



33-34 SALISBURY SQUARE, HATFIELD

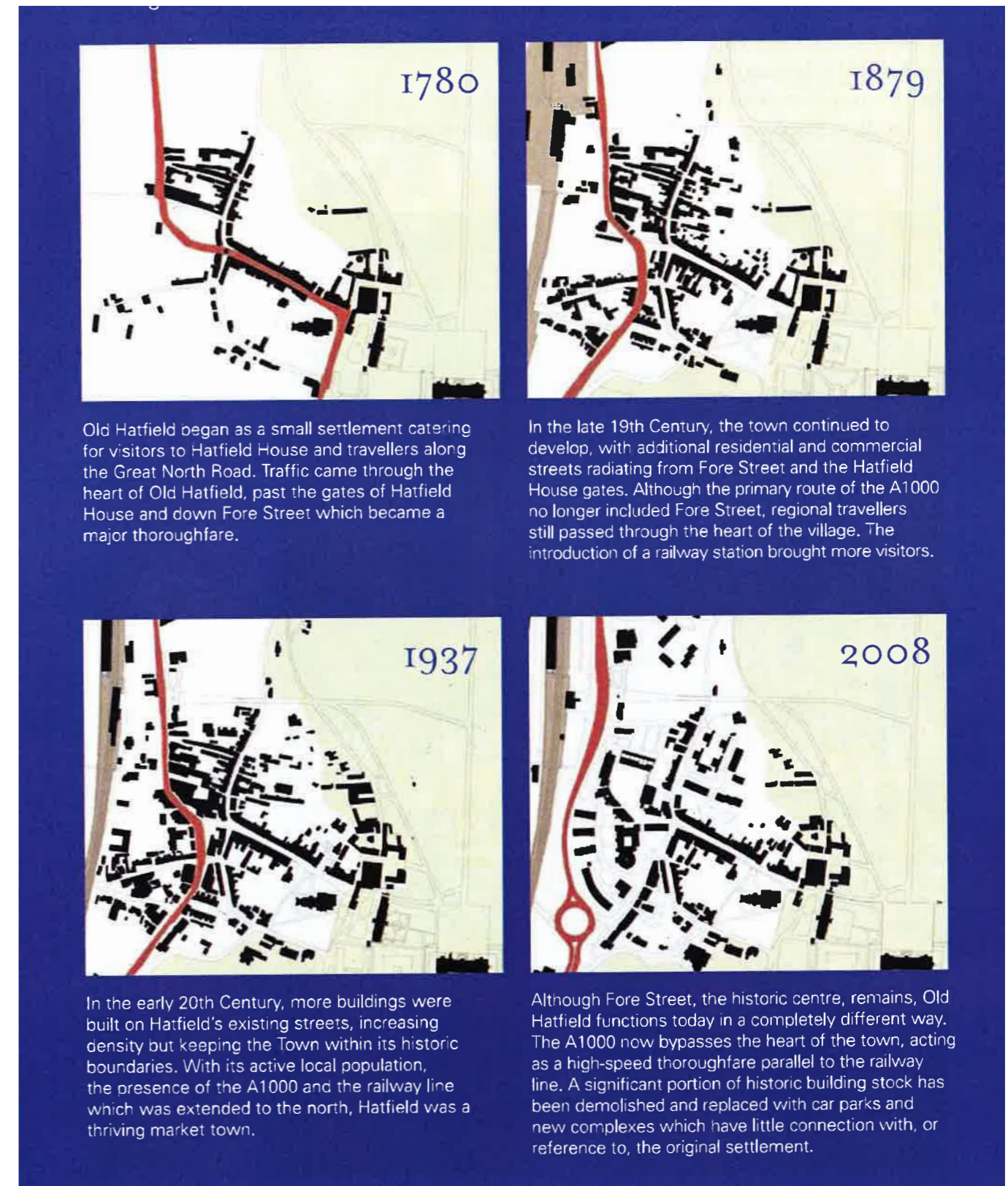
DESIGN STATEMENT

**RICHARD MORTON ARCHITECTS LTD**

The proposal is for the conversion of ground floor and rear extension at first floor for 33-34 Salisbury Square which currently accommodates an Indian restaurant called The Taste of India, to create two new residential units. The site is located in Salisbury Square in Hatfield, within a Conservation Area.

### Context

The site is located along the old Great North Road, which originally linked with Fore Street, and the heart of Old Hatfield past the gates of Hatfield House. In the early 20th Century, Hatfield was a thriving market town. In a map dated 1937, the buildings on/adjacent to our site: 31-34 Salisbury Square, make an appearance. Later in the 20th Century, the A1000 was built bypassing the old town, acting as a high-speed thoroughfare parallel to the railway line. The significance of the old route has been lost, and the visibility and significance of buildings along the route dwindled including those along Salisbury Square. In the late 20th Century, a significant proportion of the historic building stock has been demolished and replaced with new buildings. A map from 2008 illustrates this. Interestingly, a number of buildings opposite our site seem to have been demolished, most likely sometime in the late 60's creating the space of Salisbury Square as we know it today.



The historic development of Old Hatfield, particularly with regard to the routing of the a1000 and the introduction of the railway line. Taken from Old Hatfield- Post Charette Paper, Gascoyne Cecil Estates, 2008.

In the photograph from the early 1960s the building is seen as part of a thriving shopping street but today the restaurant is one of only four A1/A3 outlets still operating in the whole of Salisbury Square. Footfall is extremely low and has reduced still further with the closure of the underpass from the station and the recent conversion of the adjacent offices to residential use. There are of course consented proposals which are aimed to remedy this situation but there is no clear timetable for implementation of those proposals. The restaurant is not viable and, after attempts to market it as a going concern, the applicants have decided on conversion to residential as the only reasonable course of action.

The applicant's own letter explaining these matters is attached as part of this application.



North Road, opposite Hatfield Station with the Hertfordshire Constituency Conservative Association office, the Great Northern Hotel rebuilt c.1900 and now the Hatfield Arms, and Priory House, a late 17th century building probably built first as an inn. All the above buildings except the Hatfield Arms have now been demolished



The view is looking north up Brewery Hill, 1961, before extensive demolition of parts of the old town took place. The area can be seen as a bustling shopping street with grocers, butchers, greengrocers, chemist, fishmongers, bank, garage, doctor's surgery, cafe and outfitters.



Brewery Hill, the Great North Road, 1967. The area seems to still be a busy shopping area. Only the buildings on the right-hand side of Brewery Hill now survive as part of the modern Salisbury Square.

## Description of Existing Buildings

The ground floor of 33-34 Salisbury Square accommodates an Indian restaurant The Taste of India, accessed from Salisbury Square, with the main restaurant and bar area occupying the major portion of the front. The rear accommodates the kitchen, store and staff facilities in a single storey extension, together with a service yard which is sunk below the level of the external pavement and is accessed from the rear west through a set of stairs, as attached plans.

The first and second floors accommodate two flats 33a and 34a, both accessed from the rear, as attached plans.

Stylistically the group of buildings comprising 31-34 Salisbury Square is in the Queen Anne revival style which was popular in Britain in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries, which is most likely when the buildings date from. There are also some Arts and Crafts touches, such as the use of creasing tiles to form the keystones to the arches on ground floor in nos. 31-32, and the flat arches on the first and second floors in nos. 33-34.

The front facade of nos.33-34 is built in a warm brown brick in Flemish bond with warm orange bricks used as window surrounds, keystones and as quoins. The windows are wooden sash windows, painted white. There is an emphatic cornice with dentils at eaves level, which adds considerable character to the façade. The roof is framed with two prominent chimneys visible from the front with a smaller stub chimney midway along the roof, visible from the rear only.

The rear façade is in comparison fairly non-descript with a range of window and door openings fitted with PVC-u windows and doors. The exterior is rendered and painted white with window and door heads expressed as a row of brick soldiers. Large metal windows from the single storey kitchen area to the rear overlook the sunken yard. The west elevation is solid, devoid of any openings and is rendered and painted white as rear.

The existing areas to the rear of 33-34 Salisbury Square forming the kitchen, service yard and ancillary facilities to the restaurant, provide areas of very poor quality, both spatially and architecturally, which significantly detract from the quality of the environment. As will be seen in the photographs of the rear areas, there are chimneys and flues protruding from the kitchen roof deck, unsightly rows of metal railings along the perimeter of the roof deck and well as along the internal drop in the level of the roof deck. A pair of boarded timber gates provides access to the steps leading to the service yard below, which is screened from the hedge and trees with timber boarded fencing.



33-34 Salisbury Square, as seen from the Square



31-32 Salisbury Square, as seen from the Square



33-34 Salisbury Square, as seen from the rear, showing access to flats 33a, 34a Salisbury Square



Access to the flats 33a, 34a from the rear pavement, off Batterdale



View of the rear from north-west



Stairs providing access to the service yard from the rear of the property



View over terrace to the rear looking toward Batterdale, showing temporary cover over service yard below with protective railings providing guarding



View of the rear from south-west, from Batterdale

## **The Proposal**

The proposal is for partial demolition of the existing kitchen area, and the conversion of ground floor from a restaurant to two flats. The proposal also involves extension on ground and first floors together with change of use from Retail Class A3 (restaurants and cafes) to Class C3 (private flats).

The proposal aims to accommodate two nos. two bedroom flats to the front and rear of the building replacing the existing restaurant and kitchen areas respectively.

The entrance to the living area from Salisbury Square in flat 1 is through a lobby. Full height windows set within arched openings are proposed facing Salisbury Square, providing daylight and ventilation to the living room and the two bedrooms.

The rear accommodates a duplex two bedroom flat with the living/dining, kitchen and bedroom 2 on the ground floor, with the master bedroom and en-suite on the first floor extension along the west boundary.

A patio to the rear provides a private enclosed space for flat 2, with full height glazed patio doors to the living/dining and bedroom 2. The patio area also provides light and ventilation to the main bedroom on the first floor. External steps provide access to the flat from the street access at rear. The patio area is screened from the adjoining vegetation and trees to the south with a structural glass balustrade atop the retaining wall.

In keeping with the recommendations in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005, in the section on Design guidance, the proposed development/intervention aims to relate sensitively to the character and context of the area and the building within which the intervention is sought.

## **Context and Character**

The proposed front elevation, on Salisbury Square addresses its context as part of an ensemble together with nos. 31, 32, contiguous with it, forming an edge to the square, contributing significantly to its character. Together with nos. 31 and 32, 33-34 Salisbury Square are without doubt buildings with the highest architectural merit facing Salisbury Square, with the majority of the remaining buildings mostly utilitarian blocks from the 60's without character or contextual relevance. It might be useful to mention here that the Old Hatfield Charette Paper December 2008 conducted a frontage study of buildings in Old Hatfield, with each frontage being rated as good, middling or poor. Only nos. 31-34 in Salisbury Square were rated good while the rest of the frontages adjoining the square considered middling or poor.

The proposed design of the ground floor elevation is to replace the existing glazed extent of the restaurant, with an arrangement of brick arched openings similar in scale, arrangement and appearance to the existing ground floor elevation of nos. 31, 32, to provide architectural continuity and contextual relevance. The use of an internal recessed brick arch contained within the outer arch together with a prominent keystone formed of brick tiles, use of brick tiled cill, and the treatment of the fenestration and the entrance door to flat 1 (proposed elevations attached), relate to the existing facades on 31, 32.

The panel above the arches and below the first floor windows is similar to the brick panels in similar location in nos. 31, 32. However as the extent is greater in 33-34, it has been suggested to provide relief with inset recessed rectangular brick panels centred on the arched openings and windows.

The proposal to the rear as discussed previously aims to be understated and elegant, with large glazed openings subdivided into smaller panes are contemporary in appearance, however evoking the fenestration on the front façade. Interestingly, the rear facades in nos. 31-32 have adopted windows and patio doors similar in style to our proposal. The balustrades along the edge of the terrace and along the internal drop in terrace levels is proposed to be structural glass capped with a metal handrail.

The proposal to the rear of the property aims to significantly improve the quality of the built form, spatially and architecturally, with the proposal aiming to create an area of distinctiveness and quality in an existing area of poor quality, as suggestion in Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 - where an area is accepted as being of poor quality and undistinguished, the challenge is to create a new area of distinctiveness and quality.

## **Access and Design for People with Disabilities**

The proposal provides level threshold from the street to flat 1 only. Both flats provide WC facilities within the principal storey of the flats, with door widths complying with recommendations in Part M of the Approved Documents.

There is vehicle access from Batterdale to the rear of the property and the right to the use of two adjacent parking spaces.

## Proposed Materials

Front Elevation – Exposed brickwork in Flemish bond to match existing brickwork, with bright brick arched surround to openings. Tiled brick keystone and cill to match 31, 32. Windows to be double glazed with metal transoms and mullions, painted black to match 31, 32. Windows and door to have fanlights as proposed elevations. Front door to be stained timber to match number 31.

Rear Elevation – Insulated render on blockwork painted white to match existing. Windows and patio doors to be black/dark grey metal, double glazed, as proposed elevations. Balustrade along edge of roof deck overlooking rear patio and along internal change in level within deck area – structural glass capped with proprietary metal handrail, as proposed elevation.

Stair from Patio to street pavement – metal with structural glass balustrade.

Roof over proposed extension to rear – proprietary single ply membrane with timber decking in accessible areas.

Patio area to rear – proprietary concrete block paving.

In line with recommendations in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005, the proposed design:

- Promotes the continuity of street frontages and relates to the line of the buildings in the street.
- Is characterised by distinctive fronts and backs.
- Define and enclose private space to the rear of buildings.
- Respects the existing pattern and form of building, and use of space, local materials, scale, height and massing of the built form, and distinctive architectural quality and features