

Heritage Justification Statement

**To Support an Application to Convert the Existing Former
Education Buildings to Form Residential Flats at New
Mills Education Centre, Spring Bank, New Mills, High
Peak**

October 2024

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Former New Mills Education Centre, Spring Bank, New Mills

FORWARD

Property Address: The Former New Mills Education Centre
Spring Bank
New Mills
High Peak
SK22 4AZ

Applicant: R & H Group Ltd

Agent: Mike Leigh of Time Architects Ltd

This Heritage Justification Statement has been prepared by Mike Leigh of Time Architects Limited. The document has been prepared in support of a planning application for the conversion of existing former education buildings to form residential apartments at the Former New Mills Education Centre, Spring Bank, New Mills, High Peak, SK22 4AZ.

This document has been prepared in line with the advice and guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012. In reaching its conclusions, the statement has involved examination of the relevant planning and heritage context, a review of the available historic environment information for the site and its surroundings to identify any Heritage Assets which might potentially be affected by the proposed development and an assessment of the proposed development on them. In line with the advice contained in paragraph 128 of the NPPF, a proportionate approach has been taken which reflects the scale of the development proposed and the nature of the heritage assets affected.

Assessment of the significance of heritage assets has taken account of the approach advocated by Historic England (formerly English Heritage) in its document "Conservation Principles" (2008).

Policy

National Planning Policy/Development Plan Policies

The Local Planning Authority will be guided by the policy framework set by central government advice, the current Development Plan, and any other material planning considerations.

Legislation

Section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states:

"In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the

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building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.”

National Planning Policy Framework 2012

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out national planning policy relating to the conservation of the historic environment. It advises that in determining planning applications, “local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made to their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance” (paragraph 128).

Annex 2 of the NPPF defines a Heritage Asset as being “a building, monument, site, place, area, or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions. Heritage assets include designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).”

In determining planning applications, the NPPF advises that local planning authorities should take account of:

- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation.
 - The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

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1.0 UNDERSTANDING THE SITE

The property was originally constructed in 1891 by a local family of business owners and philanthropists as a community library facility for the area. John and Mary Mackie were wealthy and influential public figures in Victorian New Mills. As well as building the application site, they also constructed St James the Less and the neighbouring almshouses, John and Mary were both supporters of many other churches and charitable causes, particularly education.

The Mackies' attitude to charitable giving was typical of people in their social position. Philanthropy was considered to be a religious and moral duty for well-off Victorians. There was an emphasis on providing education as a means for working class people to improve their lot in life by their own effort.

Today the provision of services like clean water, sewage disposal and free schooling are taken for granted. During the Mackies' lifetime these duties were only beginning to be taken over by public bodies. The industrial revolution brought huge changes to New Mills and public provision struggled to keep up. People like the Mackies helped to bring about much needed improvements to the growing town.

Having served as a library facility, the building then went on to become a school, and latterly an adult education facility/ college. However, demand for this use has slowly dwindled, and with alternative provisions in the area available, the building has subsequently been sold for development having followed a period of unsuccessful marketing for commercial use.

The site sits to the North end of New Mills, and is surrounded by residential properties.

The site consists of the original library building facing East, with extensions to North and South rear sides, and an additional outbuilding to the West. All buildings on the site are 2 stories with dressed coursed stone external walls and natural slate pitched roofs. Windows are predominantly painted timber casements and 1 over 1 sashes.

The external areas of the site are covered by tarmac or concrete hardstanding and currently allow for off street parking.

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Both the Lodge, and the Towers are listed Grade II.

There are only a small number of listed buildings within close proximity of the site. However, the site is located within the New Mills Conservation Area, located within sub area 02.

The building is highlighted as a significant building in the sub area and also an area of significant view.

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2.0 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposal is to simply convert the existing buildings on site to form residential flats.

For details of the development please refer to the accompanying drawings and schedule:

- 240705 – 100 Location Plan
- 240705 – 101 Site Plan as Existing
- 240705 – 102 Ground Plan as Existing
- 240705 – 103 Intermediate Floor Plan as Existing
- 240705 – 104 First Floor Plan as Existing
- 240705 – 105 Roof Plan as Existing
- 240705 – 106 Elevations as Existing
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- 240705 – 207 Elevations as Existing
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3.0 HERITAGE IMPACT

Careful consideration has been placed on the impact of the works upon the heritage asset. Furthermore, an assessment of the significance of this part of the heritage asset has been made, particularly considering amendments that have already been made to the building throughout its previous use.

As noted above, the building in question is not listed Grade in its own right, though it is located within a conservation area, and is accepted has heritage value.

The works noted in the documents have all been created to allow for the envelope and external features of the existing structure to be retained. Current materials are all proposed to be retained, or replaced like for like where required. With this in mind, the main amendments to the site, as part of the proposed change of use, are predominantly internal. These internal changes have also been proposed to allow the retention of as much of the existing fabric as is possible.

The site as a whole is not proposed to be altered greatly externally also, and thus the intention of the works is to retain the look and feel of the existing building, whilst offering a long term sustainable use that allows the longevity of the site and heritage assets.

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