Applicant
Grove Project Management Ltd
Planning Portal Reference PP-02963698
39 Buxton Road, Whaley Bridge, SK23 7JE

Agent
Plan:8 Town Planning Ltd

Planning Design Access Statement

Introduction

1.1 The site is the Taxi Office located on Buxton Road, adjacent to (to the south of) the Memories of India Restaurant in Whaley Bridge. The site is not within a Conservation Area but is within the defined town centre of Whaley Bridge.

1.2 As described within the High peak Urban Capacity Study of 2003 Whaley Bridge "*Whaley Bridge has an attractive town centre most of which lies within the Conservation Area designated in 1994. Shops and services are largely concentrated in a relatively compact area along Market Street and adjoining roads. "*

1.3 There is a single storey building on the site at present that is not of any architectural interest which does not add to the streetscene. The site is underused. The triangular shaped site is flat although it is bounded and framed by the railway embankment to the west and south sides. The railway bridge that crosses Buxton Road also frames the site. To the north is the modern suburban looking Memories of India beyond which are long terraces of stone properties all within the town centre of Whaley Bridge. The United Reform Church opposite the site is stone built with slate roof and is of substantial construction with some relief within the elevations. The Church is framed by the hill behind it and to an extent by the railway bridge.

1.4 The application site and the Church form bookend sites to the town centre given the backdrop to each of the sites.

1.5 The proposed development is for a new start up business which the applicant has identified as a business opportunity. New jobs will be created by the development both during construction and for the business when operational. The building is two floors of restaurant accommodation with the roofspace utilised for a flat. No parking is provided on site given the town centre location.

History

2.1 Planning application HPK/2013/0229 was for similar development, a flat above restaurant / wine bar although the design has changed given Councillors comments at Committee. The application was determined by the planning committee who debated at length the pluses and minuses of the proposal. On balance the Committee decided to ratify the Officers recommendation for refusal with two reasons given:

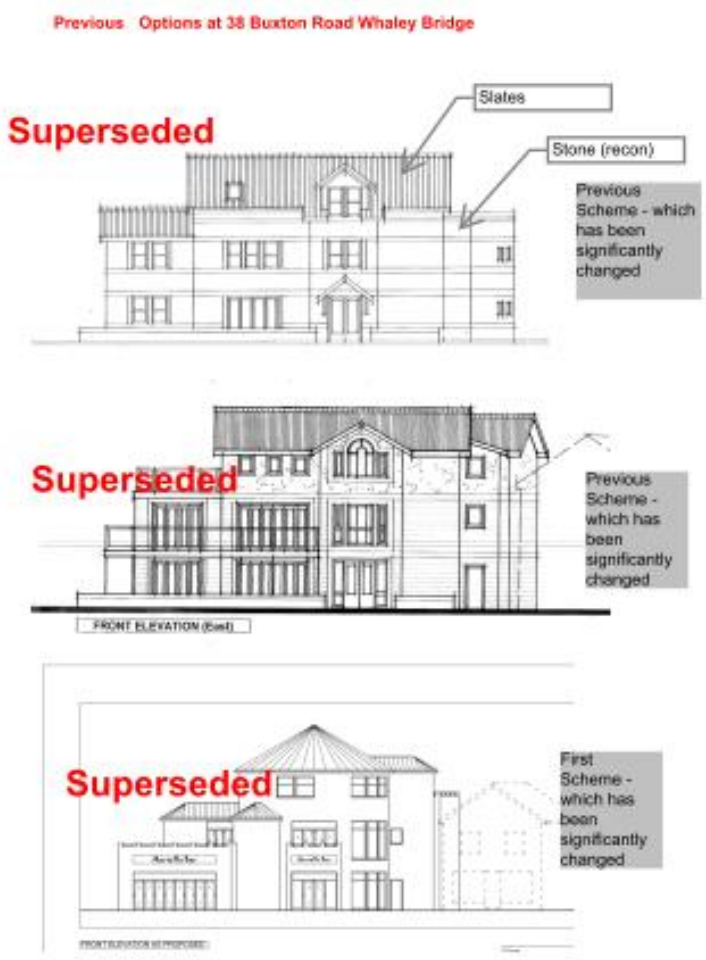
1. The scale, form, design and use of materials of the development proposed is visually incongruous and does not reflect the character of this area. The development will be detrimental to the visual qualities of the area and to the setting of Whaley Bridge Conservation Area contrary to Policies GD3, GD4, TC2, BC1 and BC5 of the High Peak Saved Local Plan Policies 2008 and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.

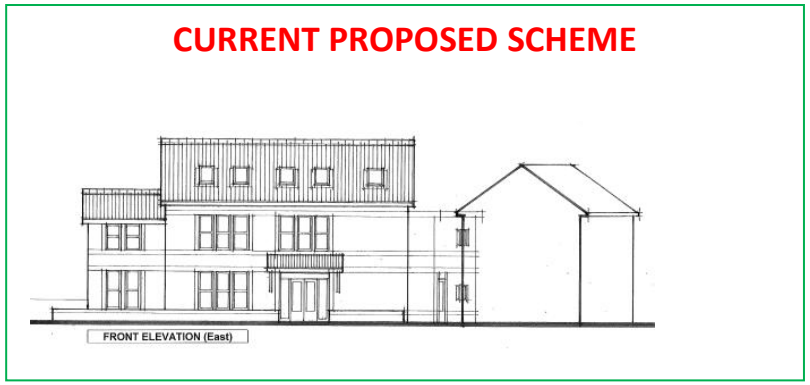
2. The scale of the development proposed, in the absence of any on site parking or service provision will lead to increased congestion on the adjacent classified highway, Buxton Road (B5004) to the detriment of highway safety and contrary to Policy TR5 of the High Peak Saved Local Plan Policies 2008 and Section 4 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

2.2 Following the refusal we submitted two alternative schemes for consideration by Planning Officers. We supplied an analysis of the streetscene and surrounding area to show how the proposed design complied with the surrounding area. We also supplied an explanation of the highway matters including the site being within the town centre. The Planning Officers suggested our changes were not enough for them to comment whilst the Highway Officer from the County Council provided positive and constructive comments.

<u>Submission and Policy Appraisal</u>

3.1 As a result of the comments received we have changed the design and offer a S106 heads of terms to include comments made by the Highways officer. These changes should allow Officers to recommend the application favourably. The following page show the previous schemes along with the development proposed within this application.





3.2 The analysis of the streetscene is provided on the following eight pages.

Analysis of the street scene, the character of the area and visual qualities of the area and the setting of Whaley Bridge Conservation Area with regard to the proposed development and resubmission of planning application HPK/2013/0229.



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Analysis of the streetscene, the character of the area and visiual qualities of the area and the setting of Whaley Bridge Conservation Area with regard to the proposed development and resubmission of planning application HPK/2013/0229.

Images below are streetscene views of the West Side of Buxton Road starting south of the site, the site and northwards.







Buildings to the south of the site are a mixture of two and three storey - many have dormers.

The site is shown on the left underlined in red. Adjacnet structures are Menories of India, railway bridge and two storey portacabins. Material sare stone and recon stone to teh front with a mixture of materials to the side and rear.

The existing timber shack will be replaced. The proposal will be appropriate in the context of the immediate surroundings. The proposed materials of stone and timber windows to the front elevation complement the pallete of materials locally.



As we move north on the West sid eof Buxton Road the buildkings are mainly two storey with five properties in this selection have a third storey - all utilising dormers - and some identical to that propsed in the application submission.

A mix of properties is found with the use of stone dominating rather than any one individual architectural style.

The new 4 storey development is noted when viewed form Buxton Road. It has recon stone and upvc windows. This development is considerde in more detail later.



The Mechanic Institute is a significant building in the town. The buildings here again show common materials facing the street but a mix of materials to the side and rear.

EAST SIDE



The terrace on the east side of Buxton Road furthest from the application site has uniformity.



Moving southward toward the application site the building styles are mainly three and two storey with a single storey building as well. Materials are mainly stone to teh front with a mixture of pvc and timber windows.



The terrace to the left is uniform in height however a great variation in window styles and materials including plastic windows are found.



Taller buildings with parapets are noted and taller terraces are found on Old Road.

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A pike and recon stone are found closer to the application site. Plastic windows are noted.

The Church opposite is a large building with varying projections, several different window types and styles are blended. A glazed canopy is noted as are the varying set backs.



The development is close to the application site just behind Buxton Road and visible from within the Conservation Area. This recently constructed building is finished in recon stone, plastic windows and has rendered side elevations. The building has three floors with large parapet above and set back 4th floor. The building is not like other buildings in Whaley Bridge but nevertheless does not harm the setting or area. The application site at 39 Buxton Road is close to this site behind the trees as shown below.



3.3 The above analysis shows the character of the surrounding area. The site is not within the Conservation Area but is close to the boundary. The site is within the town centre. The architect has amended the scheme to incorporate some design changes as inferred to be required by the Committee report and officers presentation to Committee such as lowering the eaves level and harmonising the types and sizes of windows. The materials are now consistent with stone walls to the front elevation, slate roofs and timber windows to the front. The superseded and current streetscenes are copied below.





This element set behind the street - the propsed and adjacent Memories of India are and also appear separate when viewed from the street.

3.4 We feel this resubmission has resolved the Officers concerns regarding design.

3.5 Turning now to highways we have received comments from the Highways Officer and have addressed his main concerns in doing so we would like to confirm the following:

1. The existing taxi office has a high number of cars moving in and out of the site and parking outside the site.
2. The site is within the defined town centre of Whaley Bridge. Within the adopted plan parking standards are not specified for sites within the town centre. Paragraphs 5.100 to 5.1002 (copied below) of the Saved Local Plan indicate that there are sufficient public car parks within Whaley Bridge for the town centre. The policy basis also proposes increase of the evening economy and attractions and facilities for visitors.
3. The proposal does not include takeaways. There will not be takeaways. I believe this could be conditioned. The proposal is for a wine bar / restaurant.
4. There is no room for servicing within the site. The applicant intends to run the wine bar restaurant and will service it himself with a transit size vehicle between the hours of 10:00 am and 14:00. This can be condition or a scheme can be submitted that can be controlled via a condition. He intends to use local produce from local suppliers wherever possible to reduce food miles. Other shops and businesses are able to service their properties on street.
5. Staff parking. The 14 staff will be on a shift pattern, but it is possible that say on New Years Eve there could be 10 staff at work although it is more likely that during the week there would be 5 staff and 7 or 8 on a weekend. However the applicant has given the comments you raised below some thought and does propose that he enter into a travel plan bound by a S106 obligation to ensure that staff travel to work on foot, by public transport or if they rive to first car share and park in car parks within the town centre. A travel plan co-ordinator will be appointed – which initially will be Mr Galley.
6. Additionally the travel plan will include the measures to inform staff and customers of parking options when visiting the property.
7. Mr Galley also agrees to provide, if required in the unlikely event that the site causes obstruction/ unsafe operations, sums not exceeding £5000.00p for a monitoring period of 5 years post opening for any traffic management measures deemed necessary as a result of the development. This may include investigation into, and subsequent implementation of, waiting restrictions or, possibly, reallocation of carriageway space on the fronting highway e.g. relocation of the centre line markings to create additional room in the correct lane for passing parked vehicles on the development side of the road.

3.6 We should also confirm that the High Peak Saved Local Plan Policies includes parking policies and discussion about parking for town centre uses within Whaley Bridge:

> *"5.100 Market Street was once part of the A6 trunk road, and despite the construction of the by-pass, it still takes some through traffic. Whaley Bridge's traffic problems are less severe than most other town centres in the High Peak, but traffic calming measures would nevertheless be desirable to give pedestrians greater priority and security. Possible opportunities will be investigated with Derbyshire County Council, as highway authority.*
>
> *"5.101 Car parking surveys of Whaley Bridge were carried out in 1999. These found that the* ***two existing public car parks, together with on-street parking, should be sufficient to satisfy parking demands for several years.*** *The Council has no proposals to provide additional public parking areas. Nevertheless, a scheme to improve the surfacing and landscaping of the Station Car Park, and to mark out parking bays has recently been completed, and the Whaley Bridge Regeneration Partnership has initiated a scheme to re-organise and improve the Canal Wharf Car Park."*
>
> *"5.102 Whaley Bridge has significant potential for visitor-related development, building on its association with the Canal and nearby Bugsworth Basin, the former Cromford and High Peak Railway and the Goyt Valley, including the Goyt Way and Mid-Shires Way long distance trails. The Council through the strategy of the Regeneration Partnership wishes to encourage the provision of overnight accommodation and other visitor facilities, particularly where these also help to conserve and enhance the character of the area."*
> Extracts taken from the High Peak Saved Local Plan.

3.7 The site is within the town centre and as the Saved Policies show there is sufficient parking in the town centre. The proposal to restrict takeaways and servicing to day time is in line with other business in the town centre. The applicant proposes a travel plan and to pay for monitoring and traffic control f these are necessary.

3.8 The Saved Local Plan includes Policy 27 and TC1 which relates to town centre sites, such as the application site. The policy advises: "Within town centres Planning Permission will be granted for development which sustains and enhances the vitality and viability of the centre".

3.9 The proposed development of a restaurant with apartment complies with the policy as the proposal will enhance the vitality of the centre through the introduction of a business use which will encourage local people and visitors to visit the town centre and undertake linked trips in the town. The supporting text concurs about the importance of strengthening the economy.

> *"The High Peak's town centres have many opportunities and problems in common. Each not only provides services for residents, but also attracts tourists and day-trippers, many of whom are visiting the Peak District National Park, but relying on the surrounding towns as a base. There is a clear need to maintain and enhance the standard of services and quality of environment for tourists as well as for residents. Town centre management plays an increasingly important role in maintaining vital and viable town centres. The Council is playing its part through various measures: "The Council is working in partnership with traders and local groups to promote town centre improvements and initiatives such as The Buxton Partnership, Glossop Town Centre Partnership, Whaley Bridge Regeneration Partnership and Chapel-en-le-Frith Regeneration Partnership. These partnerships are producing vision statements and business plans to help promote appropriate town centre developments."* Policy 33
>
> *TC9 – THE EVENING ECONOMY – PUBS, CLUBS AND TAKEAWAYS Planning Permission will be granted for licensed premises, night clubs and hot food takeaways, provided that:*
>
> - *the development will not be within a predominantly residential area, nor will directly adversely affect a predominantly residential area due to noise, vibration, odours, gaseous pollutants, activity or traffic disturbance; and*
> - *where appropriate, conditions will be imposed to control opening hours and operating conditions in order to mitigate the environmental impact of the development.*

3.10 Saved local policies are supportive and encourage tourism development in conjunction and interlinked with providing more services and a more vibrant town centre for Whaley Bridge:

> "*Whaley Bridge has significant potential for visitor-related development, building on its association with the Canal and nearby Bugsworth Basin, the former Cromford and High Peak Railway and the Goyt Valley, including the Goyt Way and Mid-Shires Way long distance trails.* ***The Council*** *through the strategy of the Regeneration Partnership* ***wishes to encourage the provision of*** *overnight*

accommodation and other ***visitor facilities, particularly where these also help to conserve and enhance the character of the area***." Tourism 5.102 of the High Peak Saved Local Plan Policies.

"*A Regeneration Partnership has been established in Whaley Bridge to try to formulate and implement a clear strategy for the town, focusing in particular on the town centre. Key themes in trying to regenerate town centres are to boost the economy of the town, improving its appearance, encouraging more visitors and developing pride through greater involvement of the local community*." Para 5.88 of the High Peak Saved Local Plan Policies."

3.11 Additionally and significantly the High Peak Council have confirmed they are 'Open for Business' and wish to encourage development. The Councils website advises:

"We are 'Open for Business' and keen to achieve business investment and employment growth in our area. If you are thinking of starting up a new business, growing an existing business, or moving or expanding your business into High Peak our Planning service wants to help you.

We will do what we can to make your plans a success.

Our area has a thriving business community, a friendly and loyal workforce, and safe communites in the highest quality natural environment." (High Peak BC Website).

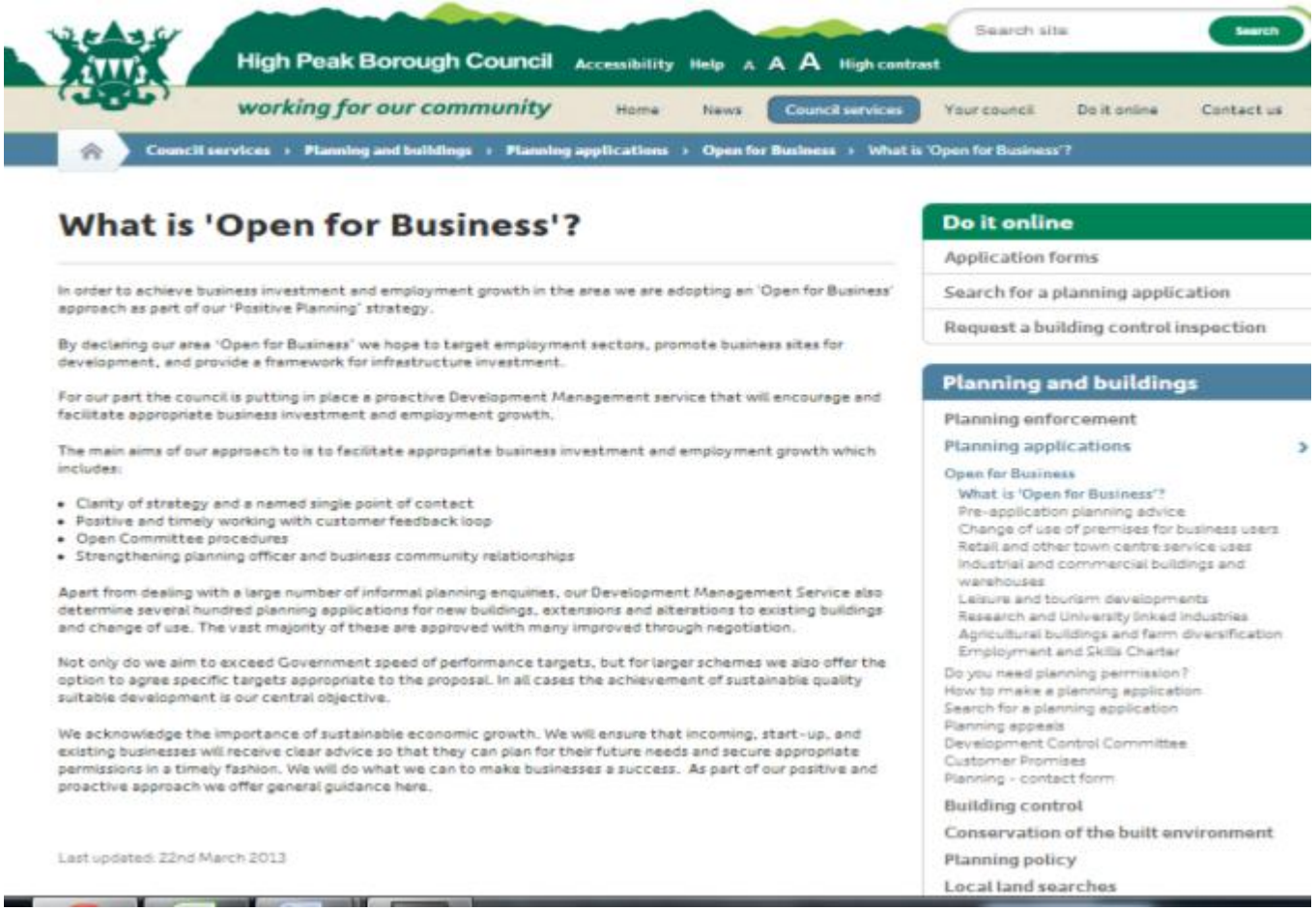
3.12 As further explanation the Council advise:

"In order to achieve business investment and employment growth in the area we are adopting an 'Open for Business' approach as part of our 'Positive Planning' strategy.

"By declaring our area 'Open for Business' we hope to target employment sectors, promote business sites for development, and provide a framework for infrastructure investment.

"For our part the council is putting in place a proactive Development Management service that will encourage and facilitate appropriate business investment and employment growth…..

"We acknowledge the importance of sustainable economic growth. We will ensure that incoming, start-up, and existing businesses will receive clear advice so that they can plan for their future needs and secure appropriate permissions in a timely fashion. We will do what we can to make businesses a success. As part of our positive and proactive approach we offer general guidance here." (High Peak BC Website).



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What is 'Open for Business'?

In order to achieve business investment and employment growth in the area we are adopting an 'Open for Business' approach as part of our 'Positive Planning' strategy.

By declaring our area 'Open for Business' we hope to target employment sectors, promote business sites for development, and provide a framework for infrastructure investment.

For our part the council is putting in place a proactive Development Management service that will encourage and facilitate appropriate business investment and employment growth.

The main aims of our approach to is to facilitate appropriate business investment and employment growth which includes:

- Clarity of strategy and a named single point of contact
- Positive and timely working with customer feedback loop
- Open Committee procedures
- Strengthening planning officer and business community relationships

Apart from dealing with a large number of informal planning enquiries, our Development Management Service also determine several hundred planning applications for new buildings, extensions and alterations to existing buildings and change of use. The vast majority of these are approved with many improved through negotiation.

Not only do we aim to exceed Government speed of performance targets, but for larger schemes we also offer the option to agree specific targets appropriate to the proposal. In all cases the achievement of sustainable quality suitable development is our central objective.

We acknowledge the importance of sustainable economic growth. We will ensure that incoming, start-up, and existing businesses will receive clear advice so that they can plan for their future needs and secure appropriate permissions in a timely fashion. We will do what we can to make businesses a success. As part of our positive and proactive approach we offer general guidance here.

Last updated: 22nd March 2013

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3.13 Restaurant use is defined by Government and High Peak Council as an appropriate town centre use. There are no policies to restrict the use of the site as a restaurant. We consider the proposed use is in accordance with the policy framework.

3.14 Policy 28 TC2 of the local plan relates to Town Centre Environment and advises that planning permission will be granted for development in town centres, provided that:

- it will be of high quality design, external appearance, landscaping and other site treatment; and
- it will be sympathetic in use, siting, scale and character to its immediate and wider surroundings; and
- it will not prejudice the provision of public transport or otherwise adversely affect public accessibility

3.15 We have seen other recent development within the town centre being of modern design such as the apartments close to the application site, as shown within the enclosures below. The application property takes some markers from other more established buildings in Whaley Bridge as shown within the images provided in this statement. The proposal will enhance the site and streetscene as well as providing a new start up business in the town.

Conclusion

4.1 We consider the proposals are in accordance with policies of the High Peak Local Plan and emerging policies as well as those contained with the National Planning Policy Framework. The proposal will not detract from the architectural features of the Church opposite and will not dominate the street scene. In fact the proposal will enhance the street scene by providing new built form of similar style and scale to other properties within the town centre.

4.2 Of great importance within the NPPF are issues of sustainability, economic growth. NPPF confirms: *"At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking"…….for decision-taking this means:*

- *approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and*

- *where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*

- *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or*
- *specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted."* (Paragrpah 14, NPPF).

4.3 The applicant has worked hard to alter the development to respond to comments given at the Committee meeting. The proposal compliments the setting and provides much needed new development in close proximity to other services and employment within the town centre. We feel the proposal complements the character of the site and compliments the wider streetscene. This is previously developed land where a new building will provide direct and indirect employment for local people during and post construction. We consider the proposal is sustainable development that complies with the planning policy framework.