

DESIGN, ACCESS & HERITAGE STATEMENT

NatWest, 29-30 King Street, Gravesend, DA12 2XX

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This heritage statement has been prepared by SpaceInvader Design on behalf of the Royal Bank of Scotland (“The Applicant”). It is submitted in support of an application for listed building consent concerning the former NatWest branch located at 29-30 King Street within Gravesend Town Centre.
- 1.2. Following a review of their properties by The Applicant, the NatWest branch closed on August 14th, 2024.
- 1.3. Upon initial survey, NatWest logos were identified to the glazing of 2no. ground floor windows located on the Windmill Street elevation. The logos were presumed to be vinyl applied to the glazing. However during the closure works, it has been identified that the logos are etched into the glazing panels. This application, therefore, seeks the replacement of these glazed panels to finalise the debranding of the property and prepare it for alternate occupation.
- 1.4. The property in question is Grade II listed and located within the designated King Street conservation area.
- 1.5. This statement has been prepared to comply with the requirements set out in paragraph 128 of Section 12 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Article 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure (England) Order 2015.

2 THE SITE AND IT'S HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

- 2.1 The site is a Grade II listed building located on the western end of King Street, within Gravesend Town Centre. The property occupies a prominent position in the street scene, occupying a corner plot at the junction of King Street and Windmill Street.
- 2.2 The buildings surrounding the site are largely commercial in nature. They are of varying architectural styles and ages. However, there is uniformity to the street scene, with red brick and stone dressings being the prominent building materials.
- 2.3 NatWest previously occupied the property, which has been recently vacated. It building dates to 1889 and is an Arts and Crafts Baroque style, designed by Alfred Williams. The building is three storeys high (plus a basement level and attic). The ground floor is of stone construction with the ornate carved dressing above the windows and main entryway. The upper floors comprise red brick with stone dressings.
- 2.4 The property has been extensively altered and modernised, retaining minimal original features. Suspended ceilings and modern finishes have been inserted throughout.

FIGURE 1: FRONT ELEVATION IMAGE:



FIGURE 2: EXISTING GLAZED PANELS TO WINDMILL STREET IMAGE:



- 2.5 As noted above, the property is Grade II listed. Historic England provides the following details regarding the site:

"Heritage Category: Listed Building

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1366592

Date first listed: 02-Jul-1975

List Entry Name: 30, KING STREET

Dated 1889. Built in Arts and Crafts Baroque. The architect was Alfred Williams. Corner building, 3 storeys and attics red brick with stone dressings. 2 pediments having Venetian windows with brick dressings separated by squat turrets having round windows. Balustrading. The King Street elevation has 2 4-light mullioned windows separated by carved shields. The ground floor has stone pilasters and round-headed windows surmounted by scrolled keystone and swag moulding. The doorcase is set in a projecting corner extension and has a stone urn above. Brackets. Stone pediment supported on Roman Ionic columns and pilasters. Date stone with the initials LCB. The Windmill Street elevation is similar but has 5 mullioned windows and 2 round-headed windows on the ground floor. To the right there is a matching extension of 2 storeys and 2 windows.

- 2.6 The property is located within the designated King Street Conservation Area. The associated Conservation Area Character Appraisal document notes that the building forms a principal landmark within the conservation area.
- 2.7 The King Street Conservation Area in Gravesend captures the essence of 18th and 19th-century commercial growth, centered on major roads like New Road, King Street, and Milton Road that developed into a bustling stagecoach route to London starting in 1801. This area features a mix of commercial and residential buildings, including ground-floor shops with accommodations above, alongside notable civic buildings and landmark 19th-century structures like St John's Church. The transformation from a rural hinterland to a densely populated urban area was further accelerated by the introduction of the railway in the 1850s, with continuous efforts to preserve the historic and architectural character through pedestrian-friendly initiatives and sympathetic public realm enhancements. The area features a high proportion of statutory and locally listed buildings.
- 2.8 The listed status and designation within a conservation area have been afforded due consideration through the development of the proposals.

3 RELEVANT POLICIES

3.1. The following documents and associated policies have been consulted in preparing the proposals which are the subject of this application:

- National Planning Policy Framework (2019) – Chapter 16 – Conservation and Enhancing the Historic Environment;
- Planning Practice Guidance – Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment;
- Gravesham Local Plan (2014);
- Saved policies of the Gravesham Local Plan (1994); and
- King Street Conservation Area Appraisal (2007).

4 THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 As noted in section 1.0, the proposals seek permission to replace 2no. existing panels of glazing to the ground floor Windmill Street elevation.
- 4.2 The panels currently feature NatWest logos, etched into the glazing. As part of the de-branding works, these panels require replacement to ensure that the building is ready for timely re-occupation by an alternate occupier.
- 4.3 The proposed replacement glazing would be inserted into the existing timber frame. The glazing would also feature decorative acid etching to the edges. In appearance and materials, the glazing would be identical to the existing, save for the removal of the NatWest logos.
- 4.4 All work is proposed to be undertaken by qualified tradespersons with extensive experience working with heritage structures.
- 4.5 For further details, please refer to the supporting documentation submitted.

5 ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 5.1. The following section assesses the impact of the proposed development on the historic significance of the building, as well as a consideration of the visual impact, scale, design, materials, and the associated possible harm and risk to the building.
- 5.2. The building's distinctive style and prominent location contribute positively to the street scene. It is an important building that enhances the quality of the streetscape and reflects the area's heritage.
- 5.3. The proposed development would have a minimal impact on the character and appearance of the Grade II-listed host building. The building's fabric or appearance will be minimally changed, and its historic character will be retained. The building's appearance from the street scene would remain largely as existing.
- 5.4. The replacement of the glazing would not be readily noticeable by the casual passerby, and the historic integrity of the building would remain unharmed.
- 5.5. The proposed materials are identical to the existing glazing, and therefore, there would be no harm to the heritage structure.
- 5.6. The works aim to ensure that the building is ready for reoccupation by an alternate occupier promptly. Vacant buildings have the potential to negatively detract from the appearance of the conservation area. Therefore, the proposals aim to ensure that the building can be quickly and readily re-occupied and does not begin to dilapidate.
- 5.7. In accordance with the guidance contained in chapter 16 of the NPPF, any perceived 'harm' to the significance of a designated heritage asset must be weighed against the scheme's public benefits to consider the overall suitability of the proposals.
- 5.8. The historical significance of the building and the broader area was instrumental in designing the proposals. Thus, after assessing the impacts and significance, it is considered that the proposals would not negatively impact the appearance and historic significance of the listed host building.

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1. This statement considers the proposal to replace 2no. glazed panels to the Windmill Street elevation at the NatWest branch at 30 King Street within Gravesend Town Centre.
- 6.2. Following the proposed closure of the branch, the panels require replacement to remove the existing NatWest logos present on the glazing.
- 6.3. The works are minimal in nature and do not negatively detract from the building's heritage features or historic integrity.
- 6.4. As a result, the proposed development aligns with policy requirements and guidance relating to the local area. Thus, it is considered that there are no policy grounds or material considerations that should prevent listed building consent from being granted for the proposed development, and the proposal is recommended to the Council for approval.