

From: [Emily Holland](#)
To: [Rachel Robinson](#)
Subject: HPK/2024/0082
Date: 17 June 2024 13:34:01
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Hi Rachel,
Brantwood, 29 Temple Road, Buxton, SK17 9BA.

Objection. Recommended refusal.

For the avoidance of doubt anything not specifically commented upon is not to be taken as an in support of or approval of.

An impressive, large, heavily ornate and handsome Arts and Crafts Villa; Brantwood is in excellent surviving condition and is an exemplar piece of one of Buxton's survived Arts and Crafts buildings.

1. Site location and description, page 2 heritage statement.

"...the villas were intended to make bold design statements and presented a major departure of building style in Buxton..."

Brantwood is an architect designed and developed Arts and Crafts Villa, built 1907 by Charles Swain. The discussion goes into detail at pages 2 and 3 with regard to the building's character, footprint, form, recognisable features of Arts and Crafts construction, and notes some piecemeal later ground floor non-structural alterations with some but few joinery lost. However, and for example, the most impressive and detailed stained glass survives at the principal elevation and though an earlier porch is said to have been lost, the existing successfully harmonises and does not detract the property.

Page 3.

A detailed and weighted appraisal regarding Charles Swain takes place, noting that Manchester born Swain was one of the most prolific architects of the interwar period. Later, going on to discuss what alludes to his first debut in the area as an architect in Buxton forming a competition to construct a water pump at the Thermal Spa.

Notwithstanding this, it appears the Brantwood was an early piece of Swain's, as the interwar period was 1918-1939. Brantwood was designed and built circa 11 years earlier, and 7 years before WW1.

5.0 Historic significance.

...appears to be lackadaisically shortened to an extent, and identified by the 'large house with generous gardens', prolific *yet largely forgotten about* architect, and ambiguity as to whether the building may or may not relate to others in the area. It is highly likely it does, as alongside the (former) Alison Park Hotel, Greenwood and other Arts and Crafts buildings in Buxton, we have a rare and close collection of this type of architecture, all within our Conservation Areas. Unfortunately, this appears to wash over much of the depth and gravitas earlier appraisals have made, and doesn't expand into anything else.

The Arts and Crafts movement was a rapid reaction that emerged in the Victorian era, an era in which Buxton saw its most active time in terms of architectural progression, as an English aesthetic movement against the industrialisation and mechanisation of crafts, materials and mass production. The movement and its patrons sought to re-establish the connection between the artist and their work. Many educated men of this era were shocked by the social and environmental impact of factory based production. Ruskin, together with poet, reformer and designer William Morris whom a short time later became patron of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) shared the view of a society of free craftspeople and against the idea of machinery. The movement represented the beginning of a new appreciation of decorative arts throughout Europe, and it left a permanent mark on Victorian design, altering the landscape of aesthetics and craftsmanship up until this day. For example Augustus

Pugin, a Gothic Revivalist, of whom many works are a short way in the Staffordshire Moorlands such as Alton Towers and Alton Castle; advocated the movement and like Morris, focused on the medieval period as a template for good design and living.

Characteristics of Arts and Crafts architecture are but not limited to:

- Asymmetry.
- Natural appearance.
- Variety of natural and often local materials.
- Scale and form. Often feeling massive or having an impressive outward identity, with humbler English cottage feel interiors with decoration.
- Truth to materials. Handcrafts.
- Vast footprints and with flowing floorplans in harmony, with a legible core.
- Decoration and ornamentation, either through finishing pieces such as joinery, plasterwork, interior and exterior architectural tooling or traditional construction.

The interiors are not assessed in any detail at all, and this is a loss in considering the overall survival condition of the building. The photographic record provided demonstrates highly significant and prominent features. At photograph 20 there is shown the statuesque double height double bay window arrangement to principal elevation, with decorative timber mezzanine wrap-around stair and balustrade. In the photograph it is seen there is the surviving and matching timber window seats, decorative plaster ceilings, panelling, dado, coving and parquet flooring.

Photograph 22 shows a set of three matching twin door and arch fanlight pairs, complete with decorative timber moulding, decorative ceiling, original cast iron radiator, two of which lead onto the small patio seen in photograph 8 at the south elevation. In photograph 8 then on the exterior, the entire centre piece of this portion is met with a equidistant pitch roof, decorative timber framing sweep and heavy fascia, and asymmetrical chimney stacks as the eye leads upward. Downward again the set of three pilasters at the veranda, decorative eaves under the veranda door roofing and gently pinched inset monopitch meets the underside of the two miniature first floor bay windows, each of these here with three lights and 6 pane top lights.

Photograph 10 showing this at another angle and affords a splendid and recognisable asymmetry of proportions and architecture tooling. A set of two pinched two light stained glass bays and triangular undersides, paired with a natural stepping down of rounded sunroom roof to then pinched veranda room roof, all with the continuation of stone lower quarters and impressive first floor, dentillated eaves and heavy protruding pitch and larger bays. This angle demonstrates the exemplary nature of this designed building's ratio and forms which are particularly attractive and substantially survived. Later development contributes successfully and provides enhancement to the character, ratios and airy yet impressive and handsome design.

Photograph 24 shows a made to fit cast iron radiator to the decorative bay, stained glass windows each with respective individual clasps, decorative plaster ceiling.

Photograph 25 irregardless of colours of paint, shows an original characteristic scullery type area. Original Victorian quarry tiling, decorative cornicing and coving, what appear to be original doors. Modern worktops and cupboard fixings. Removals of wall perhaps evident but nonetheless legible. Centre pieces and arrangement to ornate plaster ceilings are demarcation of age and historic uses of rooms. This one perhaps lime however the two areas in central design to lighting do match subsequently would require more investigation in terms of placements of any original walling if this is in question.

Photograph 26. Against, original joinery and timberwork. Photograph not too clear to decipher nature of ceiling.

Photograph 26. Form and scale of veranda to be expected on this proportion of vernacular dwelling in terms of balance. If later, nonetheless a positive contribution and see no material need to sanitise.

Photograph 29 showing the impressive and highly decorative first floor bay and twin

side lights. This is of substantial survival quality and should be commended along with its respective ground floor.

Photographs 30 and 31. Some ceiling decoration perhaps lost nonetheless the twin 3 light bays and scale of the rooms remain providing legibility and character. Decorative arches to window seats and other timber detailing evident. Perhaps a modern ceiling rose to make up for any lost plaster decoration.

Photograph 33 showing again further panelling, decorative walling cornicing and dado.

Photograph 34 showing much of the same again with a more conscious decorative ceiling.

Photograph 35 showing a privy to be expected in this age of building complete with glazed tiling and dado no doubt original.

Photo 35 and 37 are later additions and fixtures but nonetheless quite inoffensive and reversible.

Attic photograph 41 showing deterioration and issues with condensation. Rooflight to be opened in warmer months to alleviate this.

Other attic rooms quite inoffensive and reversible in terms of finishes and fittings.

Going back to photographs of the exterior, in situ are other original features such as half hip decorative geometric railing to front door, cut or cast iron. Front door design perhaps original though stained glass piece itself may be later replacement. Piers and design to porch in successful cohesion with property. L or T shape (seems to be a bit of both) single storey extension housing garaged also in successful cohesion between proportions and materials. This is positive as it is in harmony and subservient.

Later conservatory also very successful in terms of weight, visually it is a transparent and light structure not in competition with the core of the building. In terms of layout and legibility it is also not incongruous nor against the grain of the architecture.

The existing floorplans are very well survived and provide legibility and demonstration of the original architecture, that of the English Arts and Crafts Villa. There is a core and impressive entry leading into a set of four rooms in a sweep or an arc of four doors accompanying one another. The nature of a double height entry then bringing you 'down' or 'into' the respective rooms, or from an uplift into a journey. The kitchen is a stocky square and with original chimney arrangement, a set of four at the ground floor – all well survived. The Victorian notion of retaining a dining room away to a degree, from the kitchen area is evident in the floorplan, this is a nationwide and original element to this era's floorplans. (In grander manors and palaces they would have been further down wings or halls).

The historic significance of the property is therefore assessed as being medium, and in terms of a scale and in considering the substantial survival condition, quality and content it is therefore on the high end of a medium. The building would warrant local listing and or Non designated status based on this if not more.

6.0 The proposal. Page 4 heritage statement.

Comments below as best as possible match the order in which outlined in the heritage statement, however the numbers may not totally coincide with those later on.

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The proposal seems to show the demolition of a number of elements that are either of aesthetic value or contribute to this, historic significance, value and or interest, and or legibility of this buildings past and current survival condition.

1. Alternations to the existing garage and utility wing may be acceptable in some principle, however to *what it is* would require further investigation i.e a much smaller and respectful intervention. However, the proposed shows the opposite, and instead a drastic expansion of this footprint looking to irreversibly harm the original core of the building and therefore its character, by simply infilling the legible break between what is original, and what was later. This is the reason as to why this later wing (and additionally the conservatory) are so successful, as it

does not compete with the character of the arts and crafts villa. The proposed drawings show a complete and irreversible disfiguring of the rear of the building into something wholly inappropriate and contrived for the nature, age and architecture of this villa. The form, mass and footprint increase is severely detrimental and unacceptable, notwithstanding what loss and disturbance this will leave behind. The proposal shows almost a complete new core competing with the original centre piece of the building, almost four times the size of the statuesque double bay frontage alone. The very principle of a generic, mass produced contrived feature such as this is such a discord against this building, it leaves very little legibility of its past, and certainly does not have respect for or any contribution to its conscious design. It is not sympathetic and long term will sadly reduce the buildings desirability and guarantee its depreciation. I will not comment in great detail on the design or materials of this oversized flat roof kitchen-diner, as it is wholly inappropriate and of an obnoxious nature in the first instance.

2. Reinstatement of leaded lights and stained glass would need to form a comprehensive windows schedule list. Though, ambiguity surrounding 'works proposed to larger portion of house detail and form lost...'. Too much is potentially mopped up within this in considering its appraisal.
3. No issues with rerouting service pipes internally. Rerouting services altogether would need marking on plan.
4. Removal of conservatory and reinstatement of 'original form' – none of this has really been shown or alluded to. What original form for this portion? I don't believe there has been enough clarity for this. There is a set of three twin door with respective fanlights and joinery for this area, DG10, 11 and 12 (photograph 22) of which two will be lost for instead alien and much later unrelated and perhaps contrived features? 'French doors' have nothing to do with the Arts and Crafts and as such would have an impact on the character of the dwelling, inviting irreversible loss. The building is designed as seen with this matching trio for this part of the floorplan. This has then informed later organic change and development humble to the character of the property. The substantial imbalance of the proposed conditions and proportions again, creates such a discord it sadly looks to erase and harm many historic features forming the quality of the building. I cannot see how sanitising so much, is seen to improve arrangement and open feel to the nature of the building. The later is designed into the existing conditions and the scheme as shown is not in acknowledgement of its origins.
5. Removal of pinched monopitch veranda. Again, is particularly successful in terms of character and design to the building complete with pinched roof, pilasters and window arrangement. It contributes successfully and provides confident design cohesion against this elevation. However – in the proposed drawings it remains. Is only some of it being demolished? Or all of it? Clarity required as it is all marked in red. Its total sanitisation is not supported.
6. Conservation rooflights instead of generic velux may be acceptable subject to drawings. Replacement of garage doors subject to drawings.
7. Proposed loss of the 1907 original iron geometric balustrading? at the front porch is said to be a positive impact? To be replaced with unsustainable and weak modern Accoya timber – to simply replicate what is already there? This isn't clear. There is no investigation to demonstrate the existing is actually steel either, or what any former designs *may* have been. There appears to be no material need, nor any substantial difference made if the design is to stay as is. Accoya timber is not traditional, nor is it hard wearing certainly not in the climates Buxton receives. It would be more feasible to simply leave this alone, there is no substantial benefit and appears to be subjective. The degree of annexation may be quite detrimental and therefore substantial disturbance of this is to be avoided. Further to this – the

proposed elevation drawing instead shows a wavy dull pattern devoid of any interest or relation to its host - to be a replacement. This is unsupported and again this element is advised to be left alone. There is little to no evidence to support what it may have been in the past, and due to the nature of the architectural movement this building represents, it is unlikely it was something so banal.

8. Form of roofs to be restored. More clarity required – on the exterior or interior? Or both? Is this linked to conservation rooflights?
9. Manoeuvring of first floor bathrooms and related fixtures may be acceptable however due to the lack of clear understanding of the interiors, further clarity is required.

“The extensions will have no impact on the character of the conservation areas or neighbouring properties”. This feels a throwaway comment and completely ignores the host building. It does not assess the host building, of which will be irreversibly disfigured, as part of the many merits warranting our Conservation Area's a designation. To conclude, the size and nature of this project does not look to enhance or restore features found at this architect designed arts and crafts villa. I very much disagree that the envisaged alterations to some piecemeal later development would perhaps attempt to outweigh or overcome sizeable issues in the scheme, many of which are highlighted above. The project appears to attempt to begin to understand, but only at a very diminutive level, the significance and historic interest this building demonstrates. Sadly instead appearing to cast this aside irregardless, and does not seem to utilise it to inform the scheme to have its longevity or preservation in mind. New features and elements create such a damaging discord against the historic interest and survival of the property, its significance is not noted, respected or enhanced, and instead appears to be more than willing to erase, damage and transform the architecture into something it isn't. The fascination with what is an Americanised kitchen-diner does not belong nor is found in an English traditional arts and crafts floorplan. This goes against the origins of the building in its infancy, the connections and principles it represents and demonstrates in survival. Further to this, and again in what appears to be the brushing aside of any appraisal of the building – the scheme invites depreciation and harm to the desirability and longevity of the building. In terms of heritage harm, this is on the high end of less than, where the harm is irreversible and does not appear to look to preserve and safeguard features of our Conservation Areas, nor of our towns vernacular. The architectural merits and features of the era will be erased, and their replacements are not of an appropriate alternative, high quality nor are they sustainable. There appears to be a lot occurring and perhaps would be more feasible to separate the project into separate consents in terms of priority with the significance of the building's history in mind. i.e a stained glass window restoration scheme alone. The scheme unfortunately looks to invite depreciation of both the quality of the building and therefore the merits and heritage quality of the Conservation Area, and its content.

At this time I cannot support this scheme and recommend refusal.

The project does not fall faithful to Local Policy:

Policy EQ7:

Built and Historic Environment.

In particular:

“preventing the loss of buildings or features which make a positive contribution to the character or heritage of an area through preservation or appropriate reuse and sensitive development”.

“requiring proposed developments that affect a heritage asset and or its setting including alterations and extensions to existing buildings to demonstrate how the proposal has taken account of design, form, scale, mass, use of traditional materials and detailing, siting and views..”.

“requiring development proposals in Conservation Areas to demonstrate how the proposal has taken account of the distinctive character and setting of individual

Conservation Areas”.

Policy EQ6:

Design and Placemaking.

The scheme erases original features and later features that make a positive contribution to the character of the building and character of the conservation area without due care and proportionate attention.

“requiring development to be well designed to respect the character, identity and context of High Peak’s townscapes and landscapes”.

“requiring that development contributes positively to an area’s character, history and identify in terms of scale, height, density, layout, appearance, materials, and the relationship to adjacent building and landscape features”.

The scheme does not fall faithful to SPAB Guidance, most relevant in this case due to the concise historic links of this building concerned, and would be marrying to the principles of the Society.

Thanks

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

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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