

Heritage Statement

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Proposed replacement of 8 no. windows and provision of 2 no. new extractor vents at rear (garden) elevation

44 Fore Street, Hatfield AL9 5AH



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.0 The purpose of this Heritage Asset Statement and Impact Assessment is to inform and support the application for listed building consent. The statement will provide the description of significance of No. 44 Fore Street (Grade II listed building), its setting and the wider context, together with an appraisal of the settings of the nearby listed buildings and this part of the Hatfield Conservation Area.
- 1.1.1 An assessment of the impact of the proposals on the special interest, character, appearance and significance of these heritage assets is included- to justify the proposed works and to explain how the proposals would not harm the character, appearance, special interest or significance of the listed building and the conservation area.
- 1.1.2 The statement has special regard to sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed buildings and conservation areas) Act 1990, as the site includes a listed building and is within the designated conservation area, and is to satisfy the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (July 2021) 16- Conserving and enhancing the historic environment, paragraphs 189, 193- 202; Statements of Heritage Significance- Analysing significance in heritage assets- Historic England Advice Note 12 (October 2019); and Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council local planning policy.
- 1.1.3 This Heritage Asset Statement concentrates specifically on the historic environment involved and is to be read alongside the Design and Access Statement, which gives the background to the site, surroundings and full detail of the proposed works, together with the record photographs and design drawings of the individual windows involved.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1.0 No 44 Fore Street is a 3-storey, later 18th century, red brick and slate roofed, Grade II listed building- the larger (east) part of a pair (Nos. 44 and 46), located on the north side of Fore Street.

2.1.1 Fore Street rises, quite steeply, from The Eight Bells public house (Grade II listed), at the junction with Park Street and The Broadway (to the west- adjoining No. 44), up (eastwards) towards the churchyard and Parish Church of St Ethelreda (Grade I listed, on the south side of Fore Street) and the arched gatehouse and entrance buildings (Grade II*) into the grounds of The Palace and Hatfield House, which terminate that higher east end of the street. To the rear (north) of the back garden of No. 44 is a garage court, access road and the back gardens of Park Close, later 20th century terraced dwellings.

2.1.2 The official Historic England list entry description is given below.

Old Hatfield TL 2308 HATFIELD FORE STREET (north side)

15/130 Nos 44 and 46 (part of The Eight Bells P.H.) 15.2.78

GV II

House pair, left one now part of public house. Late C18 red brick front, No 46 painted. Slate roof. Timber frame on right hand gable end. 3 storeys. 3 windows, those of 1st and 2nd floors sashes except C20 casement on top of No 46. 3-light C19 sash window to ground floor of No 46. 1st floor pair of No 44 with late C19 glazing bars. Late C19 shop fascia to ground floor of No 44.

Listing NGR: TL2339808596

2.1.3 The front street elevation windows are described in general terms- No. 44 includes: A new shopfront of 19th century appearance with a fascia; two first floor 19th century double-hung vertical sliding sash windows 2/2 panes; and two earlier second floor sash windows 4/8 panes. All are set back with rubbed and gauged brick arches over, have reveals and projecting stone sills. The rear windows are not referred to in the description (see photograph below).

3.0 PROPOSALS AFFECTING HERITAGE ASSETS

3.1.0 The proposed alterations involve replacement of all windows at the rear elevation and the provision of 2 no. new extractor vents.

3.1.1 3 no. windows at ground floor (one concealed in this photograph behind the shed/ trellis fence- facing into the rear courtyard of The Eight Bells- see photograph below) and projecting from the rear elevation; 3 no. windows at first floor; 2 no. windows at second floor. 8 no. in total.



3.1.2 The windows at the rear elevation wall of the dwelling are a hotchpotch of types- all are themselves modern, flush fitted to the brick wall and none are of any historic interest. The original patterns, balance and proportions have been lost.

3.1.3 Except for the larger ungainly second floor window, brick arches above the openings have fortunately been retained in those earlier phases of change. Removal of these existing windows will be carried out with utmost care, in seeking to prevent any unnecessary damage to the bricks forming the openings. The existing modern rear door and margin lights are to be retained.

- 3.1.4 The 2 no.extractor vents proposed involve careful making of circular holes in the brickwork and fixing metal grilles (painted dark grey or black) on the face of the brick wall. The precise location of each will align with each other and adjacent windows.
- 3.1.5 The replacement windows will re-use these existing window openings. There is to be no alteration to the rear brick wall- other than localised repair and thoughtful making good- all to accord with usual conservation good practice and Georgian Group advice and SPAB Technical Guidance.



Photograph above: The rear ground floor (west) window of No. 44 (to the left of the rainwater down pipe), which faces into the rear courtyard of The Eight Bells PH. The line of the downpipe indicates the division between the two buildings.

- 3.1.6 The detailed design of each individual new replacement window is provided with the submitted joiner's scaled drawings, with a key for each location. A simple side-hung painted wood casement pattern is proposed throughout with windows double glazed and triple glazed (Nos 5 and 7).
- 3.1.7 Other than No. 44 and The Eight Bells PH, the other heritage assets affected are the neighbouring buildings to the east, adjoining the application site- Nos. 40 and 42- formerly The Rose and Crown PH (15th century timber framed, plastered with old tile roof- Grade II listed) and all other historic buildings lining both the north and south sides of Fore Street are listed buildings.
- 3.1.8 The whole of Fore Street and the nearby area is within the designated Hatfield Conservation Area. The grounds and gardens of Hatfield House, to the east, at the top of Fore Street, is a Registered Park and Garden (Grade I).

4.0 CONSIDERING POTENTIAL IMPACTS

- 4.1.0 The existing mishmash of windows at the rear elevation of this listed building are modern, unattractive, and damaging to the character and give an ungainly, uncomfortable appearance to the house in itself and to the adjacent listed buildings (refer to photographs below). Their careful removal is to be encouraged.
- 4.1.1 The proposed replacement windows are to be of a consistent side-hung wood casement pattern with a painted finish, which seeks to bring a degree of pleasing rhythm, consistency and unity in design and appropriate proportion to the appearance of this rear wall of 44 Fore Street.
- 4.1.2 The immediate settings of the adjacent listed buildings- The Eight Bells PH and Nos. 40 and 42 would inevitably be much improved and indeed enhanced by a more sympathetic and co-ordinated approach to fenestration at the rear elevation of No.44.
- 4.1.3 Any possible impact to the wider conservation area is much restricted by the enclosure of the rear gardens and limited viewing from the public realm. The Parish Church - itself a landmark focal building - and the buildings and grounds associated with Hatfield House are at such a distance at the top of Fore Street that their remoteness precludes any potential impact or possible harm.
- 4.1.4 Should it be considered that there could be any possibly degree of less than substantial harm (in terms of NPPF paragraph 202), the public benefits- of adapting and securing the listed building- are that the proposed works would result an attractive, viable and more energy efficient (responding to the climate emergency) and sustainable dwelling house to continue, fit for the 21st century and into the future.
- 4.1.5 The positioning of the proposed extractor vents is to be carefully balanced and aligned with the window openings- so as not to be eye-catching or in any way obtrusive. The dark colour- grey or black- finish will make them merely small, low-key, background features.



Above: View to Nos. 40 and 42 Fore Street to the east of the back garden of No. 44

Below: View to the rear elevations of The Eight Bells PH, to the west of No. 44.



5.0 SUMMARY

5.1.0 In 1889, William Morris, who had founded the SPAB in 1877, wrote:

It has been most truly said that these old buildings do not belong to us only: That they belonged to our forefathers and they will belong to our descendants unless we play them false. They are not in any sense our property to do as we like with them. We are only trustees for those that come after us.

This is the philosophical guidance and approach adopted for the preparation of this Heritage Asset Statement and Impact Assessment- and for consideration of these proposals.

5.1.1 The past ill-judged alterations and replacement windows at No. 44 have detrimentally played false the character, appearance and ultimately significance of the listed building. The beneficial current window replacement proposals seek to reverse this past negative impact with positive and enhancing alterations.

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