

Conservation Team Advice

Date: 20/01/2026

Application Ref: HPK/2025/0485

Site Address: Matrons and Gardeners Cottages, 56 St Johns Road Buxton

Proposal: Extension and alterations to the Gardener's and Matron's Cottages

Heritage assets affected:		
Designated Heritage Asset(s):	☒	Buxton The Park Conservation Area
Non-Designated Heritage Assets(s) (NDHAs):	☒	Branksome, 56 St Johns Rd

Conservation Advice

Summary of Significance

56 St Johns Rd, otherwise known as Branksome, was built in 1894 to the designs of architect Huon Arthur Matear. Matear was a prevalent architect in the late 19th century, responsible for designing a number of prominent buildings across the north of England. Many other buildings by Matear have now been designated as grade II and II* listed buildings (examples include, but are not limited to, the church of Holy Trinity in Sefton list no. 1379697; Magistrates Court in York list no. 1259239).

The 1894 portion of Branksome demonstrates the lavishness of the Arts and Crafts style, with formal lawns and landscaping to the front. Landscaping allows for pleasant glimpse views of the original dwelling from St Johns and Carlisle Rd. The Buxton conservation area character appraisal (BCACA) identifies Branksome as a building of distinctive historical significance (BCACA pg. 115). Due to the architectural significance of Branksome it is considered to be a NDHA which contributes positively to the character, appearance and heritage of the Buxton the Park conservation area.

The application site consists of two small ancillary dwellings located within the grounds of Branksome. The Matrons Cottage and the Gardeners Cottage are a pair of semi-detached ancillary dwellings in an Arts and Crafts style which suggest that the cottages are contemporary with the original section of Branksome Lodge. The cottages are visible historical maps dating to 1899 (figure 1). It is believed that the outbuilding would have been built with stable and coach house facilities on the ground floor with servants' quarters and hayloft on the first floor. The small single story building the northeast would have been a coalhouse and washhouse facility. This building would

have been integral to the original design and operation of the Branksome estate. As such the cottages are considered to be part of the non-designated heritage asset (NDHA) of 'Branksome'. The building has undergone 20th/21st century alterations resulting in its subdivision into two cottages and the loss of the original leaded windows.

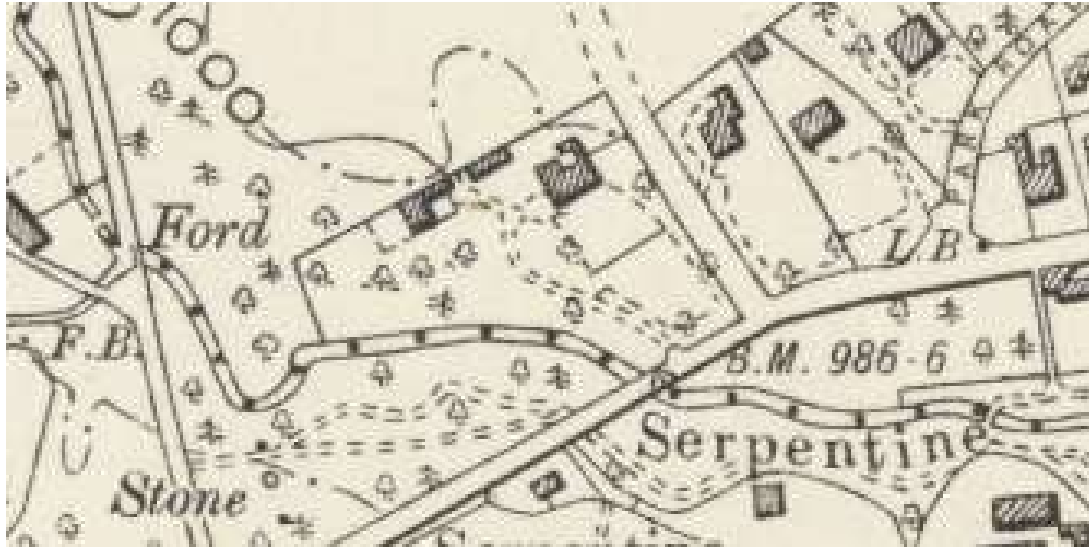


Figure 1 – 1899 Map showing the Branksome Estate including ancillary cottage (source: [Ordnance Survey, Derbyshire XIV.SE - Ordnance Survey Six-inch England and Wales, 1842-1952](#))

Branksome historic environment record - [MDR16529 - Branksome, 56 St Johns Road, Buxton - Derbyshire Historic Environment Record](#)

Assessment and Impact

The application proposes alterations to the Matrons and Gardeners Cottages to facilitate bringing them back into use as two residential dwellings. The alterations to Matrons Cottage consist of an internal reorganisation, removal of the dormer window and alterations to the existing windows and doors. The alterations to Gardeners Cottage consist of some internal reorganisation, demolition of single storey element and replacement with new single storey extension, and alterations to existing windows and doors.

The principle of bringing these two dwelling back into active use will preventing future decay of the two ancillary dwellings. On this basis there are no heritage objections to the principle of the application. However, the works required to facilitate bringing the

two cottages back into use should be carried out sympathetically to their Arts and Crafts design and their place within the Branksome estate. These details are considered below.

Window and Doors

The existing windows on site are uPVC which appear bulky and detract from the elegant Arts and Crafts style of the host building. The application proposes to replace these windows with new uPVC windows and doors. Details of the proposed replacement have not been provided.

The redevelopment of these two cottages presents an opportunity to revisit the intended Arts and Crafts architectural design of the cottages. Original plans and historic photos of Branksome should be consulted to gain an understanding for the original design intention for the outbuilding and use this to inform their proposed fenestration design. The Arts and Crafts movement considered the use of traditional materials and techniques to be as important as the final aesthetic design. Due to the host building's strong significance as part of an Arts and Crafts estate, the continuation of this approach should be considered as a way to further enhance the significance of the host building. Therefore, the use of double-glazed timber units should be considered. A high-quality uPVC may be considered acceptable subject to improved fenestration design and supporting details.

The existing dormer window is part of the original design and function of the hayloft and is therefore integral to understanding the building historical development. The loss of the dormer window is therefore considered unnecessary and harmful to the significance and authenticity of the NDHA.

The cottages have one existing rooflight which appears bulky and sits proud of the roof slope. The application proposes to install 5 additional rooflights to the southeast elevation. The layout of these rooflights appears visually disorganised and lacks cohesion. The number and layout of these rooflights should be reconsidered to allow for uniformity. Furthermore, all rooflights should be of a flush conservation style rooflight to avoid the visual harm which can occur when inappropriate projecting rooflights are installed.

Demolition of Single Storey and Proposed Extension

It is proposed to demolish the former wash and coal house, to be replaced with a single storey extension. The existing structure is likely to be contemporary to the construction of Branksome in the 1890's. Therefore, its loss is considered to result in a degree of harm to the NDHA.

As the extent of demolition is contained to the ancillary coal and wash house its loss

may be considered acceptable in order to facilitate the reuse of the currently vacant NDHA. The National Planning Practise Guidance (NPPG) states the following regarding development which is considered to harm a heritage asset:

An unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to a conservation area is individually of lesser importance than a listed building. If the building is important or integral to the character or appearance of the conservation area then its proposed demolition is more likely to amount to substantial harm to the conservation area ... Loss of a building within a conservation area may alternatively amount to less than substantial harm ... However, the justification for a building's proposed demolition will still need to be proportionate to its relative significance and its contribution to the significance of the conservation area as a whole. The same principles apply in respect of other elements which make a positive contribution to the significance of the conservation area, such as open spaces. [para 019]

Harmful development may sometimes be justified in the interests of realising the optimum viable use of an asset, notwithstanding the loss of significance caused, and provided the harm is minimised. [para 015]

In accordance with this guidance the application must demonstrate that every attempt has been made to minimise this harm. In order to achieve this the following alterations and mitigations should be considered:

- Level 2 building recording in accordance with Historic England guidance ¹
- Reuse of the existing stone in the new extension
- Ensuring any new stone matches the existing accordingly
- Address rooflight concerns raised above
- Address fenestration and dormer window concerns as raised above

Internal Alterations

The application includes a number of internal alterations. However, the internal arrangement of the building has been previously altered when converted from coach house and stables to residential accommodation. It is likely that much of the historic internal material was lost during this conversion. Furthermore, the building does not benefit from a form statutory designation (such as national listing) therefore, there are no heritage comments to make regarding the internal alterations proposed.

Other External Alterations

The application provides limited information regarding the treatment of the outdoor

¹ Historic England (2016) [Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice](#)

space. For example, the application fails to identify designated parking arrangements, nor does it identify any designation outdoor residential amenity space.

The surviving Branksome site has remained intact as a single functioning site since its construction. Throughout its different uses as a large residential site, and later as a care home, the requirements for parking and outdoor amenity space have been utilised across the entire site with no requirement for subdivision. The proposed subdivision of the site into individual units will result in the loss of the flexible use of the site for these functions. Subdivision is likely to result in residents desiring designated parking and private outdoor amenity space, leading to alterations which would require carving up of the currently formal and cohesive landscaping of the site. Therefore, the provision of parking and outdoor amenity spaces should be considered at this early stage in the process to ensure that the subdivision of the site does not harm the NDHA, nor the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Legislation and Policy

Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Section 72(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that with respect to any buildings or land in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of that area.

National Planning Policy Framework

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 (para 213).

Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use. (para 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 (para 216).

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 Area character appraisal (Adopted April 2007)

Conclusions and Recommendations

In summary, the proposed alterations are considered harmful to the NDHA and the character and appearance of the Buxton Park conservation area. In terms of planning policy this is considered to be less than substantial harm (NPPF para 215). Harm to an NDHA which makes a positive contribution to a conservation area must be justified proportionately to the significance of the heritage asset(s) (NPPG para 019).

Prior to considering justification for the harm identified, every attempt should first be made to minimise the harm caused (NPPG para 015). In order to minimise and partially address this harm identified the following recommendations are made:

- Reconsideration of fenestration design and materials to be more in keeping with original Arts and Crafts design
- Retention of original dormer window
- Redesign of proposed rooflights
- Reuse of existing stone for proposed extension
- Level 2 building recording prior to any demolition
- Provide clarity on site subdivision (including any proposed landscaping, parking and designated outdoor amenity space)

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