



## Conservation Team Advice

**Date:** 28<sup>th</sup> July 2025  
**Application Ref:** HPK/2025/0158  
**Site Address:** 1-2 Buckingham Hotel, Burlington Road, Buxton  
**Proposal:** Redevelopment of the Buckingham Hotel including demolition of the existing Buckingham Hotel and the erection of a replacement building as an Aparthotel comprising of 53 units.

| Heritage assets affected:                |                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Designated Heritage Asset(s):</b>     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Buxton Central Conservation Area</li><li>• Buxton The Park Conservation Area</li><li>• Pavilion Gardens, Buxton – Grade II* Registered Park &amp; Garden</li></ul> |
| <b>Non-Designated Heritage Asset(s):</b> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Buckingham Hotel</li></ul>                                                                                                                                         |

## Conservation Advice

### Summary of Significance

The proposal would involve the Buckingham Hotel, which is a Non-Designated Heritage Asset (NDHA) situated in Buxton Central Conservation Area and immediately adjacent the Pavilion Gardens, a Grade II\* Registered Park & Garden.

Buxton Conservation Area covers the historic core of the settlement, which includes the Crescent, the Slopes, surrounding villa-style housing and holiday accommodation, the pavilion gardens and the commercial core. The designated area's significance chiefly derives from its associated growth and popularity as a tourist destination and spa town from the late-18th to early-20th century, primarily driven by the Duke of Devonshire's plans to make an equalling settlement to Bath. The buildings surrounding the pavilion gardens – along Broad Walk, Burlington Road and St John's Road – all make a positive contribution to the area's character and appearance as they are good examples villa and boarding housing because of this growth in popularity in the

Georgian and Victorian era. Typically, buildings are constructed in local gritstone and blue-grey slates, influenced by the availability of local materials and craftsmanship.

The Park Conservation Area is immediately adjacent to the site and its significance derives from its strong planned layout, verdant and leafy character, and prominent number of large 19<sup>th</sup> century houses.

The Buckingham Hotel is one of the earliest buildings visible on Burlington Road on the c.1877 OS map (see Fig.1) – then known as Rockavon House and Buckingham House. Its symmetrical façade still retains the illustrative appearance of these two former buildings. The design of the principal elevation is evocative of the eclectic mix of architectural styles which became popular in the Victorian period; the principal elevation includes 4 double-height canted bay windows, arched window surrounds, decorative masonry detailing, overhanging eaves and projecting dormer windows. The designed grandeur of the building makes an impressive corner plot and bookend to the road. Whilst the building is within the Conservation Area, is also is of local historic importance as a building in itself due to the high architectural design, integrity of the plan form and architectural detailing and historic association with the growth and popularity of tourism in Buxton.

The Pavilion Gardens (Grade II\* RP&G) has possible origins as gardens for Buxton Hall in the late-16th and 17th century and was later improved and altered in the late-18th century and 19th century by the Dukes of Devonshire to enhance Buxton's appeal as a spa town. Its significance derives from its association with the development of public parks, which became increasingly popular in the Victorian period. The principal pavilion building is a glass structure, which dominates the northern part of the park. The walks and paths in its foreground have been laid out in a sinuous pattern to create pleasing walkways around water features and planting beds. Many of the borders, including along Burlington Road, are covered in dense mature trees to provide a degree of seclusion and tranquillity to the park. The immediate setting of the pavilion gardens is provided by the adjacent Crescent Hotel and villa-style houses and boarding houses which are all collectively illustrative of the boom of Buxton in the Georgian and Victorian period.



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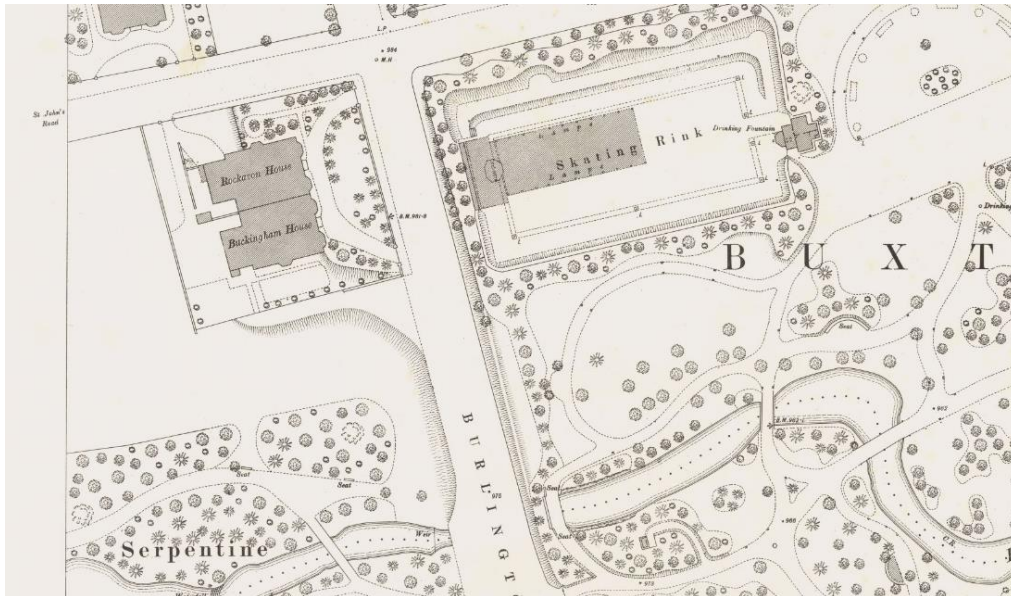


**Fig.1** c.1877 OS map [online] (National Library of Scotland)

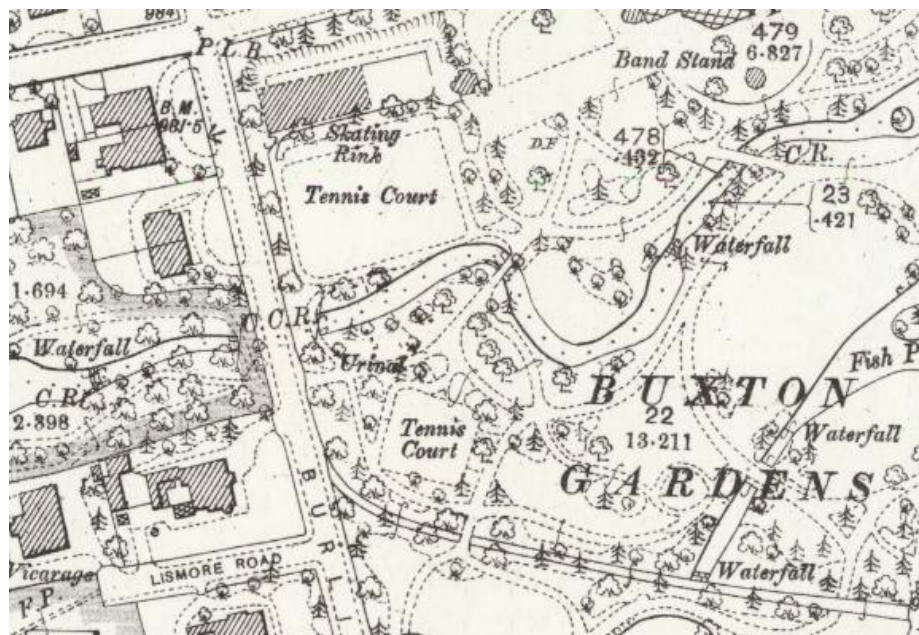


**Fig.2** c.1897 OS map [online] (National Library of Scotland)

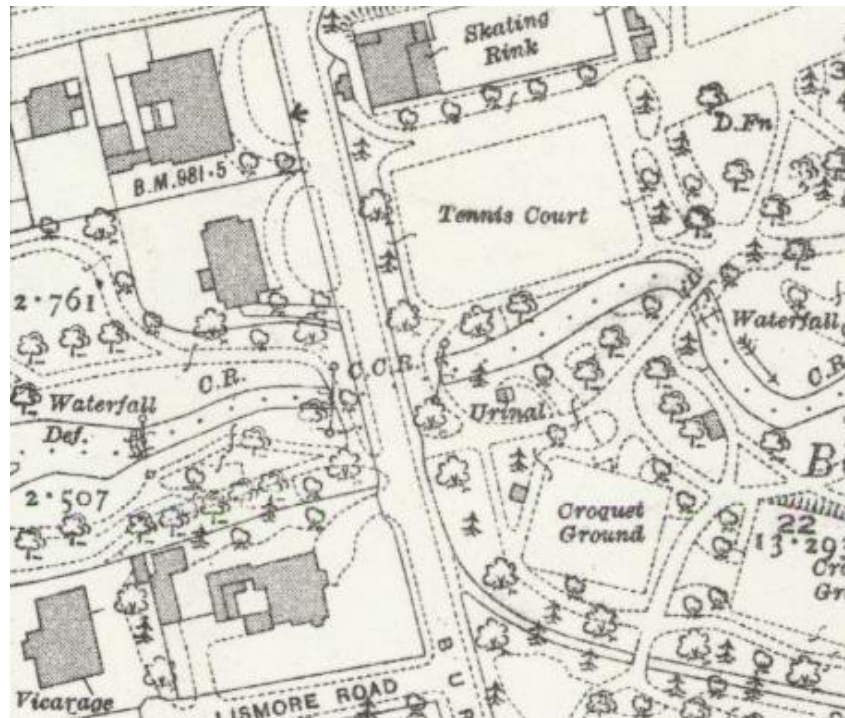


*Fig.3 c. 1919 OS map [online] (National Library of Scotland)*

## **Assessment and Impact**

The proposal would involve the demolition and rebuilding of the Buckingham Hotel, to create an aparthotel. This is a resubmission of a similar scheme, which was previously refused (ref: HPK/2020/0352) and dismissed at appeal (ref: APP/H103/W/22/3302879)

### Demolition of Buckingham Hotel

The demolition of the hotel, which is considered a Non-Designated Heritage Asset (NDHA), and which also makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of Buxton Central Conservation Area, would have a harmful impact on the historic environment. The proposed development would result in total loss of significance of the NDHA (par.216 of NPPF). The demolition of the building would result in the loss of a tangible connection to the historic interest of Buxton's development as a spa town and tourist destination. It would also result in the loss of architectural detailing and features

illustrative of the fashions of the period of its construction and tangibly connected to the craftsmanship of that era.

*Replacement building – design*

The existing building is approx. 14.3m (H) x 26m (L) x 20.8m (W – including the additions to the rear). The proposed replacement building would be similar in these dimensions, although there would be a 2-storey addition to the rear. Whilst there is an addition currently to the rear of the building, part of this is 1-storey and the proposal would infill the previous ‘U-shape’ of the plan form and increase the height of the rear addition to 2-storeys across the whole length of the building. This would considerably increase the perceived bulk and scale of the building, notably from views from St John’s Road, resulting in quite a blocky appearance to this elevation.

The proposed design of the principal elevation would replicate the design with canted double-height bay windows and similar window fenestration and proportions. There would be some lightwells provided to the front elevation for the basement extension. Whilst the replication of the detailing would maintain the overall architectural appearance of the building, the replacement would still result in the loss of patina of age and historic integrity of the existing heritage assets as a result.

The proposed roofplan (dwg no. 1971.PL09 Rev A) and proposed section (dwg no. 1971.PL10 Rev A) indicates there would be lift shafts and plant equipment on the roof. The ‘Visibility of Shafts’ document outlines that assessments carried out for the appeal of the previous application (ref: HPK/2020/0352) demonstrated that the lift shafts would not be visible from street level. This information would be useful to demonstrate that the lift shafts would not contribute to an overbearing appearance. However, other than the sectional drawing, the street level assessment does not appear to have been included in this current application.

In addition to the above, the Energy Statement mentions potential microgeneration to be added to the replacement building which would include air-source heat pumps to the roof and PV solar panels to the southern roofslope and flat roof. However, these do not appear to be included on the proposed elevations or roofplan and it is unclear if these are proposed as part of the scheme.

*Replacement building – architectural detailing*

The supporting information indicates there would be a large potential for reuse of the stonework of the existing building, most of which would be used in the principal elevation to maintain the historic ‘effect’ of the building. Whilst in principle this might help maintain some of the historic patina of age, it is difficult to determine at this stage to what extent this would reduce the heritage harm arising as the extent of reuse would only be able to be determined following demolition.

In addition, the Design & Access Statement outlines how other aspects of the proposed replacement building would utilise cast stone for the window and door surrounds, fibre cement tiles for the roof and dormers and upvc windows. All of the latter features are not traditional materials utilised in Buxton Conservation Area. Their use in this proposed scheme would water-down the architectural quality and character of the Conservation Area as a result.

Whilst there have been improvements in the design of upvc windows in recent years, they still have bulkier outer frames with chamfered edges, visible jointing and bulky plant-on glazing bars in comparison to their traditional timber counterparts. Their use in this scheme would discernibly emphasise the ‘faux’ heritage appearance of the building as their use would erode the architectural finesse and detailing that the current building contributes to the Conservation Area.

In addition to the above, cast stone has a synthetic appearance to its texture but also a uniform appearance to its colour (often as a result of dyes used), which does not replicate the hues and pigments of natural stone. Its use in the scheme would likely starkly contrast with any reused historic stonework and diminish the attempt to create an imitation of the existing hotel. The use of fibre cement tiles may also weaken the visual character and appearance of the replacement building as these artificial slate tiles can have a shiny appearance and thin edges which do not replicate traditional detailing of natural slate well.

Whilst the redevelopment scheme has attempted to replicate the architectural design of the existing Buckingham Hotel, the utilisation of inferior quality materials and increased bulk and massing of the replacement building would have a harmful impact

on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and immediate setting of the Grade II\* Registered Park and Garden.

*Works within the grounds*

The Tree Protection Plan outlines that it is proposed to keep the treed and hedgerow boundary to the north of the site (along St John's Road). However, the Design & Access Statement mentions that the hedgerow would be replaced along St John's Road, which would potentially cause a degree of harm as it would increase visibility of the bulk and increased massing from the additional rear accommodation in the replacement building for a period of time.

It is not overtly clear from the submission how boundaries would be protected during the demolition and construction phase of the proposed development as it would be assumed that some access would be required from Burlington Road during this period.

**Legislation and Policy**

*Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*

The local planning authority should have a desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area (s.72).

*National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024*

In determining applications, local authorities should take account 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, the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness (par.210).

Any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within the setting), should require clear and convincing justification (par.213).



Where a proposed development would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use (par.215).

The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining applications and a balanced judgement will be required in regard to the scale of harm or loss of significance of the non-designated heritage asset (par.216).

Local planning authorities should not permit the loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred (par.217).

Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably (par.219).

Not all elements of a Conservation Area or World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 214 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 215, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole (par.220).

#### Local Development Framework

Consideration should also be given to the following documents and local development framework policies:

- High Peak Local Plan (Adopted 2016) – EQ7 Built and Historic Environment
- Buxton Conservation Area Appraisal (2007)

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

In summary, the proposed redevelopment would result in a moderate-high degree of harm to the overall character and appearance of the Buxton Central Conservation Area, moderate harm to the setting of the Registered Park & Garden and minor harm to the setting of The Park Conservation Area. The harm to the Buxton Central Conservation Area would fail to satisfy to the provision of s.72 of the Act. With reference to the planning policies, this proposal would result in 'less than substantial harm' to the setting and significance of the designated heritage asset (par.215 of NPPF and policy EQ7 of the local development framework). The proposal would be at the higher end of the scale of heritage harm to the Buxton Central Conservation Area. In addition, the proposal would result in the total loss of significance of the Non-Designated Heritage Asset (par.216 of NPPF).

The demolition of the existing building would erode the historic interest and authenticity of the site as part of Buxton's heritage as a spa town and tourist destination. The proposed redevelopment, whilst seeking to retain and reuse some existing stonework (although the extent of this could not be confirmed until after demolition), would still water-down the architectural quality and finesse that characterises this part of the Conservation Area and makes a positive contribution to the setting of other designated heritage assets. There would be no heritage-related public benefits arising from the proposed development that would balance or outweigh the heritage harm identified (par.215 of NPPF).

The proposed redevelopment would fail to enhance or better reveal the significance of the Conservation Area (par.219 of NPPF), and great weight should be given to the conservation of a designated heritage asset's significance and, the more important the asset (such as GII\* Registered Park & Garden), the greater the weight should be (par.212 of NPPF). We, therefore, object to the proposal from a conservation perspective and recommend it is refused.

**Conservation Officer:** Megan Atkinson

