

Heritage Impact Assessment

46 Castle Street, Hinckley, LE10 1DB



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1 Executive Summary

This Heritage Impact Statement has been prepared for Mr Jahromi to support an application for planning permission for the “the change of use of 46 Castle Street from Class E(a) retail to mixed use Class E(a) retail and Class C3(a) dwelling houses”. The application site is in proximity to a grade II listed building and within a conservation area.

This statement is required to satisfy the Council’s adopted Planning Application Validation Checklist. It is considered that the proposals to change the use of the building will have a neutral impact on the setting of the Hinckley Town Centre Conservation Area due to the main alterations to the property being internal and the external alterations being minimal.

2 Introduction

2.1 Purpose

This Heritage Impact Assessment will provide an assessment of heritage significance and impact, sufficient to satisfy the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 200. In scope and detail, it is intended to be proportionate to the significance of the asset considered. It is set out in accordance with Historic England's HEAN 12 guidance on Statements of Significance.

2.2 Proposal

Full planning permission is sought for the change of use of 46 Castle Street from Class E(a) retail to mixed use Class E(a) retail and Class C3(a) dwelling houses.

2.3 Designation

The site is within the Hinckley Town Centre Conservation Area. The site does not contain any listed buildings either local or statutory.

2.4 Historic Environment Record

Heritage Gateway holds no records for the site or the immediate proximity.

2.5 Archaeological Potential

The proposals would not affect below ground assets and therefore no search of archaeological records is considered proportionate in this instance.

2.6 Planning History

An online search was undertaken, and no relevant history was identified.

2.7 Approach and Methodology

The assessment of significance has been carried out under current National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) guidance regarding types of heritage interest. It is informed by consultation of the local HER, the Historic England Listings and a desk-top site assessment.

The degree of impact a proposed development could have on such assets is variable and can sometimes be positive rather than negative. It can also be neutral. The wide range of possible impacts

can include loss of historic fabric, loss of historic character, damage to historic setting, and damage to significant views.

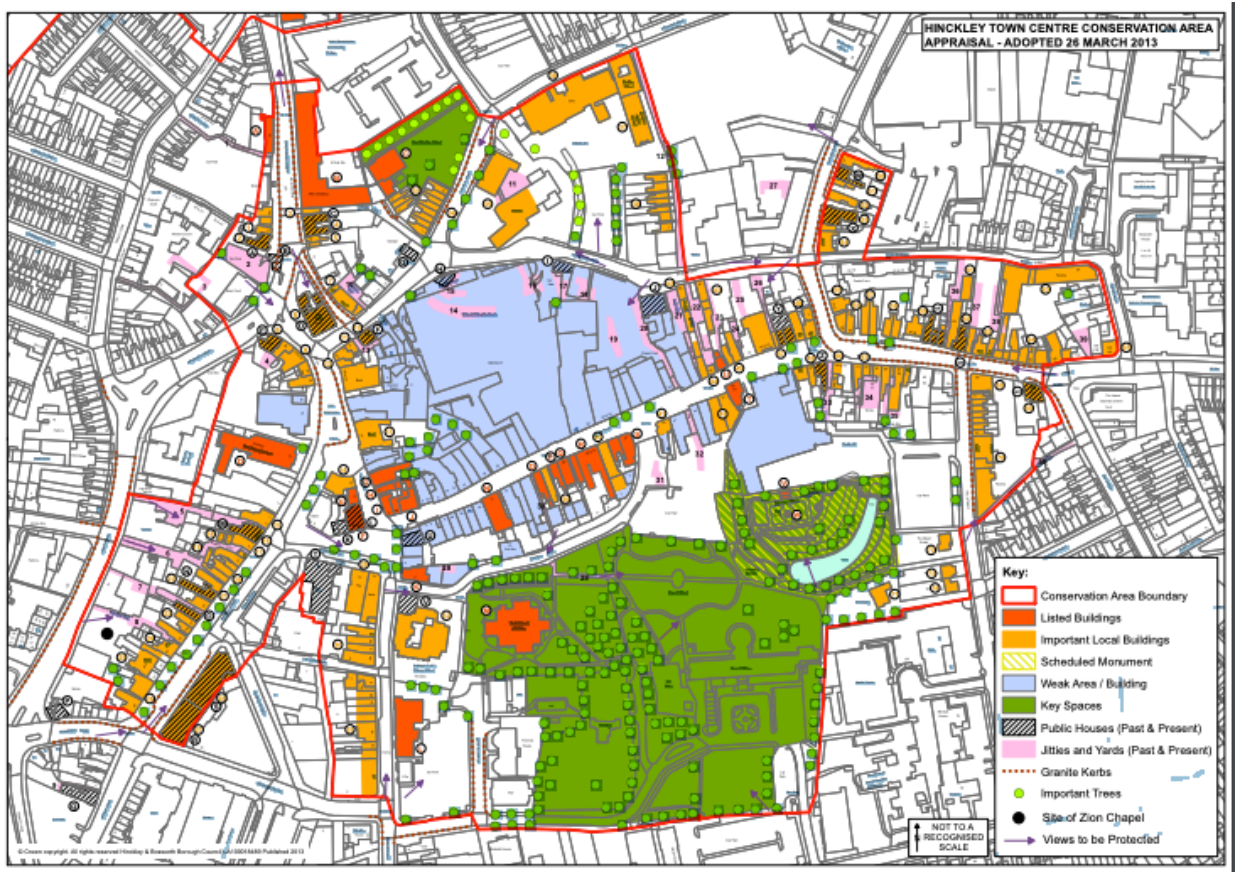


Figure 1 Conservation Area Boundary Map

3.2 Assessment of Significance

Hinckley Town Centre Conservation Area

The historic core of Hinckley centres around the Borough and its connecting streets, with the church of St Mary to the south-east. A settlement existed in Hinckley during Roman times, but the origins of today's town are a Saxon village called Hinc's Leah. In the C12 a priory and a Norman motte-and-bailey castle were built in the village, and by the C13 it had grown into a small market town, centred around The Borough, with Stockwell Head and Castle Street stretching to the east and Coventry Street or Duck Paddle Street (now Regent Street) to the south-west. In 1640 the first stocking frame was brought to Hinckley, marking the beginning of the stocking weaving industry which was to dominate the town for over two hundred years. Hinckley prospered on the success of this industry, and many of the surviving buildings of the historic core date to the rebuilding and modernising of the town centre carried out in the C17 and C18. The arrival of the South Leicestershire Railway in 1862 allowed the stocking industry to expand with steam-powered frames and large factories, and the corresponding prosperity allowed the town to expand significantly beyond its historic core. The wider town is now characterised by the C19 houses and civic architecture erected during this time of expansion.

35 and 37 Castle Street (Grade II Listed)

Late-C18 house with C19 extensions and late-C20 and early-C21 shopfront.

35-37 Castle Street are likely to have been constructed in the late-C18. The Historic Environment Record notes that there is extensive timber framing in the internal cross walls at second floor level. This may be remnants of an earlier timber-framed building on the site, but substantial internal timber framing was also common in newly built houses of late-C18 date. Between 1879 and her death in 1884, the romantic novelist Charlotte Brontë, who was born in Hinckley, lived with her family in the building. The ground floor extension to the east appears to have been added between the date of the survey of the 1889 Ordnance Survey map, and its revision in 1901. This addition may mark the point at which the ground floors of the building were converted into shops. By 1923, when the Ordnance Survey map was next revised, the building had been subdivided into three separate properties, 35 and 37 on Castle Street, and the rear wing on Church Walk.

Between the survey dates of the 1961 OS map and 1966-1976, a small, angled extension was added to the south (rear) of the ground floor extension. In 1989, a new metal-framed shopfront was added to 35 Castle Street. In 2008, windows were replaced at 37 Castle Street, and in 2019 the shopfront, display windows and door were altered and refurbished.

Listing Details:

CASTLE STREET (NORTH) ELEVATION: the house is three storeys high with a symmetrical design of three bays. To the left and right corners of the Castle Street elevation are simple brick pilasters. At ground floor there are two separate shop fronts, to the left a 2019 remodelling in historic style, with simple reeded pilasters to either side of the windows and a plain signboard with lighting. To the right is a late-C20 red metal-framed shopfront, with a red framed glass door. Between the two shopfronts is a panelled timber doorcase with an open pediment and flanking pilasters. The door is panelled and has a semi-circular fanlight above decorated with stained glass. At first floor level, three evenly-spaced windows containing six-over-six sashes are topped with shallow segmental arches decorated with stucco lintels. Two circular pattress plates above the left-hand window indicate an historic structural repair. At second floor level, three windows with three-over-six sashes are similarly topped with stucco lintels. Above these is a simple cornice, and above this is a substantial timber gutter cased with lead ornamented with star motifs.

CHURCH WALK (EAST) ELEVATION: the main body of the building is three storeys high, with a two-storey rear wing with a gabled roof to the south. In front of the main building, projecting into Church Walk is a single-storey extension with shopfront and corner entrance. The ground floor of this elevation is principally the shopfront, remodelled in 2019 in imitation historic style, with reeded pilasters to the corners and a plain sign board. To the left of the shopfront is an angled, late-C20 extension. At first floor level, this elevation is less symmetrical than that of Castle Street. The windows are an array of widths and heights, though all have multiple lights with glazing bars and sashes. There are four windows at first-floor and three at second-floor level, with the fourth bay blank. Four pattress plates indicate historic structural repair. Between the first and second bays, and on the corner with Castle Street, are simple brick pilasters. The unusual lead covered gutter visible on Castle Street is particularly prominent on this elevation and forms a substantial element of the character of the building. The two-storey extension to the rear has a simple corbelling detail at eaves level with a single ten-over-ten sash window.

INTERIOR: restored open string dog-leg staircase with turned balusters, fluted square newels, moulded handrail and shaped tread ends. Segmental arch in entrance hall and on first floor landing with imposts and keystone.

4 Legislation and Policy

4.1 Legislation and National Policy

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that in the exercise of planning functions, the local authority shall have regard to the desirability of preserving features of special architectural or historic interest, and in particular listed buildings. It requires development which would affect the setting of a conservation area to preserve or enhance the area.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023) at Section 16 deals with conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Paragraph 200 of the NPPF states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

Paragraph 201 suggests Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

Paragraph 203 states that when determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and

c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority to pay special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Paragraph 206 of the NPPF states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the assets' conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This paragraph goes on to state that this is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

The objective of preserving the setting, character or appearance of an area can be achieved, either by a positive contribution to preservation, or leaving the character or appearance unharmed, i.e., preserved. Development that merely maintains the status quo, is also appropriate.

It is not necessary to cite the relevant National and local policies and guidance in full. Suffice to say, the relevant paragraphs within Section 16 of the NPPF are pertinent, along with Historic England's Guidance on The Setting of Heritage Assets Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition, 2017).

In terms of general design, Paragraph 196 of the NPPF requires that local planning authorities should take into account the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

4.2 Local Policy

Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council Local Plan 2006 - 2026 Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD:

- DM11 - Protecting and Enhancing the Historic Environment
- DM12 - Heritage Assets

5. Assessment

5.1 Impacts of Proposal

The proposed change of use would be almost entirely internal. The external changes are essentially minimal, with a first floor being added on top of the existing ground floor wing. Given its location and sensitive design it has no significant impact on the appearance or character of the conservation area.

The character of a conservation area can be derived from its function as well as its physical appearance. In this proposal the function on the ground floor would remain the same and therefore the building would retain an active frontage to Castle Street. On the upper floors a residential use is proposed which provide much needed housing in a sustainable location and add to the vitality of the area.

There are some important views from the north as set out in the conservation area appraisal, these views are directed north to west. The property would be visible in the wider view (figure 3) but as the extension would be infilling a gap adjacent to another two storey wing, on its existing ground floor footprint, no harm to the view would be caused.



Figure 2 Front elevation on Castle Street



Figure 3 Rear elevation where extension would be sited (from north)

6. Conclusion

Overall, the proposed uses would result in a neutral or slightly positive impact to the character and appearance of the conservation and would be in accordance with all relevant local and national policies relating to heritage protection.

About the author

Michelle Hill is a chartered town planner with over 17 years' experience working with the built environment and with listed buildings and conservation areas, in both the public and private sectors. Michelle holds a Post-graduate Diploma in the Conservation of the Historic Environment for which she received a Distinction at Birmingham City University and is a supporter of the IHBC.

References

Hinckley Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal, Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council, February 2013. [https://www.hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk/downloads/file/3244/appraisal-february_2013] (accessed 15 January 2024)

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