

52 HIGH STREET, RICKMANSWORTH, WD3 1AJ

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

VERSION 1.1

OUR REF: 0171/HIG052/HA



Stewart
Management & Planning Solutions

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Background

The application site is a former solicitors office on the ground floor of a an existing three-storey building known as 52 High Street, Rickmansworth.

Physical Context

The application site sits at the end of a terrace of properties on the north side of High Street in Rickmansworth Town Centre. The area comprises commercial and civic buildings of various sizes and vintages. We understand that there are no listed buildings in the vicinity of the site.

Assessment of Significance

Much of Rickmansworth town centre was designated a Conservation Area in 1974 and extended in 1980 to include the Victorian development of the town.

The application site forms part of the Central High Street area of the Conservation Area which is characterised by commercial properties with residential above. The character appraisal document observes that:

The main busy commercial heart of the High Street is contained by Northway and Station Road.

Only a small number of buildings in this area are listed for their architectural or historic interest. However, the appraisal document observes that:

... there are a great many attractive buildings such as the Banks, the Victoria Pharmacy and WH Smith's.

It goes on to say that:

Poor modern developments detract from the more pleasing and acceptable 17th century to 19th century elements.

The application site sits at the junction of Northway and High Street, the extreme eastern end of the “commercial heart”. Built between 1971 and 1973, just before designation of the “Conservation Area”, it is one of the modern buildings lamented by the conservation area appraisal document. Nonetheless,

the building forms part of a cluster of modern buildings, including the Post Office, the Iceland supermarket, the library, the Civic Centre and the Theatre that mark the road junction at this end of the town centre that has some integrity, albeit at odds with the historic market town character of the bulk of the Conservation Area.

The building is finished in red brickwork with front and rear facing gables and a dark tiled pitched roof to the flanks. It has windows of varying sizes and designs and has been much altered and extended since its original construction, all sanctioned by planning permissions granted in the 1980s and earlier this year.

Effects of the Proposal on Heritage Assets

The proposal is for a change of use at ground floor level and will not alter the structure of the building either internally or externally. The only works proposed involves the installation of 4 tanning machines, loose furniture and internal screen partitions only. The only external works will be three louvre vents on the rear elevation. All door and window openings, including the shopfront, will remain unchanged.

Therefore, the proposal will have a neutral effect on the conservation area as a whole and will not affect the immediate settings of any listed buildings.


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