

Conservation Response.

Date: 27/04/2023.

File/Application ref: HPK/2023/0108.

Case Officer: Declan Cleary.

Proposal: 'Conversion of attached outbuilding to form additional space and formation of lightwell to front to provide access to converted basement'.

Address: 50 West Road, Buxton, Derbyshire, SK17 6HG.

Dear Declan,

Objection.

Firstly, Buxton Central Conservation Area inaccurately identified as 'West Road Conservation Area' does not seem to be assessed in terms of significance, vernacular qualities, historic uniformity, setting or character of which contribute to the merits awarding the vicinity Conservation Area status. I appreciate some building materials are described though this is a minimal acknowledgement of the Buxton Central heritage asset. I am not confident there is sufficient exploration into the heritage asset to justify some of the interventions.

50 West Road is not a listed building, though it sits quietly within terraces of its 19th century gritstone counterparts. A variety of historic features along the road remain, including the general make-up of the traditional architecture of these modest dwellings. These elements consist of two or three storey in plan, bay windows, some dormers, squat chimneys, rear extensions or outriggers, some original windows, stone window and or door surrounds, and their placements set back neatly from the road, with low lying stone walling and or greenery and planting. Mentioned in the Conservation Area appraisal, the pattern of West Road is a major connecting route just a short way south from the core of Buxton Central. The earliest Historic OS Maps dated 1882 (quoted to be surveyed in 1878-79) denote this relationship; still seen today, between the vernacular terraces and their street scene.

The proposal creates a very alternative principal elevation to the dwelling. West Road does not see this unusual feature at a street facing or principal elevation, of an exposed cellar level or essentially what is envisaged to become a four storey townhouse with its *now* ground floor at a subterranean level. This intervention looks to elongate the building against its traditional counterparts, which looks to cause visual conflict in this setting. The front elevation appears vulnerable and see drwg ref: *front sectional front elevation as proposed Proposed 01*, the inclusion of double French doors and a stairwell at the street scene makes for an untraditional and quite odd feature here. This design concept is one typically found in cities such as Brighton for example, where larger Regency architecture across the city could afford to have spreading elevations and grander entrances.

At the rear of the property the proposal sees a rearrangement of internal functions in what appear to be existing rear outriggers and a garage through a fairly complex floorplan.

It is advised that any works in the cellar be approached with caution. The proposal outlays numerous harmful and incompatible materials. Those of which include:

- DPM. (Damp proof membrane).
- Tanking.
- Kingspan.
- Dry lining.

None of these interventions are vapour permeable and will exacerbate humidity, condensation and damp. Cellars by nature are not designed to be habitable spaces and were often used as storage for food and or dry goods. A cold void below a property of this age often protected the living spaces above simply by keeping them up and away from cold damp earth. Lining and plugging up a cold historic stone cellar, (which appears to contain original stone flags more than likely laid directly onto earth), with modern plastic items and foil backed insulation is unfortunately, a recipe for disaster. I can see from the photos some original stone flags to the floor, and the walls appear to be painted stone or rubble. Interestingly, the cellar currently appears dry depending on the time of year the photo was taken.

I am happy to continue to advise in the most appropriate course of action to tackle a cellar, though the items mentioned and described above are ill-advised. The behaviour of historic stone and internal atmospheres, clashing with modern day functions weigh heavily on a historic building's material health and integrity.

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To conclude; The first intervention discussed above of alterations to the front elevation by way of a stairwell, French doors, excavations and such are not supported. This feature is not traditional for Buxton Central Conservation Area and looks to fragment the street scene of West Road. I don't believe it contributes to the setting of the Conservation Area, other than creating a visual conflict.

I have no issue in interventions to the rear of the property and of course personal functions inside, though the second intervention regarding the cellar is advised to have further investigation. I am aware this is not a listed building, irregardless, the proposed works at the cellar are not compatible with historic fabric and this part of the project is therefore at the applicants discretion.

Regards,

Miss E Holland.
Conservation Officer.