

**The Vault, 2-4 High Street,  
Buxton, Derbyshire, SK17 6EU**

**DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT;  
and,  
HERITAGE STATEMENT AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

HALIFAX  
BUILDING  
SOCIETY

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**Date: 19<sup>th</sup> February 2021**

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This assessment has been carried out in order to determine the impact of proposed alteration works on a Non-Designated Heritage Asset which is situated within a Conservation Area. The appraisal is concerned with the process of conserving the special architectural and historic interest of the building and preserving or enhancing the historic character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

1.2 This appraisal has been conducted in accordance with the general guidelines set out in British Standard 7913:2013 'Guide to the Conservation of Historic Buildings' and in particular responds to policies outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF). In respect of information requirements, paragraph 189 sets out that:

*"In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance."*

1.3 Guidance on the implementation and interpretation of historic environment policy has been provided by the Historic England publications 'Historic Environment Good Practice in Planning' notes 1 'The Historic Environment in Local Plans, GPA2 'Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment' and GPA3 'The Setting of Heritage Assets' (Second Edition).

1.4 Planning policy for Buxton comprises the 'High Peak Local Plan' which was adopted in 2016. With respect to heritage, Policy EQ 7 'Built and Historic Environment' sets out that:

*The Council will conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. This will take into account the desirability of sustaining and enhancing their significance and will ensure that development proposals contribute positively to the character of the built and historic environment in accordance with sub area strategies S5, S6 and S7.*

*Particular protection will be given to designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings including:*

- *Listed Buildings*
- *Conservation Areas*
- *Historic Parks and Gardens*
- *Scheduled Monuments*
- *Archaeological Sites or heritage features*
- *Heritage trees and woodlands*
- *Locally listed heritage assets*

*This will be achieved by:*

- *Requiring all works that could impact on a heritage asset or its setting or sites with the potential to include assets, to be informed by a level of historical, architectural and archaeological evidence proportionate to their significance and sufficient to understand the potential impact of a proposal. Where appropriate, the Council may also require historical research and archaeological recording to be undertaken before works to a heritage asset commence.*
- *Preventing the loss of buildings and features which make a positive contribution to the character or heritage of an area through preservation or appropriate reuse and sensitive development, including enabling development, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss or other relevant provisions of the NPPF apply.*
- *Ensuring that development within the Area of Archaeological Interest as identified on the Policies Map does not have a significant adverse impact on any known or yet to be discovered heritage assets. Planning conditions and/or obligations will be agreed to ensure that archaeological or heritage features are recorded and retained intact in situ. Where this is impractical, such features will be appropriately excavated and recorded prior to destruction. Within the Buxton Area of Archaeological Interest development proposals should be informed by desk-based assessment / field evaluation as appropriate to assess the potential for impacts on Roman archaeology. Where proposals are likely to affect other known important sites, sites of significant archaeological potential, or those that become known through the development process, an archaeological evaluation will be required prior to their determination*
- *Requiring proposed developments that affect a heritage asset and / or its setting, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings, to demonstrate how the proposal has taken account of design, form, scale, mass, use of traditional materials and detailing, siting and views away from and towards the heritage asset in order to ensure that the design is sympathetic and minimises harm to the asset.*
- *Requiring proposals for the change of use of heritage assets, including listed buildings and buildings in Conservation Areas to demonstrate that the proposal is considered to be the optimum sustainable and viable use that involves the least change to the fabric, interior and setting of the building*
- *Requiring development proposals in Conservation Areas to demonstrate how the proposal has taken account of the distinctive character and setting of individual Conservation Areas including open spaces and natural features and how this has been reflected in the layout, design, form, scale, mass, use of traditional materials and detailing, in accordance with Character Appraisals where available*
- *Requiring the retention of shop-fronts of high architectural or historical value wherever possible. Proposals for replacement shop-fronts and signage, or alterations to shop-fronts affecting heritage assets should respect the character, scale, proportion and special interest of the host building and its setting.*

- *Continuing the programme of Conservation Area Character Appraisals Ensuring that appropriate heritage assets are added to the local list of buildings of architectural or historic interest*
- *Using Article 4 Directions to control permitted development in the Central, College, Hardwick, and Buxton Park Conservation Areas in Buxton and the Old Glossop, Higher Chisworth and New Mills Conservation Areas*
- *Providing occasional grant funding as resources permit to allow owners or occupiers of historic commercial buildings to improve and enhance their shop-fronts, windows, doors and signage in a traditional and sympathetic manner.*

1.5 Significance has been assessed in accordance with guidance as set out in Historic England Advice Note 12 'Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets' and the former English Heritage document entitled 'Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance'

1.6 The author Daniel Waugh has over 30 years' experience working with historic buildings. He studied a Master of Science Degree in Architectural Conservation at the University of Central Lancashire and still has an active role in promoting the course. He is a member of the Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists and a member of the Institute for Historic Building Conservation in addition to being a member of The Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain.

1.7 Background research was conducted utilising the following resources:

- High Peak Interactive Planning Service
- Derbyshire Historic Environment Record Database (via the Heritage Gateway)
- Historic Trade Directories
- Historic Mapping Databases
- High Peak Conservation Area Appraisals

1.8 The assessment of the proposals will be conducted in accordance with Historic England good practise guides.

1.9 The following documents and drawings have been assessed in preparation of this report:

#### **Dickinson Waugh Architecture**

Project no. 2590

| <b>Doc Ref</b> | <b>Title</b>               |
|----------------|----------------------------|
| PL1            | Site Location Plan         |
| PL2            | Existing Ground Floor Plan |
| PL3            | Existing First Floor Plan  |

|      |                                     |
|------|-------------------------------------|
| PL4  | Existing Second Floor Plan          |
| PL5  | Existing Elevation to High Street   |
| PL6  | Existing Elevation to Chapel Street |
| PL7  | Proposed Ground Floor Plan          |
| PL8  | Proposed Elevation to High Street   |
| PL9  | Proposed Elevation to Chapel Street |
| PL10 | Proposed Block Plan                 |

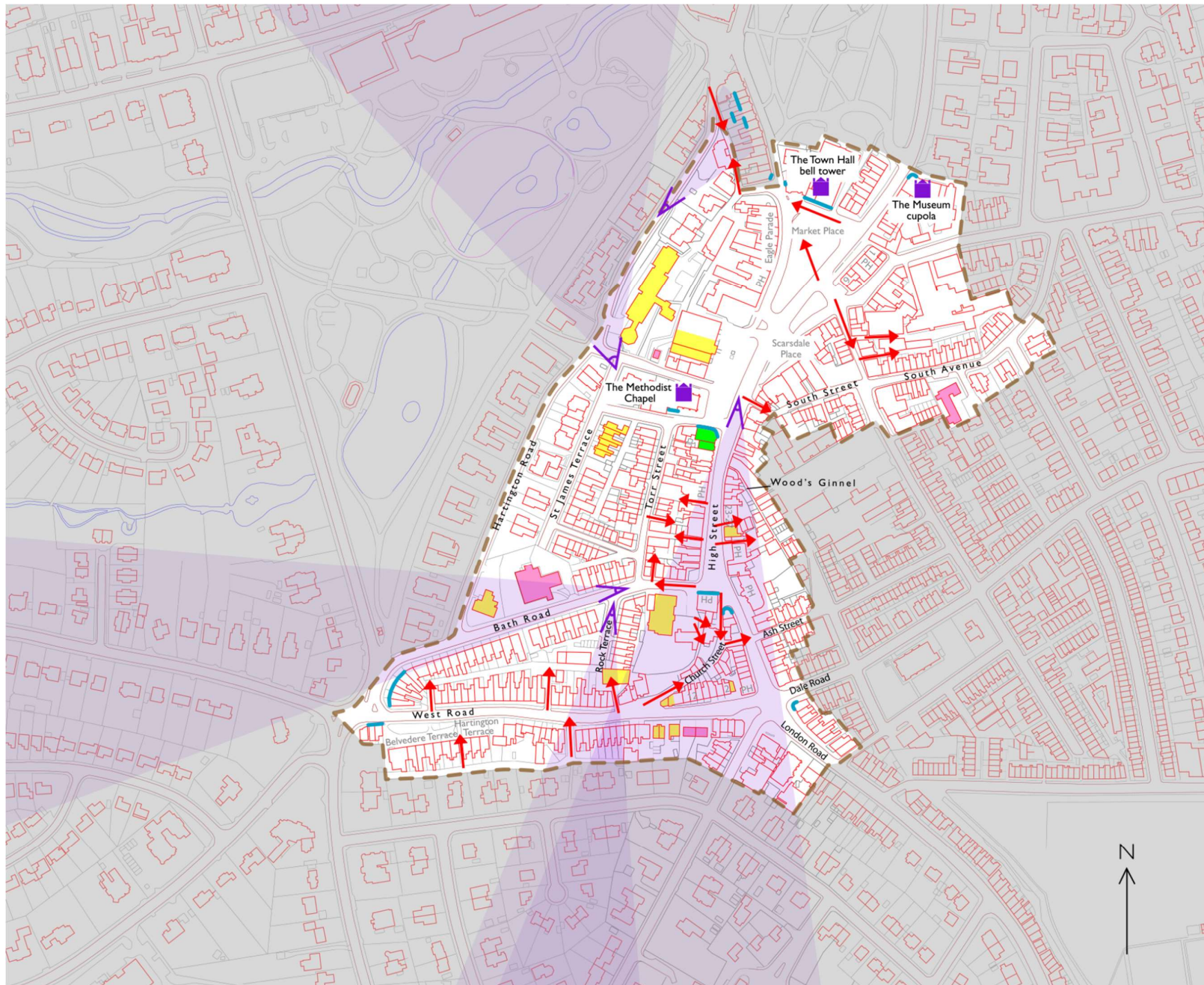
## **2.0 LOCATION AND SITE INFORMATION**

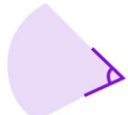
- 2.1 The Vault, 2 - 4 High Street, Buxton (the building) is situated at National Grid Reference SK 05737 73136 and lies to the south-west of the junction of High Street and Chapel Street.
- 2.2 The building is situated within Character Area 2 – Higher Buxton of the Buxton Conservation Areas as designated by, and under the authority of High Peak Borough Council.
- 2.3 The building is not statutorily listed and High Peak do not currently hold a list of Locally Listed Buildings.
- 2.4 The building is identified within the Conservation Area Appraisal as a ‘Focal Point’ within a significant view and therefore is considered to make a positive contribution to the distinctive character and appearance of the Conservation Area and is therefore defined as a non-designated heritage asset.
- 2.5 Non-designated heritage assets are defined by Historic England as *‘buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified by plan-making bodies as having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets’*.

# BUXTON CONSERVATION AREAS

Character Area 2

Higher Buxton



- focal point 
- architectural landmark 
- glimpse view 
- significant view and viewpoint 
- character area boundary 
- negative building 
- neutral building 

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Figure 1. Extract from the Conservation Area Appraisal. The building indicated green.

### 3.0 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

- 3.1 The original building comprising 3 bays along High Street and 4 bays along Chapel Street with a single splayed bay over the junction, is a mid C19th commercial/administration building historically sub divided but later knocked through.



Figure 2. Archive image, circa 1930's.

- 3.2 The building holds illustrative historic interest being representative of a period in local history referred to in the Character Area Appraisal as 'Victorian Buxton – phase 1' identified as being between the publication of the Tithe map (1848) and the Ordnance Survey Town Plan of 1879, on which it appears. This period of development is described as being *'the most prolific and radical amount of development under the 6th & 7th Dukes of Devonshire. This period of 30 years represents the main period of development within the conservation area'*.
- 3.3 The building is a substantial stone structure, late Georgian in style and holds a prominent position on the corner of two substantial highways with an unobstructed view across the Market

Place. The building's architectural (aesthetic) interest is contributory to the distinctive character and appearance of the conservation area.

- 3.4 The vista from the north end of High Street looking south towards Solomon's Temple is identified within the Character Appraisal as a 'significant view' where *'there are far reaching views that help to define Buxton, where several landmark buildings can be see together'*.



Figure 3. View from the Market Place (north end of High Street) looking south with the building slightly obscured by a tree. Solomon's Temple in view within the vista through to Harpur Hill.

- 3.5 In attributing levels of significance to the asset as a whole or elements of the asset, levels of significance are graded as follows:

#### **EXCEPTIONAL**

This would correspond to an individual Grade I or II\* Listed Building or an element which is intact, has a special interest, and makes an important contribution to the wider significance of the building.

#### **HIGH**

A designated heritage asset which has significance at national level, such as Grade II listed buildings or an element which is relatively intact, has a special interest and makes an important contribution to the wider significance of the building.

#### **MEDIUM**

A non-designated heritage asset such as a Locally Listed Building which is considered to be important at a local to regional level or an element which has been altered, has less special interest, and its contribution to the wider significance of the site is less important. May include less significant parts of statutorily Listed Buildings.

## **LOW**

A non-designated asset important at a local level such as a building which makes a positive contribution to a Conservation Area (key building) or an element which has been significantly altered, has a low level of integrity, the special interest has been lost and it makes little contribution to the wider significance of the site.

## **NEUTRAL**

An element which is considered to be historically unimportant but does not have a harmful impact on a heritage asset. This may include insignificant interventions to designated and non-designated heritage assets and buildings that do not make a positive contribution to a Conservation Area.

## **INTRUSIVE**

An element which is considered to be historically unimportant and has a harmful impact on a heritage asset.

- 3.6 On balance, the overall historic significance of the building in local context is considered to be LOW and is limited to what remains of the original building which both serves as a reminder of its, and the local area's history and contributes to the historic character of the Conservation Area.

This can essentially be narrowed down to the facade of the building as viewed from the highway and the Market Place. The façade of the building maintains both its presence (illustrative interest) and its aesthetic contribution.

## **4.0 PROPOSAL OVERVIEW**

- 4.1 The building is currently vacant and the proposals effectively intend to bring it back in to functional use with a cosmetic refurbishment which includes some external alterations.

## **5.0 IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1 To follow is a detailed critical analysis of the proposed changes. The purpose of this analysis is to manage the change using methodology as advocated by Historic England (2008) and is categorised as follows:

**Proposal:** *Brief description of the proposal together with an assessment to establish whether there is enough information to comprehensively understand the impact of the proposals on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area*

To the High Street elevation, the modern aluminium frames to the two projecting square bay windows at ground floor level are to be replaced with painted hardwood units. These units are to be fully opening and are to be fitted with double glazed windows.

To the Chapel Street elevation, the single projecting square bay window is to receive new hardwood opening units to match the new units along the High Street elevation.

Additionally, the large remaining aluminium windows to the Chapel Street elevation are to be replaced with new painted hardwood units with the top lights to one window being fitted with extract louvres.

**Impact:** *Consideration of the effects of the proposal on authenticity and integrity of the heritage values attributed to the building or area.*

The square bays appear to be later 'shop front' additions replacing the original bay windows. Whether these later windows introduced layered interest over time is arguable, but undoubtedly the installation of modern aluminium windows was harmful in terms of both design integrity and material use.

The proposals introduce a new feature to the façade i.e. fully opening (folding) windows. The replacement of the existing windows with hardwood units is beneficial and appropriate and the design proposals reinstate the historic dividing mullions.

The proposals are therefore considered to at least preserve the distinctive character and appearance of the Conservation Area in result in a minor improvement to the architectural interest attributed to the building.

**Reversibility:** *Whilst the quality of the architecture and intended specification of materials is intended to last the test of time, this is not always a given. Should the proposal not perform as expected, consideration is given to the ease of reversibility so as not to prejudice alternative future solutions.*

The proposals remove features which are inherently harmful in terms of design and material use. Informed reinstatement of the original bay windows is no less possible as a result of the proposals and therefore they do not prejudice alternative future solutions.

**Mitigation:** *Consideration of the necessity mitigate the impact of loss of any element of historic significance resulting from the proposals.*

Mitigation is not considered necessary.

**Compensation:** *Consideration of any consequential conservation-based benefits resulting from the proposal.*

The proposals clearly retain the most significant elements of the building which contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, while preparing it for continued viable and sustainable use whereby it will not remain unoccupied and its future will be secured in the medium to long term.

## **6.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

- 6.1 The Vault, 2 – 4 High Street, Buxton is a historic C19th commercial/administration building which is situated within a conservation area.
- 6.2 The building has been identified within the local authority Conservation Area Appraisal as a 'Focal Point' within a significant view and is therefore defined as a 'Non-Designated Heritage Asset'.
- 6.3 The building has been substantially altered resulting in the loss of its original and historic plan form.
- 6.4 The façade of the building has been significantly altered in recent years albeit mostly cosmetic but ultimately harmful.
- 6.5 This document concludes that the building's presence, identity and architectural interest are of most significance in terms of its contribution to the historic character and appearance of the Conservation Area. This primarily lies within what is visible from the main highways i.e. the façade.
- 6.6 The proposals comprise removal and re-fitting of new windows to the principal and side elevations at ground floor level.
- 6.7 This document contends that the proposed works essentially remove previous harmful windows and replace them with windows of greater design integrity with appropriate use of materials, which serve to at least preserve the contribution the building makes to the Conservation Area.
- 6.8 The proposals do not prejudice alternative future solutions or the building's capacity to be adapted for its original use.
- 6.9 The proposals are therefore consistent with the objectives as set out in local planning policy in terms of:
  - The proposals demonstrably take account of design, form, scale, mass, use of traditional materials and detailing.
  - The proposals essentially alter a shop front belonging to a heritage asset, and therefore the design is intended to respect the character, scale, proportion and special interest of the building and its setting.
- 6.10 The proposals are also consistent with the objectives set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (CLG, 2019. S16 Para185) specifically:
  - a. the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
  - b. the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
  - c. the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and

- d. opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

6.11 It is therefore recommended that the application is permitted subject to conditions set out in accordance with Paragraph 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework ensuring that they are:

- 1. necessary;
- 2. relevant to planning and;
- 3. to the development to be permitted;
- 4. enforceable;
- 5. precise and;
- 6. reasonable in all other respects.

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