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DESIGN AND ACCESS HERITAGE STATEMENT:

CONVERSION OF FORMER WHITE LION PUBLIC HOUSE AND ASSOCIATED OUTBUILDINGS TO REAR TO FORM 13 APARTMENTS.

This application relates to the conversion of the former White Lion public house, existing domestic accommodation thereto and adjoining barn and related outbuildings to the rear to form 13 No apartments through renovation. The apartments are to be a mix of one and two bedroom dwellings for open market use.

The origins of the building we see today are understood to date back to 1650 (or maybe earlier) when the structure stood as a small one up one down with a vaulted cellar below, adjacent to this stood a single storey cow shed and hayloft to the rear, forming what was in effect an original small holding. This agricultural building later formed the Smithy building that can still be seen today in the corner of the site to the rear courtyard.

Being at what was then the entrance into Buxton and sitting the other side of a road track (adjacent to the main River Wye) – that later became known as Spring Gardens, the prominence of this building soon became of a greater use as a small coaching inn. The building soon became of importance as a Coaching Inn in the 18-19th Century, handling over 4 horse coaches a week and grew as popular working mans stop over point through the town. The building became known as The White Lion Inn during this period.

For over 200 years the building grew in stature and size, with what was originally a small holding growing to 3 storeys in height throughout with a central area of 4 storey. At the same time a Smithy cottage was added in front of the original cottage that we now see as the white painted building.

Behind the main pub, additional stables grew up to form what was by then a complete courtyard with the building to the side of the original Smithy. This courtyard serving its purpose for stabling in association with the busy boarding house Inn throughout the period of horse drawn carriages coming into the town. With the arrival of the railway into the town and the decline of such use, this building was eventually demolished in 1895-97 to be replaced with a function hall to run alongside the road that had then been formed up the hill to the side of the pub – Holker Road. This building having been used for a variety of uses over the century including indoor Skittles, private parties, discos and snooker room.

During the 1900's the importance of the public house diminished significantly as Spring Gardens grew up in front of the main building and its previous prominence was lost behind newer built structures. It's use as a pub kept going until the early 2000's but by then the

writing was on the wall for this establishment, like many others as the market for traditional town centre public houses was in serious decline. Despite many failed attempts to sell as a going concern, the building eventually closed its doors for good more or less a decade ago.

The building lay empty for a significant period of time until roughly 6 years ago when it was purchased as a pretty derelict shell by its current owners, Jon Baigent and Lyn Broadbent. Over the years they have considered various options for the building and a variety of uses, with discussions having taken place with several third parties but none of these have come to fruition. Until late last year they, themselves had been trying to make a go of part of the building as an Artisan Market, but once again this attempt at a commercial use for the building failed. As has long since become evident, the setting of the building now behind Spring Gardens has meant that any restaurant/commercial or retail use for this building has come to an end, over a decade of trying has now made this obvious. Over the last few years various discussions have taken place with HPBC conservation area officers with regard to the use of the building and potential planning applications. Until recently there had been a desire to retain a mixed use of residential and commercial for the building, but over the last couple of years this position has changed to an acceptance that the only viable future for the building is for a pure domestic use as apartments.

The position of the building in the town centre and the significant need for housing that HPBC have within their targets means that the conversion will not only provide a sustainable use in planning terms it will also provide a much needed purpose with the right housing mix of one and two bedroom apartments. The nature of the building and its central location in an urban setting meaning that apartments are the logical domestic use and will result a significantly reduced need of private amenity and parking, with central car parks and the Pavilion Gardens being within easy walking reach. Part of the building does of course still carry a domestic use to this day as the original Smithy cottage, has never formed part of the Public House use, with the original kitchen thereto still being in place.

The group of buildings sit within the town centre conservation area and are also listed. The listing dates back to 1997. HPBC themselves have on several occasions mentioned that they see no specific reason why the building should be listed but the British Listed building register makes reference to the original position of the building, the window styles to the front, the stone corner corbels and the irregular placing of windows throughout the building. It should be noted that the listing has never made reference to any part of the interior and indeed it is understood that no inspection as ever been made thereof as there are no remains of any specific character within.

The conversion itself is specifically designed to retain all of the original character of the building and work with all existing openings where appropriate. All sliding sash windows to the main 'front' elevation are to be retained if applicable or replaced with narrow casement double glazed hardwood units specific to the requirements of listed buildings. The original bay window will continue down to the ground as it originally stood. The main front elevation will remain as is with all stone detailing etc retained without change, other than re-pointing within the specific guidelines of working on listed/conservation buildings. Natural blue/grey slate roof coverings will be put back in place as full reclaim or reclaim to match following the removal of the roof coverings to undertake insulation and membrane works thereto with associated new central hidden valley in code 5 lead. All roof forms and building groupings are to remain as is.

To the courtyard to the rear, the existing stable building and Smithy are to remain in form with their elevational height lifted by 600MM approx with random stonework thereto to match. The original openings are all to be retained with new conservation range rooflights from the

'Rooflight Company' used to add natural daylight to the bedrooms within the attic truss roof space thereto. Roof coverings will be blue/grey natural slate to match and to replace the rather incongruous concrete tiles currently in place to the rear. Discussions have taken place over the years to demolish this building and support seemed to be in place for that, however, this application seeks to work with the existing building which in itself is of quite strong character and forms part of the listed structures.

Small changes to the layout to the courtyard will allow for parking for up to 3 vehicles and revisions to access to the various apartments from the rear. Further parking for up to 5 parking spaces is already in place on Holker Avenue within the ownership of The White Lion, whilst to the frontage a further 3 spaces could be provided as tandem spaces. This provision allows the potential for 11 private spaces, although not a 100% ratio, this is a very central building and sits within 50metres of the main town centre car park and within 100metres of the further car park at the end of Spring Gardens. Provision is available for lease spaces thereto for residents. It should also be noted that there is significant precedent given for domestic conversion of buildings within the town centre to either provide no off road private parking or a significantly reduced ratio. On this basis, the proposal not only provides a significant betterment of the current parking provision but also complies with the guidelines used throughout central area and similar such domestic conversions.

The aim of the proposal is very much seen as the catalyst to regenerate interest in this end of Spring Gardens and provide desirable accommodation in an existing building in a central location. The regeneration of the The Crescent is being seen by many as the spring board for The Centre of Buxton to once again become a desirable place – something which it has arguably lost over the years. This proposal hopes to capitalize on that renewed interest in the town and provide a viable long term future for this listed building – something it has not had for many decades. The open market private sale potential of what are intended to be good quality apartments will obviously be key to those long term prospects and sense of pride that the building not only desperately needs but also deserves after its very long and varied past.