

Heritage Statement for Planning Application at 29 King St, Gravesend DA12 2DU

1. Introduction

This Heritage Statement has been prepared to support a planning application for the proposed works at 29 King St, Gravesend, DA12 2DU. Its purpose is to assess the heritage significance of the property and its contribution to the King Street Conservation Area, and to evaluate the potential impact of the proposed development on that significance.

The proposal this statement is for a Grocery shop Awning at the Ground Floor & window display product sticker. Similar awnings and product images are displayed in several shops in the vicinity. The proposal unifies the proposed Shop front signage with similarly coloured awning and product images on the window below eye level.

- **Installation of Awnings:**

- A retractable awning facing King Street, approximately 2m deep, is proposed above the new shopfront. This functional addition provides shelter and can enhance the visual appeal of the shopfront. Its retractable nature ensures minimal permanent visual intrusion
- Installation will involve minimal disturbance to the building's structure.
- These awnings will be similar to the various awning already installed on several nearby shops/properties.
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- **Window display stickers:**

Several shops nearby have similarly displayed images of their products, examples below;

(Photographed examples from the vicinity are added at the end of the statement)



Image 1; Shop Front showing Proposed Awning & Product image sticker

The applicant is opening a Grocery shop in place of the previous Nat west bank, which will include a variety of items such as fresh meat, frozen fish, general groceries, exotic fruits and vegetables etc.

2. Site and Context

2.1 Location and Setting:

The property is situated in the town centre on the south side of the part pedestrianised King Street close to its junction with Windmill Street and High Street. St Georges Shopping Centre and a number of public car parks are close by as well as Gravesend Railway Station which is approximately 320 metres from the property. Occupiers on King Street include Santander, Coral, BetFred, Costa Coffee, and Primark. The property is an attractive period retail building. The self contained upper floors have been sold off on a long lease.

- King Street developed from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, particularly with the creation of New Road in 1801. This encouraged the development of the town as a staging post for the coach trade from London to Rochester and on to Dover.
- The street widens to the west, coinciding with an increase in the architectural quality and grandeur of the buildings.
- The western end of King Street joins New Road, High Street, and Windmill Street at a focal point for the town.
- The street's width and the height of buildings create a sense of containment and solidity.
- 29 King Street is part of an attractive period retail building. The ground floor was last used as a banking hall with a basement. The upper floors have been sold off on a long lease.
- The previous tenant, NatWest Bank, was in occupation since 1991.

3. Historical Background and Significance of Gravesend

Gravesend holds significant historical importance due to its strategic location on the River Thames, serving as a crucial landing point for shipping and a vital "stopping-off point" on the London to Dover road. The town's historical development saw rapid expansion in the early 19th century, driven by increased river traffic and further boosted by the arrival of the railway in the 1850s. This period also saw Gravesend flourish as a popular visitor destination, particularly for day excursions from London, with contemporary descriptions lauding it as "a marine watering place equal, if not superior in point of attraction and economy, to any other in the United Kingdom". By the late 19th century, the town boasted over ninety hotels, inns, and public houses, underscoring their prominence in serving a diverse populace of visitors, sailors, port workers, and residents.

The town of Gravesend, encompassing the historic parishes of Gravesend and Milton, was initially granted borough status by Royal Charter in 1562, with subsequent renewals and a Market Charter in 1693 that allowed markets and an

annual fair. The first town hall, built in 1573 on the east side of High Street, served as the administrative hub until an elected body replaced it in 1835. A major fire in 1727 extensively damaged the town, including St George's Church, though it was largely rebuilt in a similar form with some buildings surviving. By the end of the 18th century, key streets including King Street, West Street, East Street, Crooked Lane, High Street, Queen Street, and Princes Street were densely developed with a mix of basic dwellings and commercial uses.

Examples of the use of awnings historically in the area and its neighbourhood

Gravesend, King Street 1902 Photo ref: 49028



Gravesend, King Street c.1955 Photo ref: 647017



Above two images from 1902 & 1955 image from The Francis Firth collection. Examples of plenty of shops with awnings



From 1900-1980 section Discover Gravesham

The Douglas Grierson (local historian) collection from discovergravesham, shows many properties below with awnings historically in Gravesend and nearby New Road, So it's not out of character in historical context.





3. Heritage Significance of 29 King Street

3.1 Historical Evolution of 29 King Street

Historical records suggest that 29 King Street likely originated in the 17th century, a period of significant development in Gravesend. Buildings from this era often utilized brick as a primary building material, sometimes imported, and may have incorporated features reflecting the town's maritime importance. The listing description notes the building as "probably C17 and later," indicating subsequent modifications likely in the 18th or 19th centuries, influenced by the significant architectural developments seen in King Street during the Georgian, Victorian, and Edwardian eras.

Since at least 1991, the ground floor of 29 King Street has been in commercial use, occupied by National Westminster Bank PLC. This prolonged commercial use likely necessitated internal and potentially external alterations, including the installation of a modern office front, to adapt the building for banking operations. Past planning applications, such as the 2015 listed building consent for NatWest at 29-30 King Street, could provide further detail on these alterations. The historical significance of 29 King Street is also connected to its neighbour, 31 King Street, with their joint listing and combined non-domestic rates suggesting a shared original construction as a single entity that was later subdivided. The upper floors of 29 King Street have been converted into flats, addressed as 29a King Street, a residential conversion that would have involved internal modifications impacting original layouts. This evolution through various periods of modification and use contributes to the building's rich and complex history.

3.2 Architectural Significance and Contribution to Streetscape

The architectural significance of 29 King Street is primarily defined by its Grade II listed description, detailing it as a "2 storeys fling-faced with brick quoins and stringcourse" and having an "old tiled roof with 2 restored stacks" and a "modern office front on ground floor". Features like brick quoins and stringcourses were common in 17th-century and later architecture, adding visual interest to the facade. The "old tiled roof" suggests the retention of traditional roofing material possibly dating to its earliest phase, while the "restored stacks" indicate maintenance or alterations over time. **The "modern office front" at ground level is a clear modern alteration for its commercial banking use.**

Beyond its individual architectural features, 29 King Street holds significance through its contribution to the streetscape of the King Street Conservation Area. It forms a group with 30 King Street, indicating a deliberate architectural relationship, and is in close proximity to the Grade II listed 30 King Street, a late Victorian retail building. The increasing architectural quality and grandeur of King Street towards its western end, where 29 King Street is located, underscores its key role in defining the area's historic townscape. Therefore, the scale, massing, and architectural details of 29 King Street are important both in themselves and for their contribution to the overall character and appearance of this designated conservation area.

The adjoining building number 30 King street has records on historic England website Dated 1889. Built in Arts and Crafts Baroque. The architect was Alfred Williams. Apart from the shopfront of number 29, the Materials are the same with red brick with stone dressings of both 29 and 30 King street. 29 King street has a matching extension of 2 storeys and 2 windows.

4. Proposed Works and Impact Assessment

The proposed alterations aim to:

- **Modernise and Improve Appearance:** Provide a fresh, coherent, and attractive shopfront that enhances the visual appeal of the unit and contributes positively to the vitality of the street.
- **Meet Commercial Needs:** Facilitate the effective operation of 'KING'S AFRO FRESH MARKET' with appropriate display space and a welcoming entrance.
- **Sympathetic Design:** The design has sought to respect the proportions of the existing opening, aligning with the architectural rhythm of the building and adjacent properties. The awning is retractable, minimising visual impact and the stickers low height to attract passing trade.

5. Conclusion

This Heritage Statement demonstrates that 29 King Street is a building of significant heritage value, contributing to the historical and architectural character of Gravesend and the King Street Conservation Area. The scheme has been carefully considered to ensure that it respects the architectural integrity and historical context of the building and its contribution to the Conservation Area / street scene.

The building although in a conservation area and attached to number 30 has shop front which clearly was made later to adapt the ground floor for commercial use. The proposed works have been carefully considered in light of this significance, and the assessment aims to ensure that any alterations respect and, where possible, enhance the building's historic fabric and its contribution to the local townscape.

Examples of nearby shops awnings attached below;



Image 5 Examples of shops across the road with awning



Image 6 Examples of a pub few doors down from 29 King street



Image 7 More examples of a shop with awning nearby

- **Window display stickers:**

Several shops nearby have similarly displayed images of their products, examples below;



Image 8 Examples of product advertisement on the windows





Image 9 Examples of product advertisement on the windows nearby