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**From:** isobel.hartley@historicengland.org.uk  
**Sent:** 28 March 2025 11:53  
**To:** \_planningadvice  
**Subject:** Historic England advice on Application no(s) H16-0209-25  
**Attachments:** H16-0209-25\_HERef\_L01589581\_L467736.doc

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Dear Mr Watkinson,

Please find attached our advice on the following site -

The Sessions House, Sheep Market, Spalding, Lincolnshire, PE11 1BB  
Application No(s):H16-0209-25

Yours sincerely,

Isobel Hartley  
Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas  
E-mail: isobel.hartley@historicengland.org.uk

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Historic England

Mr Greg Watkinson  
South Holland District Council  
Council Offices  
Priory Road  
Spalding  
Lincolnshire  
PE11 2XE

Direct Dial: 07823608338

Our ref: L01589581

28 March 2025

Dear Mr Watkinson

### **Arrangements for Handling Heritage Applications Direction 2021**

**THE SESSIONS HOUSE, SHEEP MARKET, SPALDING, LINCOLNSHIRE, PE11 1BB**

**Application No. H16-0209-25**

Thank you for your letter of 10 March 2025 regarding the above application for listed building consent. On the basis of the information available to date, we offer the following advice to assist your authority in determining the application.

### **Historic England Advice**

#### **Summary**

Historic England appreciates the need for better use of space, and are encouraging of improving the functionality of the building for the benefit of users, and to secure the building's future.

We do not object to the removal of some of the benches within the viewing gallery, however we do have concerns with the removal of all benches as currently proposed.

#### **Significance**

Sessions House is a Grade II listed building, recognised for its special historic and architectural interest.

#### **Impact**

Historic England do not consider that the original, fixed, wooden benches in the Viewing Gallery are secondary to the primary architectural and historical features of the space, as stated in the Heritage Statement. We consider that they represent a principal feature and contribute considerably to significance.

The benches are intrinsic to understanding the room's previous purpose, therefore the total removal of all benches in the Viewing Gallery would be harmful to the building's overall heritage significance.



THE FOUNDRY 82 GRANVILLE STREET BIRMINGHAM B1 2LH

Telephone 0121 625 6888  
[HistoricEngland.org.uk](http://HistoricEngland.org.uk)

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## **Policy**

The NPPF is clear in the requirement to take into account the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets (203).

When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be) (212).

Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification (213).

Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use (215).

## **Recommendation**

Historic England has concerns regarding the application on heritage grounds.

We encourage the exploration of other configurations which would include the retention of some of the fixed benches.

Should the applicant wish to pursue the total removal of all benches as proposed, we recommend amendments to include robust justification for the requirement of this space in particular, such as an options assessment and evaluation of alternative available spaces within the building.

Information should also be provided to your Conservation Officer about the proposed removal method and storage of historic fabric.

We consider that the issues and safeguards outlined in our advice need to be addressed in order for the application to meet the requirements of paragraphs 203, 212, 213, 215 of the NPPF.

In determining this application you should bear in mind the statutory duty of section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

Your authority should take these representations into account and seek amendments, safeguards or further information as set out in our advice. If there are any material changes to the proposals, or you would like further advice, please contact us.



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Historic England

Yours sincerely

I.Hartley

**Isobel Hartley**

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