in scale and is acceptable in principle.

However, there are concerns regarding the works to the existing kitchen: Existing and proposed rear elevations of the house have not been provided but the proposed plans and 3D view indicates a large opening would be created in the rear wall of the kitchen. This would result in the loss of a



large amount of historic fabric. In addition, the existing kitchen is a small area in keeping with the age of the property and is likely to form part of the historic layout. Based on the brickwork it appears that the rear rooms were a later addition to the houses, but still form a historic part of the property. The complete removal of this section of rear wall area would result in a loss of this existing fabric and historic layout, resulting in less than substantial harm.

In terms of other internal alterations: A new opening is shown from the lounge directly to the kitchen and closing off the existing doorway to the hallway. It is not clear as to the age of the existing openings, but the new opening from lounge to kitchen would result in an excessively open-plan layout which would not be in keeping with the historic form of the building.

In addition, an annotation describes partitioning off and insulating the front door. It is not clear if this would then mean that access is from the rear of the property only. This alteration would change how the property has been understood historically as fronting onto Tilehouse Street and harm the significance of the listed building.

The other element of the proposal is a boundary wall for privacy and security. The wall would run between No. 1 and No. 2 to a height of 1.8m, with an access door. There does not appear to have been a boundary wall in this location historically. However, it is noted that the two properties have been separate homes historically and the boundary wall would not harm their significance in principle.

The submission states that reclaimed bricks for the proposed boundary wall would be used that would be in keeping with the character of the building. It is very important that an appropriate brick and mortar are used, particularly due to the relative prominence within the Conservation Area. The wall is acceptable in principle, but materials to be provided on site should be secured via planning condition.

The proposal, by reason of works to the rear wall and other internal alterations, resulting in harm to the historic significance, would fail to preserve the special historic interest of the listed building, contrary to Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. With regards to the National Planning Policy Framework the level of harm is 'less than substantial' as per paragraph 215. 'Great weight' should be given to the heritage asset's conservation as per paragraph 212.

Yours sincerely,

David Buckley 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