

From: [James Stannard](#)
To: [Planning Comments \(HPBC\)](#)
Subject: FW: HPK/2024/0114 - Conservation Officer Comments
Date: 07 May 2024 10:51:48
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Please see below comments from Conservation Officer in connection with HPK/2024/0114

James Stannard Planning Officer
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Please note that my working days are Monday-Thursday

From: Emily Holland
Sent: Friday, May 3, 2024 5:28 PM
To: James Stannard
Subject: HPK/2024/0114

Hi James,

3 The Clubhouse, Water Street, Buxton.

Objection. Recommended refusal.

The Old Clubhouse whilst listed within its own right at Grade II, faces Frank Matcham's Grade II* Opera House, Grade II* Pavilion Gardens RPG, and is within a core vicinity containing but not limited to Grade II* The Square, and Grade II The Conservatory. It accompanies other Grade II's of The Octagon, The Paxton Suite and The Central Hall. The remainder of the Clubhouse, (as all elevations are being focused on in this case), face Grade II* The Devonshire Dome, Grade II* Church of St John the Baptist among other assets on the other side.

Its current placement and orientation, along with its form and footprint are conscious decisions forming part of the development of the historic town plan, (ultimately informing said form and orientation).

The vicinity contains Buxton's highly graded and highly significant heritage assets. The Clubhouse, by nature of its name, is a handsome, modest and stocky building flanking the north of this open courtyard feel to the enclave of assets. Acting as a marker the other side, it is overlooked by the Dome and hugged securely from the north west by St John the Baptist Church.

There is a very interesting architectural hierarchy seen in this vicinity. With Frank Matcham's Opera House tall, intimidating and highly decorated taking centre stage so to speak, with what can only be described as *'the wow factor'*. The Clubhouse against its neighbours, sits quietly and honestly to attention, *'the modest gentleman'*, among these larger and more ostentatious architectural pieces. Therein lies historic legibility, character and significance, and through this is the conscious architectural language successfully placing buildings like this together. The setting here, and this portion of the

Conservation Area therefore contains a sizeable amount of historic significance.

For ease I will address each item and refer to the elevation it concerns.

Principal elevation , Water Street (affronting the Opera House).

- Firstly, the proposal shows no ivy and or wisteria across the front elevation. It is key to understand what the thoughts are behind this growth as it links in with the type of project proposed. Currently, the status and condition of the building sees a lot of ivy, and it is well managed. The growth forming a substantial part of the buildings long term character and provides high aesthetic value in this core vicinity. Consequently, I would not support or encourage its total loss. The latter would also have a substantial bearing on the integrity of the fabric. It is best left managed and monitored. However – if it is shown solely as such to be able to demonstrate the signage project - then please confirm.

The signage on the railings may be acceptable as it does not physically impact the structure. I would advise for it to be smaller and quieter due to the setting and the vicinity. This outwardly faces the Opera House.

Wall board: this is offset to the furthest point of the frontage and is unattractive. The building doesn't have one, and I don't see a precedent for one. It is not in keeping with the exclusive feel and architecture of the Club House. Wall boards would be more at home on a small rural pub in the countryside.

New name plate: the font size, type and colour is very bland and very random. I don't see a need for this alteration. The existing conditions tie in very successfully with the dark local stone, the impressive form and footprint of the building, and the decorative cornice and moulded banding. Again as above, biological growth can be managed appropriately.

Up or downlighters: this is a Listed Building. This generic illumination is very inappropriate and harmful to the character and integrity of the building. It is not supported and I do not see any public benefits to these. In considering the building's location, again in this core area I don't believe it is an enhancement nor is it traditional for this architecture.

Item 7 – large 'amenity sign': this is particularly large and it is unclear how much larger it is compared to the existing board. Its placement at the main entrance may be acceptable if it is smaller and quieter. Next to it on the other side of the door would be item 4: a generic branding plaque. I don't see the material need for this and it contributes very little to the character of the building. Less is more in terms of boarding clutter.

Lantern at the frontage. Forming a portion of another application? Which application is this now being dealt with?

There would have to be substantial improvement in terms of detail for this item. i.e material, glass, bulb colour and brightness, manufacturer etc. The construction and design of it also seems to be very different to the existing. Notwithstanding this - before this can be dealt with more concisely – as it forms part of other comments echoed here : has there been any investigation or consideration as to whether the existing lantern is original?? What is the clear and convincing justification for this element. It appears the

existing may be late Georgian as it ties in with other lanterns and metalwork of a similar ilk across the town.

Corner of principal elevation. Water Street.

The visuals show a *jumbrella* that is not supported, forming part of a portion of another application. It has been omitted from other details, but forming part of the concept behind this second project it too remains unsupported.

Lighting again is unsupported and completely inappropriate.

Back of the building elevation facing St Johns Road, The Dome and Church.

A large obtrusive wall board is envisaged, however this contributes very little to the building and is quite odd at the back here and uncomfortable in terms of placement. I echo my previous appraisal about this building in that it has a specific form of 'back' and 'front', consciously designed to create its character seen today and its exclusivity. The back is very simple and humble in terms of features, it does not harmonise well.

Item 8: is a small and narrow info-board which may be acceptable if it is very small. There is something already in this placement and as long as it remains limited and quiet, it may be acceptable.

Item 5: is a another generic branding plaque which again I don't see material need and appears to simply be additional clutter.

Moving around to the other corner at St Johns Road there is another bland and uninteresting name plate that doesn't tie into the character of the building at all. The existing conditions for the signage are very successful in terms of size, colour, font, appearance and modesty.

Item 13: is smaller than the existing arrow sign and may be acceptable. However its location and position may need revisiting. Now that it is smaller, it looks more odd because it is higher.

Item 12: large basic sign. Again, unfortunately more clutter, and paired together overall the proposed for this portion of the building looks very jumbled and there is a lot going on. It already says 'The Old Clubhouse' very successfully, I don't see the material need for a large obtrusive sign below this – saying the same thing.

East elevation. Facing Grade II* The Square.

Lighting is not supported.

The signage in its existing conditions is very successful. I will echo comments above. On this portion of the building it is particularly successful because of the organic constraints imposed by the decoration of the gable, the bay window, moulded banding and pattern of fenestration and joinery.

To conclude:

It appears from this project that the objectives are mostly cosmetic. However, and sadly in doing so what the project is inviting is the unravelling of the character of a building that is very much established, and well survived. It is not clear if at all what the clear and

convincing justification is, and what the concept is behind changing this appearance.

The scheme does not respect the history of the site nor the surrounding area, and is instead seen to substantially dilute the currently impressive and handsome identity of the building. As a result of this new concept, the building is transformed, and as depicted appears to simply show '*just another pub*' with modern clutter all over it. This does not have the listing status in mind, nor the outward appearance it currently provides and holds proudly to this historic core. I do not see how it will have any bearing on its functions, and subsequently what the public benefit would be to alleviate the harm imposed. These types of external accessories are not an enhancement and do not have conservation in mind.

In terms of heritage harm, there is identified harm. Whilst some smaller features in the project may have been able to be discussed further, it is not enough at this time to be able to offer full support. It does not feel as though there is a confident reason for all of these extra accessories where the building simply does not need them. A result of this accumulation of change is therefore a substantial disfiguring of the building's 'faces'.

The identified harm extends from the following:

- That imposed on the setting and overlap of setting of the heritage assets here. This includes those at the 'back' and 'front' of the building due to the area. Direct visibility into and across, around and through these highly graded assets will receive visual conflict due to the cluttered and jumbled outward appearance the scheme looks to create.
- This paired with alien and unsympathetic illuminations will emphasise or highlight this unnecessarily, also causing visual conflict through the transformation of the buildings character.
- Harm is seen to be imposed on the setting of the conservation area leading on from the above notes.

Due to the highly graded assets all in close proximity, it is a highly significant and therefore vulnerable area. NPPF 2023 paragraph 205 and 206 where the harm is not justified, is engaged, and paragraph 208 is at conflict.

Direct harm will be imposed on the Clubhouse itself:

- Means of new wiring, puncturing of the fabric to house these accessories, unrelated and unsympathetic facing and finishing materials such as the font type, shape, size and colour, and illuminations.
- This also in terms of outward facing appearance, it looks to cause a level of depreciation for the listed building where it will no longer be as we see and experience it today. The well established character will be harmed.
- Mentioned previously but provided again for cohesion: a result of this accumulation of change is therefore a substantial disfiguring of the building's 'faces'.
- The exacerbation of clutter would have to be managed in terms of maintenance and care/repair. This in itself invites problems in terms of deterioration and unsightly weathering. i.e blown bulbs, rust, damage and decay to the stone, which otherwise would not occur imposing harm on the character of the building and integrity of the fabric.

Final note:

The proposals would fail to preserve the special interest of the listed building, contrary

to Section 16 (2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The proposals would also fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area contrary to Section 72 (1) of the Section 16 (2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. With regard to the NPPF 2023, the harm would be less than substantial. However due to the accumulation of elements noted above and the highly graded assets, this harm would be on the higher end of the scale. It is not considered there are any public benefits to outweigh this harm, nor is the impact assessment and supporting information provided by the application sufficient, detailed or proportionate enough to show clear and convincing justification for this harm.

I cannot provide full support and recommend refusal.

Thanks

In your communications with me please always quote the planning reference number if you have one.

Advanced notice of planned leave: 14/05/2024-22/05/2024.

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Due to work levels at this current time there will be a delay in responding to your query, however, I shall endeavour to do so as soon as I am able.

Emily Holland. Principal Conservation Officer.

Development Services.

High Peak Borough Council / Staffordshire Moorlands District Council.

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