



1-2 Moorcroft, Lismore Road, Buxton

Heritage Statement

Householder application for single storey extension

Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of this statement is to assess the overall significance of Moorcroft, the significance of an extant kitchen extension, and to evaluate whether the significance will be impacted upon by the proposed replacement of the extension.

Nature of Proposal

This minor kitchen extension would replace an existing extension, created from a former rear porch. The replacement extension would be constructed of coursed gritstone with a slate roof and decorative crenelated roof ridge with finial.

Designations

Moorcroft is not listed but is within the Buxton Central Conservation Area and, because of its design qualities and the contribution it makes to the Conservation Area, can be considered to be a non-designated heritage asset. It also lies immediately west of Pavilion Gardens, a Grade II* listed park and garden.

The Heritage Asset and its Significance

Description of the Asset

The site is occupied by a late Victorian villa previously known as Moorcroft. The house was heavily altered internally and used during the second half of the twentieth century as the head offices for 'Tarmac' before being split into apartments after 2001. The coach house to the south west of the villa was converted into a three bedroomed dwelling at the same time. The former gardens to the

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south and south west of the house are now a shared parking area surfaced in tarmac. Mature, formal gardens remain to the northern and eastern sides of the site, with a dense landscaped boundary along Burlington Road.

The former villa of Moorcroft is an imposing, coarsed gritstone building with a slate roofscape consisting of elegant dormer windows with leaded cheeks, and tall chimney stacks. The ridge is crenalted and gables are coped. The main entrance door off Lismore Road sits under an ornate, wrought iron and glass canopy. To the south is a two storey bow window with a decorative ironwork balcony at second floor level.

The property, like its close neighbours along Burlington Road, was designed to be seen from first floor up from Burlington Road and Pavilion Gardens, hence the first floor and roof are more decorative than the ground floor. Despite this, the building retains some high-quality stained-glass windows at ground floor level depicting the four seasons (one now missing).

A small extension with iron columns and a curved, leaded roof with standing seams infills a return between the southern and western elevations of the main house (fig 1 & 2). This is a former rear porch that was infilled with a low stone wall and double glazed timber windows during the latter part of the twentieth century. At this time, the internal opening was enlarged so that the former porch became additional floorspace to a small kitchen area. Internally, the space now houses a boiler (fig 4) . This is the only part of the house to which the current application relates.



Fig 1: Infilled porch seen from within car park to west



Fig 2: Southern elevation of infilled porch



Fig 3: Views of the extension site from Lismore Road are impossible due to single storey extension



Fig 4: Interior of existing infilled porch.

Phasing

The building has been extended at several points (fig 5). The original layout of the house as shown on the 1898 OS maps changed after 1922, with the single storey projection west being replaced with the extension now extant and displaying an ornate fish scale roof. This was further extended in the late twentieth century with a very shallow pitched lean-to creating a rear porch and access to apartment No. 2. At the same time, presumably to facilitate the 2001 conversion, the coach house was extended.



Fig 5: Phasing plan

The earliest OS maps from 1877 show the application site undeveloped to the west of Pavilion Gardens, which had been opened only 6 years previously. At this time, Lismore Road was a narrow footpath heading west towards the site of Lismore Fields.

By the time the 1898 OS map was published, the house was in situ and the first 100m of Lismore Road had been laid out, at this time serving only Moorcroft, The Hawthorns and the Vicarage on the opposite side of the road. The Hawthorns was designed by WR Bryden as were several other properties along Burlington Road and so it is possible that Moorcroft was also his work. Formal gardens extended all around the house, with access taken from the newly created Lismore Road rather than Burlington Road.

The site remained largely unchanged until after 1955 when the context became increasingly urban with more residential development along Lismore Road.

The Buxton Central Conservation Area

The site is within the Pavilion Gardens and Serpentine Walks part of the Conservation Area. The application site represents the westernmost extent of the Conservation Area, with the boundary sitting alongside the coach house's western elevation.

The Character Appraisal emphasises that the Burlington Road villas can be seen across the park from Broad Walk. The Appraisal describes the avenue like nature of Burlington Road with its heavy tree canopy. It describes, tall, three storey houses on the west side of Burlington Road set back, deep within large grounds only obliquely visible in short range views from the street. The north, east and south elevations of Moorcroft therefore contribute to the setting of the Gardens as described in the Character Appraisal.

Due to the location of the proposed extension, set within a side return and not projecting forward of the main southern elevation of Moorcroft, there is no vantage point within Pavilion Gardens from where the extension would be visible even if all vegetation were to be cleared. The existing extension makes **no** contribution to the setting of the park, and there will be **no** impact on the Grade II* listed park and gardens as a result of these proposals.

Similarly, there is no public vantage point within the Conservation Area from where the extension would clearly be seen (fig 3), aside from the coach house. Whilst visibility is not the only determining factor in terms of assessing impact on significance, it does mean that the proposals will have **no** impact on the wider setting of the Conservation Area.

Archaeological Interest

The wider site may have some archaeological interest, but only insofar as it relates to late nineteenth century archaeology. Its significance in this respect is therefore **low**.

Architectural and Artistic Interest

The house, which may have been designed by a reputable 'named architect' has **moderate** architectural and artistic significance. This mainly relates to the relationship between the row of villas on the west side of Burlington Road as a group, and the contribution their east facing facades make to the setting of Pavilion Gardens. It also relates to the architectural detailing within the building itself such as stonework, ironwork, and stained glass. The rear porch ironwork and roof are of **moderate** architectural significance but the manner of its infill and the breaking through into the room beyond the porch, losing the ability to properly read the historic use of the area, has served to reduce its overall significance to **low**.

The significance of the site has been adversely impacted by the laying out of the shared parking area, and the late twentieth century extensions to both the house and coach house. These alterations serve to make the site of the proposed extension less sensitive to change, surrounded as it is by these later additions.

Historic Interest

The development of the Burlington Road villas, their relationship to Pavilion Gardens, their design by WR Bryden, and their named first occupants (the Robertsons) adds to a **moderate** level of historic interest.

Summary of Significance

Overall, the site has **moderate** significance as a non-designated heritage asset in a Conservation Area and forming the setting of a nationally significant park. Significance is mainly focussed on the group value of the Burlington Road villas and the architectural details of the houses, including the existing porch. The modern extensions and the car parking do, however, detract from the significance.

Impact on Significance

The proposed extension is small and mirrors elements of the host building. Whilst it will lead to the removal of the existing converted porch, this side of the building is less sensitive to change having already been altered during the twentieth century. The extension will have **minor** impact on the significance of the building as a whole, with the impact being limited to the loss of the former porch.

The porch has, however, been altered over time such that its original design and function is largely obscured by new walls, windows, and the removal of internal walls.

The proposals will have **negligible** impact on the significance of the Conservation Area and **no** impact on the Pavilion Gardens.

Mitigation

A full, photographic record of the existing porch should be made prior to its replacement.

Consideration should be given to reusing the ironwork elsewhere on the site, either by incorporating it into the new extension, or using it within the garden area.

Conclusion

The proposals are small scale and will be located on the western elevation of the former Moorcroft villa. Although in the Conservation Area, they will not be seen from any public vantage points and will have no impact on the significance of either the Conservation Area or Pavilion Gardens, which lies on the opposite side of Burlington Road.

The proposed extension will involve the removal of a small, rear porch which has been infilled and incorporated into the kitchen of flat 2. The significance of this porch has been impacted by twentieth century infilling, such that its significance is now low. There will be no impact upon the wider significance of the former villa or its contribution to the setting of Pavilion Gardens as part of the wider Burlington Road group.