A.J.S ARCHITECTURE



32 CARR ROAD, BUXTON, SK17 6WF
TEL: 01298 26062

DESIGN, ACCESS AND HERITAGE STATEMENT: APRIL 2013

THE OLD COURTHOUSE, GEORGE STREET, BUXTON

REAR ELEVATION CHANGES AS PART OF THE CONVERSION OF THE FORMER PROJECT X UNIT OF THE OLD COURTHOUSE TO FORM A REAL ALE BAR – THE BUXTON TAP HOUSE.

The purpose of the application is to seek permission for the opening up of 3 large existing openings to the rear of the unit previously known as Project X in The Old Courthouse building. Works to be undertaken are also to encompass the extension of a pitched roof area over a flat roof and the reinstatement of an existing brick wall in coursed gritstone to match elsewhere.

The works are being undertaken as part of the internal refurbishment of the existing internal space to form a new real ale bar in the form of The Buxton Tap House. The current use is for a cafe bar and as such these works do not represent a change of use. The proposed real ale bar will sit adjacent to a wine bar and restaurants that have become very popular in this area and thus represent a use that is in keeping with the area and the changes that are taking place within the area with The Crescent.

The exact date of The Old Courthouse is unclear, but it was certainly in existence in 1850 as the earliest records relate to its use during that time. The construction of the building is likely to have taken place not long after The Crescent and its use related to that building as the Duke of Devonshire Estate Office. Since this use expired during the 1930's, the building has being used for various purposes over the last few decades, but the main use now relates to bar and restaurant facilities with only two small retail units remaining to the ground floor. It is understood that these two units are to relocate elsewhere in the town. The first floor use still relates to that of a Masonic Lodge.

The Old Courthouse is just one of numerous Edwardian buildings in Buxton, that along with the more recent Victorian structures in the town, gives the area its distinctive Architectural style. This building in particular is of considerable architectural merit that sits comfortably next to its somewhat grander neighbour in the form of The Crescent, which is of course undergoing major works to form a high quality Hotel. It is these works that have in many ways been the catalyst for the recent changes of use at The

Old Courthouse and the future use of The Crescent will of course be of major benefit to the success of the units within the building.

The group of buildings that The Old Court House sits next to, including The Crescent, the old bakery and associated Cavendish Circus buildings(opposite), The Cavendish Arcade, The George Mansions and slightly further on – The Square and The Opera House, form what is probably the most important part of the Architectural Heritage of Buxton. Although The Opera House and The Square have been refurbished over the recent decades, major works are now proposed for the rear of Cavendish Circus, George Mansions and, of course, The Crescent. The Old Court House is an important Architectural Heritage building within this group and has itself, recently undergone the first seeds of refurbishment to capitalise on these surrounding changes. This application seeks to further enhance this building and its important architectural standing.

The works being undertaken as part of The Crescent conversion have recently opened up the space between the two buildings. This space is ultimately to form a large open courtyard space which will, to certain extent, change the emphasis and importance of the existing elevations to The Old Courthouse. An extension to the rear of The Bar Brasserie was recently approved on the basis that the elevational aspect of the rear of this building will soon become just as important as the front. With this in mind permission is now sought to open up the three window openings to the rear of the former Project X unit. The existing openings are more or less open down to the floor level from the gutter line and hence the proposal is form three bespoke French window openings. The units will be in hardwood painted white with quarter lights as per the original window openings so as to reinstate this elevation to a more coherent state with the rest of the building. The further works to replace the part flat roof and semi collapsed brick wall thereto with a coursed gritstone elevation and extended pitched roofline over will only further respect the impending importance of this elevation.

Although not a change of use requiring planning permission, the internal refurbishment of the existing cafe bar to form a real ale bar for Buxton Brewery in the form of The Buxton Tap House also shows a substantial investment in the continued refurbishment of this building and a long term home for what has become a very successful local business. It is these kind of commitments that continue to show the desire to further improve The Old Courthouse and respect the neighbouring listed buildings.