



FAO: Planning Department,
Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council

Ref: 6/2024/1335/COND
Date: 08/08/2024

HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION ADVICE

Dear Sir / Madam,

RE: 31A Howardsgate Welwyn Garden City AL8 6AP

This application is for the submission of details pursuant to condition number 2 (Replacement Window Details) and 5 (Details of Bin Storage) on planning permission 6/2022/2632/FULL.

The property is located in the Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area. The building dates to c.1935 making it one of the earliest buildings laid out in the town centre of the Garden City. It is neo-Georgian in style and form which is typical of the Garden City vernacular. The windows appear to be timber sash windows and are potentially original. They make a positive contribution to the architectural interest of the property. The appraisal notes that Number 31A Howardsgate is a key unlisted building. The building makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area by virtue of its scale, form, appearance, rarity and derivation.

The approved scheme ref: 6/2022/2632/FULL related to the conversion of the office space to residential flats, the Design and Access Statements noted 'The proposals make very few changes to the external appearance of the building... A window on the north elevation is replaced with one of a different shape to accommodate the bathroom to flat 03.' Limited external changes were proposed, and the proposal was considered to preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

The current discharge of condition now seeks wholesale replacement of the timber sash windows to the front and side elevation. As noted above, the windows make a positive contribution to the architectural interest of the property. The loss of the windows would detract from the positive contribution the property makes to the significance of the Conservation Area. There is always a preference for repair over replacement. If the windows are beyond economical repair, then this should be demonstrated through a condition survey.

Even if the principle of replacing the existing windows was considered acceptable, the proposed replacement windows would not be considered acceptable from a conservation perspective. The proposed windows would be uPVC and have applied glazing bars. The replacement of traditionally made timber sash windows with modern windows of a non-traditional material and detailing would



be inappropriate and unsympathetic, detracting from the architectural interest of Number 31A and the contribution it makes to the Conservation Area.

The proposals would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, and Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 should be considered. With regards to the National Planning Policy Framework the level of harm is considered to be 'less than substantial' as per paragraph 208.

Yours sincerely

Seren Wilson BA (Hons) MSc
Built Heritage Consultant
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