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SERPENTINE HOUSE DEPOT, BUXTON

HERITAGE STATEMENT TO ACCOMPANY THE APPLICATION FOR OUTLINE PLANNING PERMISSION

MAY 2012

The following statement has been prepared to accompany the application for **Outline Planning Permission** submitted to High Peak Borough Council.

1.0 THE SITE

The site of the proposed development is immediately to the south of, but not within, the Serpentine Walks historic park, Buxton. This statement describes the significance of the park as a heritage asset and the impact of the proposals on it, as follows:

2.0 SERPENTINE WALKS

2.1 DESCRIPTION

The Serpentine Walks extend alongside each bank of the River Wye to the north of the proposed site. The park continues on the opposite side of St John's Road and also links with the Pavilion Gardens which open out on either side of the river on the east side of Burlington Road. The Park is listed at Grade II*.

The banks of the River Wye are grassed and planted with scattered trees and shrubs. The water enters this section of the park beneath a bridge carrying St John's Road. It flows eastward over a number of smooth-stepped cascades dividing at one point and then converging before running beneath a bridge carrying Burlington Road and on into the Pavilion Gardens. A winding path takes a picturesque route beside the river, crossing it via bridges with iron railings and following it under Burlington Road and into the pavilion Gardens.

2.2 HISTORY

Extensive tree planting and walks alongside the river had been developed in the C18 as part of the fifth Duke of Devonshire's plans to enhance the attractions of the spa. Adam's description of 1838 makes it clear that the river had already been beautified with the construction of cascades and states that 'The whole is admirably laid out, and enriched with shrubs and luxurious plantations'. Walks are shown along this part of the river on the 1848 Tithe map.

The Serpentine Walks are thought to be the earliest phase of the development of Pavilion Gardens, which were laid out by Sir Joseph Paxton for the 6th Duke of Devonshire along the course of the River Wye in c.1840. The 1854 plan of Paxton's layout shows configuration of walks similar to the 1848 Tithe map, and at the west end an irregularly shaped lake with an island is shown. Paxton had been undertaking various projects for the sixth Duke of Devonshire in Buxton for some years, and the improvement of the Serpentine Walks was part of a larger plan for the development of a park to the north surrounded by villas. This was only partially executed and is outside the registered area.

3.0 PROPOSALS

The outline proposals comprise the following:

- The demolition of an existing storage shed and outbuilding and removal of the remains of a former glasshouse.
- The retention of Serpentine House itself and its refurbishment for residential use.

- The construction of three new four bedroom residential units.

- The creation of a passing point on the access road and widening of the access adjacent to Serpentine House to create space for service vehicles to turn.

- The return of a triangular parcel of land at the western end of the site to the Serpentine Walks park.

4.0 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- The proposals include the refurbishment of the existing Serpentine House, currently in a poor state of repair. The house is visible from the southern side of the park and its refurbishment will enhance its surroundings

- The demolition of redundant buildings and general tidying up of the site is also considered to be an improvement which will have a positive effect on the Park.

- The arboricultural survey carried out on the site recommends the removal of a number of existing generally self seeded trees both to enable the development and because a number of them are diseased and/or have limited life. Key specimen trees will remain and it is envisaged that the boundary of the site abutting the Park will be planted with trees and suitable shrubs in order to create an appropriate 'green edge' to the Park and screening for the new buildings.

- The new buildings will be located towards the southern side of the site, ie away from the Park and approximately on the site of existing buildings. Their overall height will be no greater than the ridge of Serpentine House.

In summary the impact on the historic park is considered to be minimal, with the refurbishment of Serpentine House potentially having a positive effect on the setting and the new buildings sited and screened so as to be barely visible.