

GEORGE MANSIONS, BUXTON - PLANNING AND LISTED BUILDING APPLICATION

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT:

DESIGN PROPOSALS TO IMPROVE EXISTING SOUTH ELEVATION

8 JUNE 2023

Introduction

The application is for Planning and Listed Building Consent for the addition of decorative dummy windows to improve the visual appearance of the existing section of the south elevation which stands above George Street.



George Mansions, viewed from The Crescent

The Proposal

The ongoing refurbishment works at George Mansions has generally sought to improve the external appearance of the building. This has included the removal of non-period fixtures and fittings, removal of excessive amounts of external soil vent pipes and metal escape stairs. In addition, there has been the replacement of poor quality modern windows with traditional sash windows and repairs to existing stonework. All of these works as consented under HPK/2021/0383 and HPK/2021/0371.

The result of these improvements, whilst enhancing the appearance of the existing building within its historical setting, have also served to highlight the inferior quality of the section of the south elevation which stands above George Street. We understand that this was rebuilt in the 1970's following structural collapse as the result of burst water main damage in the street / surrounding area. The design of this replacement facade is rather mundane and not entirely in keeping with the quality of the rest of the building. The format and dimensions of the facing masonry are more modern in appearance and the window sizes and patterns do not follow the elegant proportions of the original design. We have sought to address this by replacing the existing windows with new sash windows,

glazed in a traditional pattern. However large, uninterrupted expanses of more modern masonry will continue to define the appearance of this elevation.

We have analysed how we might further improve the appearance of this elevation, bearing in mind the fact that the three existing window openings per floor are not centred on the elevation.



The existing facade is rather bland with large expanses of masonry

In keeping with the methods employed by Georgian designers, we proposed to augment the existing facade with the introduction of mock fenestration, applied to the face of the stonework using paint, which will visually break up the large area of uninterrupted stonework (see accompanying drawings). This was frequently done by the Georgians when they had spaces behind the facade that stopped windows being introduced but they needed to continue the fenestration to achieve balance and continuity in their designs.

In the era of the window tax, it was also of course common to see stately homes with many dummy windows painted onto the facades.

The northeast corner of the Crescent has a prime example of a dummy window, painted on the façade in exactly this manner.



Mock window employed at The Crescent

In addition to the application of three mock windows, we also propose to create the effect of continuing the line of the existing railings which mark the boundary of our parking area with George Street. Again, it is felt that this feature will assist in reducing the visual mass of stonework when viewed from George Street.



Existing railings adjacent to George Street

Access

Pedestrian access for the building occupants will remain as existing – from the front doors facing St John's Road.

Access and egress for vehicles onto St John's Road will remain unchanged.