

Design, Access and Heritage Statement

Cavendish House

11 Broad Walk

Buxton

SK17 6JR

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1.0 Introduction

This document has been produced to support the application for material alterations at:
Cavendish House
11 Broad Walk
Buxton
SK17 6JR
National Grid Reference: SK 05624 73223

The report has been commissioned by the current building owner Mr Mike Finch, for assessment ahead of any alterations taking place. The heritage assessment comprised a desk-based study and a site inspection covering internal areas not surveyed as part of the official listing with Historic England. The site inspection took place on 10th January 2023.

2.0 The Existing Building and Site

The Building and Listing Status

Cavendish House is a Grade II listed building that sits within a the Central Conservation Area in Buxton.

Listed Entry No: 1259419
Date First Listed: 31-Jan-1997



The building comprises two main internal storeys and one attic level built into the roof structure. The house was contrasted around 1870. To the rear of the building a two-storey and a single-storey extension have been added, believed to have been built circa 1879 in a notably differing style of stone and roof. The main building is clad in millstone grit with Italianate string courses and the hipped slate roof features deep overhang in eaves on timber bracketry. The building features decorative ashlar dressings to the northern, western and southern elevations. The windows and doors to the main house feature round-headed stone surrounds with keystones; and the front elevation features a pair of bay windows flanking a central arched doorway.

More recently, the property has a detached garage constructed to the rear, which is believed to have been built post 2000, including new railings and a driveway leading onto Fountain Street.

Excerpt from Historic Listing Entry

Ref: 1259419

SK0573SE Broad Walk 616-1/4/9 (East side) No.11 Cavendish House

GVII

Villa or boarding house, now house. Mid C19. Possibly by Sir Joseph Paxton. Coursed millstone grit with ashlar dressings and Welsh slate hipped roof with stone stacks.

EXTERIOR: 2 storeys. Chamfered plinth, ground and first floor bands, first floor panelled impost band and deeply overhanging eaves supported on carved wooden brackets. Symmetrical front, 3-windows range with central round headed doorway in moulded ashlar surround with keystone, and 4-panel part glazed door and fanlight. Cavendish House is inscribed on the keystone. Either side are single canted stone bay windows with hipped leaded roofs, the central 2/2 sash of each round-headed and taller than the fixed sidelights, which are topped with ashlar panels. Above 3 round headed 2/2 sashes with flush surrounds and keystones. Returns. 2 windows with round headed 2/2 sashes.

INTERIOR: Not inspected.

The Broad Walk comprises a series of Victorian villas and a walk overlooking the Pavilion Gardens originally laid out by Paxton c1850, though most of the surrounding houses were built by speculative developers. Some are reputed to be designed in detail by his pupil Edward Milner from 1871, and built by Saunders and Woolcott of London for the 7th Duke. (The Buildings of England: Pevsner N: Derbyshire: Harmondsworth: 1953-1986: 117).

Listing NGR SK0562473223

The Site and Surrounding Area

The site is in the centre of Buxton Central Conservation Area overlooking the Pavilion Gardens historic park on Broad Walk. Broad Walk was originally constructed in 1861 as Cavendish Terrace with the first three houses (located at the Hall Bank end) called Cavendish Villa's. Developed over the next decade from 1861, villa's were built along the entire length as we see it today.

Broad Walk is a beautiful example of distinguished Edwardian and Victorian villa's and town houses.

(Source <https://explorebuxton.co.uk/broad-walk-buxton>)

This site lies near to the south of the central medieval area within Buxton on the north-west slopes of the limestone plateau above the Wye Valley. This area was developed by the local landowners, the Devonshire Estate, during the 1860s and 1870s, and includes Bath Road, Torr Street, St James Terrace and Hartington Road. To the west are the gardens and parks laid out by the Dukes of Devonshire in the 1840s and 1850s, and subsequently developed by the Buxton Improvements Company from 1870 and finally in the 20th century by the local authority as part of the attractions for visitors to the spa.

Broad Walk was developed in the mid-to-late 1800's by the Dukes of Devonshire. The majority of original housing in the area dates from this period, although more-recent construction has taken place at a number of locations along the route. The original houses were commonly referred to as "villas", owned by the middle-classes and often rented out to others.

Original buildings were raised above the level of the road, taking advantage of the natural slope of the Wye Valley. The original houses comprise a mixture of detached and semi-detached villas and rows of terraces. Each original building has its own unique design features and are typically separated by boundary walls and cast-iron railings. The larger of the detached villas often symbolised a greater affluence within the area.

The villas demonstrate a great variety in external design features and styles, which was seen as typical to the Victorian era of eccentricity within architecture. Cavendish House itself was reputed to have been designed by the local architect, Edward Milner, although conflicting reports including the Historic England listing report work undertaken by Sir Joseph Paxton. The quality of the Italianate-design styling is the main reason that this building was given Listed status making the building of national significance.

3.0 The Proposed Works

Introduction and Site Investigation

The Historic England surveyors report for the Listing notes that an internal survey of the property was not undertaken. An accurate record of the internal original architectural features does not appear to be documented. For this reason a separate site visit and internal survey was undertaken by the architectural team looking specifically at this work in February 2023. Only the rooms around the proposed alterations were investigated on all floors and externally where the window amendment is proposed.

Existing ground floor rooms comprise two sitting rooms with fireplaces built into a separating masonry wall. Feature banding and Victorian style mouldings are present in both rooms. Two levels of mouldings appear at heights of approximately 1.1m and 2.4m above floor level, and cornices at the junctions between walls and ceiling. All skirting boards, cornices and bandings are of the same design and the same levels between rooms. Both rooms feature recessed arched sash-opening windows, with an additional bay window to the front-of-house elevation.

The fireplace present in the front ground floor room appears to have a much more simplistic mantelpiece and smoother finish than the other features of the house, indicating it seems to have been replaced in the past, or heavily decorated to a point where the stonework is visibly different from other surrounding finishes.

The rear ground floor room fireplace also appears to have been replaced with a more modern granite finish coal fire and hearth, appearing of a more 1980's design.

It is evident from the age of the work undertaken historically that these items were replaced or worked on long before the current owner acquiring the building.

Both fireplaces are routed up a single chimney breast through the attic and out to a high level brickwork stack.

Internal Works

The proposal internally is to open-up the twin rooms on both floors, to form a larger habitable room at ground floor and bedroom to the upper floor. This would involve the removal of the separating internal masonry wall containing the fireplaces between rooms. The survey noted that the floor joists spanned parallel to the dividing wall, so there is no reliance on this wall for vertical load bearing from either floor. For this reason there are no proposed steel bulkheads or projections below the existing ceiling lines on either floor. This will allow for the ceilings to run flush between each area on both floors.

Mouldings are proposed to be continued between spaces, re-purposing existing rails from the proposed areas to be removed, scribed and sealed into the voids where the wall is removed to ensure a flush continuation of the existing decorative features.

It is recognised that the separating wall may be offering some buttressing properties to the outer wall and internal stairwell wall. The internal wall between rooms is of half-brick construction (102.5mm plus finishes). A structural engineer is appointed to design in lateral support structure local to the points where the wall is proposed to be removed, leaving to centralised nibs which are to be boxed in and decorated with continued mouldings. This will ensure walls are adequately braced so as not to compromise the structural performance. It also allows for continuity of feature mouldings and cornices as previously noted.

The chimney stack is recognised as a documented feature within the surveyors report on the Historic England Listing. The stack is proposed to be fully retained by installing new supporting structure above the level of the first floor ceilings. This will ensure no visible bulkheads at first floor level, and allow for the stack to remain in-situ from the attic level out to above. The external appearance will therefore remain unaffected by the works.

The internal changes affect areas which do appear to have had C20 modifications made, mainly around the fireplaces.

There are no proposed alterations to the external appearance of the chimney stack as a result of the internal works.

In summary, all works have been designed to enhance the internal layout of the building for domestic modern living, whilst avoiding any harm to, or loss of the original elements of the heritage asset and eliminating any visual alterations to the external appearance.

External Window Works

To the northern side elevation of the building, one of the two arched windows, (to the rear room marked within the works), is proposed to be removed and replaced with an external door to outside.

The existing window has an internal sill height only 370mm above floor level. The alteration to lower this to a threshold level suitable for a doorway requires minimal alteration to the external façade.

The surrounding ashlar stonework at this window comprises an arched head and keystone, with jambs constructed in three separate ashlar pieces; two larger top and base sections, with a smaller central stone piece.

There does appear to be evidence of this central stonework being replaced. The stone appears slightly different in tone to its adjoining sections, and there is a noticeable change in the natural stone façade immediately adjacent the central jamb piece. It is unclear if or when this occurred, but noted nonetheless.

The work to lower the sill down to a door threshold would involve the removal of the central stonework piece and replacement with a longer piece replicating the original width, profile, texture and colour tone.

The original base section can then be repositioned 370mm lower to suit the new threshold. This ensures that the original base piece is retained, and only the small central piece is being replaced. It also retains the architectural balance in the overall stone surround, keeping both top and bottom sections as per the current arrangement.

The new doorway is proposed to be a glazed timber-framed bespoke unit, painted to match the existing finishes. All frames are proposed to be custom made to match the size and profile of the existing windows, with glazing bars separating panes and not face-fixed to the glass, as per the original windows. The work is detailed on the appended drawing 75001.

In summary, the work to lower the sill height down to floor level from a current level 370mm above this, presents a very minimal alteration to the side elevation, but all works have been designed to minimise any harm to the appearance, retain the architectural balance and offer an improved access to the side garden.

Conclusion of the proposal from the Designer

Cavendish house has some striking external and internal features from the Victorian era. The works outlined within this application make every effort to respect the original features of this building, with the only proposed change to the external façade comprising a reduction in sill height to a single side window of 370mm. The internal works, which focus mainly on the removal of one internal cross-wall, only affect fireplaces which have had C20 modifications done prior to the current owners occupancy. All original decorative features are to remain in place and be continued where the wall is to be removed. The impact is therefore seen as minimal to create a space much more suited to modern family living.