

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

HPK/2023/0085
Valid 04/04/2023

**GEORGE MANSIONS, ST
JOHNS ROAD, BUXTON,
DERBYSHIRE, SK17 6XW**

**APPLICATION TO REMOVE
EXISTING "GEORGE
MANSIONS" SIGN FROM
BUILDING**

**LISTED BUILDING CONSENT –
(ALTERATION)**

MAIN ISSUES

Impact on the character and appearance of the Grade II listed building.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The application relates to George Mansions, a Grade-II listed former public house and hotel in Buxton town centre, set between St Johns Road and Water Street at the front and George Street at the rear, and within the Buxton Central Conservation Area and Article 4 area. Originally dating from around 1770, the building has previously been converted into apartments. It is unclear from planning records when the building was changed to residential use, however the heritage statement submitted with the application suggests that this may have taken place in the early C20th.

George Mansions is a substantial building set across a sloping site, three storeys in height at the front elevation and four storeys at the rear, and set within landscaped grounds at the east and west sides and with a parking bay at the front. The building is in a prominent position on St John's Road.

The building is surrounded at the rear by the Crescent Hotel, restaurants and bar, and a motor repair/MOT business which adjoins the application site.

PROPOSAL

The application seeks permission for the removal of the sign at George Mansions, a residential apartment block which is Grade II Listed.

The sign is supported by a metal frame which is simply hooked onto metal brackets which protrude from the façade of the building. There is no specific mention of the signage in the listing.

The current re-development means that the 1930s sign "George Mansions" is no longer relevant or appropriate to be retained on the building facade.

It is proposed to retain the façade brackets in place and the sign be relocated inside the building, on the hallway wall, where it will be an interesting feature. The sign will not be lost to the building and could be reinstated on the façade in the future.

Note: it is proposed that a small metal plaque will be placed next to the front door, stating "The George". No details are provided and this may require to be subject of separate Listed Building Consent.



RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

High Peak Local Plan 2016

S 1 Sustainable Development Principles
S 1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
S 7 Buxton Sub Area Strategy
EQ 6 Design and Place Making
EQ 7 Built and Historic Environment

Supplementary Planning Documents

High Peak Design Guide
Residential Design SPD

National Planning Policy Framework 2021

Including sections -
2: Achieving sustainable development
6: Building a strong, competitive economy
12: Achieving well-designed places
16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

HPK/0003/0955 - Alterations To Public House Including New Windows To Rear Extension, Resited Cellar Stair And New Bar And Seating. Approved, 06/10/1992

HPK/2002/0264 & HPK/2002/0265 - External Landscaping Scheme And Minor Amendments To Rear Elevation. Approved, 22/05/2002

HPK/2008/0073 - Listed Building Consent : Refurbishment Of Ground Floor Public House Area With Adjustments To Ground Floor Elevations Incl. 2 No. New Window Openings And New Temporary Kitchen Extract Duct. Approved, 08/04/2008

HPK/2008/0074 - Refurbishment Of Ground Floor Public House Areas. Approved, 08/04/2008

HPK/2021/0371 Improvement of facade by removal of modern window designs and replacement with sash windows. •Re-routing / removing pipework on facades. •Internal modifications to flats to improve layouts. Minor internal layout alterations to others. – Approved 2022

HPK/2021/0383 Listed Building Consent for: •Improvement of facade by removal of modern window designs and replacement with sash windows. •Re-routing / removing pipework on facades. •Internal modifications to flats to improve layouts. Minor internal layout alterations to others – Approved 2022

DOC/2022/0016 Discharge of conditions 4, 5, 6, 7, 11 and 12 in relation to HPK/2021/0383 – Approved 2023

DOC/2022/0072 Discharge of conditions 5,6,7,8, 9,10,12,13,14 relating to HPK/2021/0371 – Approved 2023

DOC/2022/0073 Discharge of conditions 8,9 and 13 relating HPK/2021/0383 – Approved 2023

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 11May 2023
Neighbour consultation period ends: 18 May 2023

Public Comments

No comments received during the consultation period

Town / Parish Comments

No comments received during the consultation period

SMDC Conservation

Objection - on looks to sanitise the principal elevation of GII George Mansions by removing its nameplate. I acknowledge the physical signage or item may possibly be

a post-war intervention, however the name forms part of the character and therefore identity of this historic building. The Historic England listing entry is titled thus. Without, I fear it will appear completely anonymous and no longer have any legibility in the public domain noting its historic social standing in the vicinity.

Concern removal will affect the building's visual appeal and interest as many similar hotels or former historic accommodation in the vicinity also retain nameplates, this therefore forms part of the uniformity of the town and Conservation Area.

Notes the proposed generic contemporary metal plate often found at high-rise blocks. Questions if this is appropriate for the ground floor entrance and would advise more exploration into this item. This may also need a separate Listed Building Consent application depending on the level of intervention here.

Concludes that giving what is a 18thC building 'a more contemporary appearance' Does not fall wholly in line with Conservation guidance, and do not feel removing part of the building's historic identity is an honest approach. As such I cannot support this scheme as it currently stands.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Policy Context

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that in assessing planning applications the Local Planning Authority has a duty to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of architectural or historic interest.

Principle of Development

The principle of development can only be deemed acceptable if the existing character and appearance of the listed building will be preserved or enhanced.

Impact on the character and appearance of the Grade II listed buildings.

Section 66(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

LP Policy S1 sets out a number of sustainability principles which all new development proposals should incorporate in order to make a positive contribution towards the sustainability of communities and to protect, and where possible enhance the environment.

LP Policy EQ6 states that all development should be well designed to respect and contribute positively to the character, identity and context of High Peak's townscapes, in terms of scale, height, density, and layout.

LP Policy EQ7 has regard to the Built and Historic Environment. It states 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 strategy S7.

The NPPF states amongst other things that new development should add to the overall quality of the area, be visually attractive as a result of good architecture and sympathetic to the surrounding built environment.

Chapter 16 of the NPPF contains the restrictive national planning policies relating to heritage conservation. Paragraphs 199-202 set out how a local planning authority should assess the significance of a heritage asset and the potential of a development proposal upon that asset. Where a proposal will lead to substantial harm or total loss of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent unless there are substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits.

The Historic England National Heritage List describes the building as follows:

Public house and hotel. c1770 with mid C19 addition and C20 restoration. Ashlar and dressed stone with ashlar dressings and Welsh slate hipped roofs with stone stacks.

EXTERIOR: 4 storeys to main range, 3 and 2 storeys to additions. Original southwest front has 4 storey, 6 windows range to right. Off-centre later doorway with 4-panel double doors with overlight in deeply moulded segment headed surround. To left a single sash and to right 4 similar sashes. Above 6 sashes to each floor, those to the third floor smaller, topped by 3 dormer windows. To left 3 storey wing with fullheight canted bay window with plain sashes and 2 pairs of sashes beyond. Northwest front 3 storey, 7-window front with 2 storey single window wings. First and second-floor sill bands. Central segment headed doorway in moulded ashlar surround with flanking columns and keystone, plus double glazed doors with side lights and overlight. Either side 3 2/2 sashes, above 7 segment headed similar sashes, above again 7 similar sashes. Wings have single segment headed tripartite sashes with keystones and above single 2/2 sashes. Rear: regular 4-window range; first bay and right return rebuilt at all levels. Left return: 3-window range. Projecting stacks. Single storey outbuildings.

INTERIOR: not inspected.

Alterations to the road routes led to the decline of The George, and subsequent rise of The Grove.

The proposed development comprises the removal of the sign at George Mansions, a residential apartment block which is Grade II Listed.

The sign is supported by a metal frame which is simply hooked onto metal brackets which protrude from the façade of the building. There is no specific mention of the signage in the listing.

The building was built, as the George Hotel, approximately 1770 as a speculative venture. It underwent substantial alterations during the 19th century before changing its use from hotel to residential use in the 20th century.

It is acknowledged that the Council's Conservation Officer objects to the removal of the signs, concerned that the name forms part of the character of this historic building and therefore its identity. Notwithstanding, it is clear that looking at the history of this building, that the lettering is an addition to the façade. The hotel was built approximately in 1770 and the façade has evolved from having a sign free façade to the introduction of this sign around the 1930's.

To restore the facade to be clear of signage during the current refurbishment of the property, is not considered harmful to the character of the building, or the conservation area. Whilst it still reads on the streetscene as an imposing large building, its prominence has lessened as development around it has materialised and the fact that it was originally built to front on to the former main road explains its odd angle to the present road arrangement. This building itself has evolved over time, it is not as originally built having gained a floor, undertaken major structural rebuilding with reduced number of bays.

The Conservation Officer notes that similar hotels/ former historic accommodation in the vicinity have sought to retain nameplates and considers this to form part of the character of the town and Conservation Area. There may be other premises that have retained name plates depicting their use for accommodation, moreover, the importance of this building is the historical value of the fabric of the building - as a coaching inn, that is retained, will be unaltered - that adds to the character of the Conservation Area.

However, as per the submitted Heritage Statement and DAS, the proposal is to retain the façade brackets in place and the sign be lifted off and relocated inside the building, on the hallway wall, where it will be an interesting feature. The sign will not be lost to the building and could be reinstated on the façade in the future.

The Supporting Heritage Statement also makes the following points:

- *It is just one part of a wider project in the building which has involved a sympathetic internal rearrangement of rooms to create new apartments; the repair and replacement of timber sliding sash windows on all of the elevations (removing some modern windows in an inappropriate design); a rationalisation of external downpipes and the removal of some unsightly escape stairs to the rear elevation. In short, there has been a substantial investment in the property, the first for a considerable period, which is likely to keep the building in active use for the future whilst also conserving its historic character.*

- *There are many precedents for similar commercial hotels in Buxton which have subsequently changed the name or have been converted into flats – for example, the former Savoy Hotel on Hall Bank, the Peak Hydro which is today's Museum and Art Gallery, the Grove Hotel on Terrace Road and both the Crescent Hotel and St Ann's Hotel in the Crescent. All of these buildings have lost their original signs to reflect the changed uses and circumstances.*

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

Therefore, on balance, whilst the conservation officer's concerns are noted, it is considered that a refusal of the application for signage removal on the basis of harm to the significance of the heritage asset would be difficult to sustain at Appeal. The retention of the sign within the building would ensure that no historic fabric would be lost as a result of the works, allowing the safeguarding of the listed building and enhance the special character/ historic heritage of the Listed Building, in accordance with Policy EQ7.

For the above reasons it is considered the proposed development would represent a sustainable form of development and would accord with the relevant policies of the Local Plan and the NPPF and accordingly the application for listed building consent is recommended for approval.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL

Case Officer: Pet Twigg

Recommendation Date: 2.6.2023

X *B.J. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of High Peak Borough Council