

**21 COLLEGE ROAD, BUXTON**

**Heritage Statement  
Significance and Impact**

**HPK/2015/0661**

**Dec 2015**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This Heritage Statement and Assessment has been produced to support a Planning Application for No.21 College Rd and should be read in conjunction with the submitted plans. The proposal is for subdivision of the existing apartments and refurbishment of a basement flat and the common areas.

The property, whilst undesignated, is situated within the College Conservation Area of Buxton and as such is a Heritage Asset.

PPS5 requires significance to be assessed when changes are proposed to heritage assets, and for the impact of proposals to be assessed in relation to significance. This report has been produced to comply with this policy framework.

### **Purpose of the Report**

The purpose of the report is to assess the significance of the building, and the impact of proposals to change it. The report will cover the following key issues:

- A summary of the history and development of the building,
- A statement of significance of the building,
- An impact assessment of the proposed works, in the context of PPS5.

## **HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT & CONTEXT**

The building is located on College Road, adjacent to what was then Buxton Endowed School (1881), known now as Buxton Community School.

College Road was developed by the Devonshire Estate in 1892, as a speculative residential development of large detached and semi-detached Victorian Villas to serve the housing needs of the burgeoning professional classes of late Victorian Buxton.

The area is largely characterised by two types of housing; the Victorian Villas of which No.21 is an example and later Arts and Crafts houses from the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Research shows that the property was originally used as a single dwelling house. However, as the building became less relevant to more modern requirements additional uses were sought and it is thought the property may have been used as a guest house for a period. For the past twenty or more years it has been divided into apartments. The property comprises four apartments.

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE BUILDING AND SETTING**

### **External Description**

This building is constructed of coursed local gritstone, and roofed in natural slates. In typical Buxton style a large number of bay windows, both square and splayed are present. The bays are constructed from sawn stone of square section with stop chamfer detail. Elsewhere the coursed gritstone is finished with an arris detail at window and door openings

A small extension has been made to the rear elevation, perhaps shortly after original construction. A detached concrete garage stands to the northern corner of the plot.

The original joinery work to windows and doors has been completely removed and a crude and unsympathetic scheme of u-pvc replacement windows and doors has been installed at some point in the past.

Whilst much of the original detail remains within the building, the original floor plan has been lost through the partitioning of rooms etc.

Previous schemes of division at the property have been attempted in a crude manner, maintenance of the property has been neglected and the property is no longer lettable, nor indeed habitable.

Surveys have revealed that whilst the property is in reasonable condition, the roof is in a poor state.

Emergency works have been made in an attempt to stop the ingress of water and prevent further deterioration of the property. However, the roof is in need of complete replacement and a comprehensive scheme of refurbishment is needed to bring the property back into usage relevant to modern users.

### **Setting**

The property is located with other similar properties on College Road, facing South-West over the adjacent school playing fields. The road was originally laid out with Lyme and Sycamore trees, many of which are still standing.

The property sits on a good sized plot, which has been mainly laid to hardstanding, the front garden is bounded by a low random gritstone wall perhaps 300mm high, a vehicle access has been made from College Road into the site.

The property is set back from the road a sufficient distance, such that the front elevation dominates the street view. Neighbouring houses obscure much of the side elevations and the rear is not observed.

The gardens to front and sides have been neglected; dense growths of vegetation screen the property from the road. Numerous inappropriate Conifers have outgrown the site and Holly trees have self- sown and proliferated.

## SIGNIFICANCE

### Assessing significance

Assessing significance is a key principle for managing change to heritage assets, and is embedded within current government policy; PPS5 policies HE6 and 7 (CLG, PPS5, Planning for the Historic Environment, 2010). A key objective in the PPS is to 'conserve England's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance by ensuring that –“ decisions are based on the nature, extent and level of the significance...” (PPS5 para 6).

PPS5 advises that the more significant the heritage asset the greater the presumption in favour of its conservation (policy HE9). English Heritage issued Conservation Principles in 2008 to explain its philosophical approach to significance and managing change and identified four main aspects of significance: evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal. Within these categories, significance can be measured in hierarchical levels; the most usual levels are:

**Exceptional** – an asset important at the highest national or international levels, including scheduled ancient monuments, Grade I or II\* listed buildings and World Heritage Sites. PPS5 advises that substantial harm should be wholly exceptional.

**High** – a designated asset important at a regional level and also at a national level, including Grade II listed buildings and conservation areas. PPS5 advises that substantial harm should be exceptional.

**Medium** – an undesignated asset important at a local to regional level, including local (non-statutory) listed buildings or those that make a positive contribution to the setting of a listed building or to a conservation area; may include less significant parts of listed buildings. Buildings and parts of structures in this category should be retained where possible, although there is usually scope for adaptation.

**Low** – structure or feature of very limited heritage or other cultural value and usually not defined as a heritage asset. May include low quality additions to listed buildings, and buildings that do not contribute positively to a conservation area. The removal or adaptation of structures in this category is usually acceptable where the work will enhance a related heritage asset.

**Negative** – structure or feature that harms the value of a heritage asset. Wherever practicable, removal of negative features should be considered, taking account of setting and opportunities for enhancement.

### Significance of No.21 College Rd

The building is one of a number of similar properties designed as Victorian Villas within a Lyme Avenue.

Whilst the property is not designated, it does contribute positively to the College Conservation Area.

## PROPOSALS

The proposals are a response to manifold factors:

- The property is currently unlettable and is no longer in usage. A comprehensive scheme of repair and refurbishment is required to bring it back into service as a desirable, efficient and relevant place in which people wish to live.
- The current configuration of the property is very poorly laid out and results in extremely large and outmoded living spaces. The proposals would make more efficient and relevant use of the property.
- The existing fenestration was installed some time ago and is of such crude and poor design that successful re-development of the site necessitates its removal and replacement.
- Opportunities to improve the thermal efficiency of buildings of this type are very limited. The windows provide a primary means of achieving such an upgrade.
- The demand for a range of tenure and type and costs of accommodation in the area. Promoting mixed and flexible patterns of land use which are likely to be and remain sustainable.
- The reuse of existing fabric, minimising waste and reducing the need for new build housing and the strain this places on all aspects of the environment.

## Exterior and Setting

The exterior changes to the building are .

- A new window opening is proposed to the rear elevation, at first floor level. It is adjacent to a number of existing windows in the elevation. Sawn stone cill and head will be used to match existing. The opening will be formed in the coursed gritstone and the arris detail found on the other window openings will be repeated.

**Impact:** The new window opening will be to the rear of the property and unseen. It will match existing materials and design. It will have no significant impact on the Heritage Asset.

- It is proposed to replace the existing windows with new u-pvc double glazed windows of a more appropriate design, manufactured by Malbern Ltd, a leading manufacturer.

**Impact:** No original joinery is present, the existing windows are very poor in terms of design, efficiency, operation and visual amenity. The proposal will remove a significant, negative feature of the property. As there is currently no original joinery, no further loss can occur. The impact on the Heritage Asset will be an improvement from that existing.

- A scheme to rejuvenate the gardens retaining the most appropriate species and specimens. The scheme is currently being discussed with the Arboricultural Officer, together with replacement planting more appropriate to the period of the property and the site.

**Impact:** The current garden is in a very poor, overgrown condition. It requires clearance and replanting. The impact on the Heritage Asset will be positive. The challenge is to mitigate any short term sterility the site might display whilst awaiting the new planting to get established. This can be achieved by retaining a few of the existing trees, utilising the existing boulder limestone as a feature and by careful choice of shrubs.

- The roof to be overhauled.

**Impact:** The rooflines will remain the same, natural slate to be used. No significant impact.

- A new vehicular entrance from College Rd

**Impact:** The new access will result in the loss of a 3m section of boundary wall to the property. The boundary wall in question is approximately 300mm high, in random gritstone. The impact on the Heritage Asset is low to moderate. The proposal will allow a safer one way route to access the property and prevent the practise of reversing out onto College Rd. A wide variety of vehicle crossings are evident to all properties in the area.

The remainder of the house will not be affected.

## Internal

The existing layout is being remodelled as described in the Application Drawings. There will be no impact on the Heritage Asset.

## PPS5 POLICIES

Planning policy statement PPS5 provides a policy framework for making decisions about historic assets. A key principle enshrined in PPS5, is the need to balance the significance of heritage assets against the benefits of the proposals.

**Policy HE1** relates to climate change and heritage assets. The proposals will be designed to meet current standards for thermal insulation to minimise energy usage.

The Replacement of the windows provides a primary means to achieve a thermal upgrade on the property

**Policy HE7** relates to proposals that affect all heritage assets and requires assessments of significance and impact to be made as part of the application process. HE7.2 states that 'in considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, the Local Planning Authority (LPA) should take into account the particular nature of the significance of the heritage asset'.

The affected Heritage Asset is the College Conservation Area.

The proposals contained in the Planning Application largely have no impact on the Heritage Asset. The internal modelling, the roof overhaul and the additional window opening to the rear have no significant impact and cause no harm or loss to the building.

It is accepted that the new access proposal will result in a small loss in the boundary wall, however the wall is not a prominent feature of the street scene being relatively low and random in construction.

The proposal to clear and replant the garden will have a positive effect on the Heritage Asset and will be sensitively managed to ensure the short term effects are mitigated.

The proposal to replace the existing windows does not seek to rectify the damage that was done when the original timber windows were removed, indeed it is not possible to do so. It does not result in any additional loss or harm to the building or the wider Conservation Area. It does however offer a very clear improvement on the existing situation and results in a moderate positive impact on the Heritage Asset.

In terms of the conservation area, the proposals will have a small positive impact.

**Policy HE9.** PPS5 policies relate to the level of the asset's significance and the level of harm that a proposal may cause. As the proposal would not cause 'substantial harm', HE9.2 does not apply in this case.

In relation to the balance of benefits it is considered that most proposals have either positive or no impact. The new access is justified by the increase in safety it will supply both to users of the property and all users of College Rd.

The proposals overall are worthy of support as they seek to sustain, improve and increase the existing residential use.

**Policy HE12** of PPS5 states that 'where the loss of part of a heritage asset's significance is justified', recording should be required. This planning application and this report provides that record.

## **CONCLUSION**

No. 21 College Road is important to the character of the College Conservation Area.

The proposals to refurbish and bring it up-to current standards and back into residential use are appropriate and sustainable.

The Planning Application is consistent with advice and policies in PPS5 and the impact on the Conservation area is positive and worthy of support.