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FAO: Planning Department,
Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council

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HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION ADVICE

RE: 41 Wigmores North Welwyn Garden City AL8 6PG

This application is for the replacement of all first-floor windows and a loft conversion with 7 no. new dormer windows, associated alterations, and refurbishments to the existing retail building use class E(a) to facilitate a change of use to an estate agents class E(c).

The property is located in the Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area. Numbers 41-53 & 36-42 Wigmores North is identified as a key unlisted building within the Conservation Area and makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. It is therefore considered a non-designated heritage asset. The area appraisal states that Wigmores North retains a strong frontage and sense of enclosure along the western side, through a range of red-brick buildings constructed either during or before the 1960s but with later shopfronts added during the 1970s/80s in the Garden City style.

Whilst dormers are prevalent throughout the streetscene, they typically follow the same pattern as the fenestration on the first floor, aligning with the sash windows creating rhythm and consistency within the area.

As proposed, the dormers to the west elevation would align with every other window and the dormers to the north elevation would be positioned between the windows. This would be inconsistent with the pattern of dormers to the neighbouring properties. There are also concerns with the appearance of the dormers, particularly the thickness of the dormer cheeks. Adding dormers to the north elevation would need careful consideration as the windows at first floor are positioned close together which may result in the dormers appearing cramped within the roof space. Notwithstanding this, the dormers to the west elevation would only extend across the roof of Number 41, however, the building also incorporates Numbers 45, 49 and 53. Installing dormers to only the northern most unit would undermine the buildings overall composition and the uniformity of the wider streetscene. Whilst amendments could be made to the design and positioning of the windows, adding dormers to part of the roof would not be acceptable from a heritage perspective.

There are concerns regarding the loss of traditional (and potentially original) joinery. The windows make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the non-designated heritage asset. Their loss would be harmful. Any original windows should be retained and repaired if possible. If the windows need to be replaced because of their poor

condition, they should be replaced with timber windows (which could be double glazed) but they should not be composite as this would be a non-traditional material.

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 215. Paragraph 216 of the NPPF would also be relevant as the proposal would impact a non-designated heritage asset.

Yours sincerely

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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