

THE GROVE HOTEL
BUXTON, SK17 6AJ

HERITAGE STATEMENT ADDENDUM STAIRCASE SIGNIFICANCE



HUL Ref: 2110.967 | 12 February 2024

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REVISION SCHEDULE					
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2					



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This Heritage Statement Addendum has been produced by **Heritage** Unlimited to support a planning application at The Grove Hotel, Buxton, with regards to the conversion of the unoccupied hotel into residential apartments.
- 1.2. This addendum has been produced in response to requests by the conservation officer with regards to further justification for removing the staircase. The initial Heritage Statement identified the age and context of the staircase with regards to their contribution to significance of the building. This matter is the result of subsequent documents being produced that visually highlight the significance level of the staircase.
- 1.3. The Heritage Statement Addendum should be read in conjunction with the initial Heritage Statement, Gazetteer, Schedule of Works, architectural plans, and other supporting documents.
- 1.4. The original report and this addendum have been compiled by Shaun Moger MSc Historic Building Cons and Paul Clarke BA (Hons) Arch Cons and is based on desk-based research and multiple site visits carried out between December 2021 and January 2024.

2.0 SIGNIFICANCE OF STAIRS

- 2.1. The Significance Overlay and Gazetteer which have also been produced in support of the application identify the significance of the historic stairs (to the centre of the seven and three bay ranges) as being contextual to the property and of high significance.
- 2.2. This has been the position held since the outset and as described in the initial Heritage Statement, for example as follows:
- Figure 7: *The staircase may relate to the historic circulation pattern and the balustrade appears to have context to relate to 1802.*
 - Point 3.10: *The 1802 addition incorporates several staircases, of note are the two that are formed to give access to the rooms fronting the west elevation from the first to the third floors. These staircases appear to be contextual with that date.*
 - Point 5.15: *The building forms part of a phase of Georgian development and provides evidence of construction methods, fabric, and the architectural style from the period.*
 - Point 6.6: *The removal of the existing staircases (which vary in originality and condition) would have a moderate impact to the property's context and circulation, however the benefit of doing so would make more practical and efficient use of the existing room and corridor spaces, thereby causing less than substantial harm overall.*
- 2.3. By comparison, the modern ground-to-first floor stairs and those to the northern end of the building are of no significance.

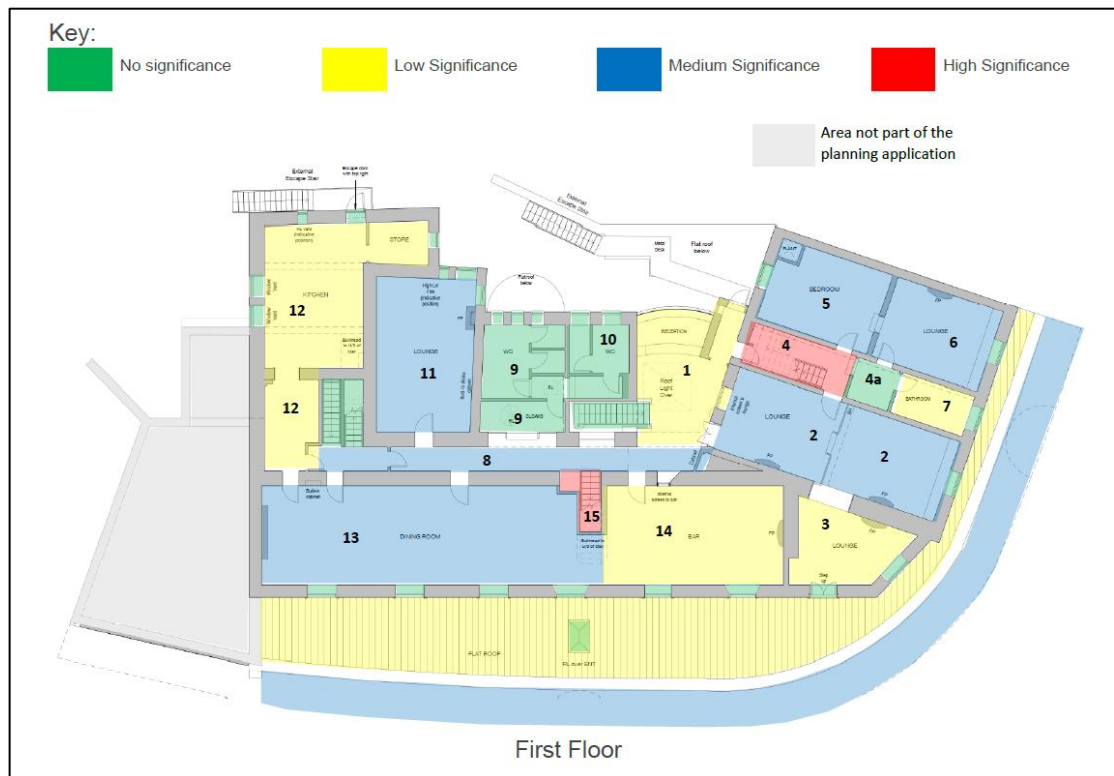


Fig.1: Extract from Significance Overlay Document showing part of every staircase. The historic stairs are shaded red denoting high significance, all other stairs in the property are modern and shaded green, denoting no significance.

3.0 PROPOSED WORKS AND ASSESSMENT

- 3.1. It is proposed to remove all existing stairs (modern and historic, with exception of retained ground-first floor main stairs) and construct a new protected stairwell and corridor to the rear of the property.
- 3.2. In addition to making more practical and efficient use of the existing room and corridor spaces, the proposal also relates to Building Regulations which cannot be superseded or compromised by heritage matters. These regulations are those concerning Life Safety, namely Part A (structural stability) and Part B (escape from fire). It has been identified that the existing stairs are too narrow to comply with Part B, and neither do any flights serve all floors.
- 3.3. It is understood that the proposed removal of the existing stairs is closely tied to the viability of the scheme as any alternative would result in a reduced number of proposed flats, jeopardising the vital source of investment in the repair and conservation of the listed building as a whole.
- 3.4. It is also understood from conversations with the client's agent that the conservation officer had no initial objections to removal of stairs, possibly for the above reasons.
- 3.5. The Planning Officer also appears to be in agreement, stating in paragraph 7.47 of the Planning Committee Report that *"a single central stair core would be the only way to achieve a floor layout with apartments to meet with the requirements of Part B of the Building Regulations and safe escape in the event of fire as justified by the applicant... In turn [the proposed rear addition] minimises the alterations to the existing fabric by removing the need to create new openings within the existing floors."*
- 3.6. The above paragraph of the Planning Committee Report also states that the conservation officer requested that the ground to first floor feature staircase be retained, but no similar request has been made to any other stairs.

4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1. The original Heritage Statement and subsequent documents identified the stairs within the property as being of historic context and thereby of high significance. This does not necessarily account for the current condition of the stairs, which is varied and can include some lost or damaged fabric. It is also worth noting in this regard that the extent of repairs required would result in a high degree of modern replacement fabric compared to original, eroding significance.
- 4.2. The removal of the stairs is concluded to be necessary to meet regulations relating to life safety, with the existing stairs found to be too narrow to comply with Part B and ensure the safety of occupants in the event of fire/emergency escape.
- 4.3. Whilst the loss of fabric would cause less than substantial harm to special interest, as determined by the initial Heritage Statement, this is considered to be outweighed by public benefit and the viability of the scheme, which will provide optimum viable use and long term conservation.
- 4.4. The initial understanding from the client's agent is that the conservation officer had no objections to the removal of stairs, as neither this aspect of the proposal nor the position of Heritage Unlimited has changed since this time, it is considered that the conclusion of no objection is still applicable.



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