

From: planningcomments@highpeak.gov.uk
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Subject: Comment Received from Public Access
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Application Reference No. : HPK/2024/0432
Site Address: 43 High Street Buxton Derbyshire SK17 6HA Buxton
Comments by: Kate MacLean
From:

The Smithy
Church Street
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Submission: Objection

Comments: This planning application is well-intentioned but the solution proposed to improve the thermal performance of the windows is inappropriate in Buxton Conservation Area.

As the applicant's heritage statement explains, the property is a prominent building on High Street, with distinctive Arts & Crafts-style black & white timber detailing. It is illustrated in the Conservation Area character statement as one of a group of four similar properties, and fortunately there is a good retention of original detailing across the group.

The proposal to replace the casements (mis-described as sliding sashes) on the High Street elevation with timber double-glazed units within the existing frames may be acceptable at first floor, as these windows have already lost their stained-glass upper lights. (The adjoining neighbour retains its coloured glass). Historic England guidance in Advice Note 18 'Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency' should be followed. However the second floor bay still has some of its leaded light casements and it is unlikely that encapsulating these will provide a satisfactory solution, unless the historic glass remains exposed on the outside where the differing reflections from the glass can continue to be experienced. A secondary glazing system will achieve a similar level of thermal performance, and allow full retention of the historic fabric. As the applicant notes, the frames are in good condition, as is the timber of the older casements. It is the newer non-leaded lights that are in need of redecoration and may have deteriorating wood on the lower rails where water has got beneath the paint.

I object to the proposal to replace the upper floor windows on the Ash Street elevation. In planning terms, this is a 'highway' in the Central Conservation Area Buxton Conservation Area, and it is a prominent elevation on the corner as one rises up into higher Buxton from the 'gateway' of the London Road junction. The property retains all its historic timber sliding sash windows, with very fine timber framing, and most of its historic, slightly rippled glass. The windows are currently painted in the traditional Victorian style, to match the Arts and Crafts character of the front of the property, with black frames and white sliding sashes. At second floor, the dormer window retains its original stained glass in the lower panes of the sliding sash window, as noted in the application. None of these windows appears to be in poor condition, and all are capable of repair. A secondary glazing solution will retain the historic character of the elevation (and its uniformity, noting that the ground floor windows do not form part of the application proposals), be longer-lasting (as uPVC windows are rarely guaranteed beyond 10 years, though some may last up to 25), and give high thermal and acoustic performance. The technical literature in the application indicates that the 'legacy uPVC' windows will have 62mm meeting rails; this is almost double the existing timber rails, so definitely not like for like. They are very unlikely to be anything other than white, so the black & white character will be lost, and the double glazed units will not exhibit the characterful reflections of the historic glass.

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