

Conservation Team Advice

Date: 08/07/2026

Application Ref: HPK/2026/0184

Site Address: Buxton Opera House, Water Street, Buxton

Proposal: Application for Listed Building Consent for the repair, upgrade, and replacement of existing flat roof coverings across a number of roof areas, the installation of roof upstands to facilitate the future installation of louvred external natural ventilation outlets. Additionally, works are proposed to expose the base of the original (now removed) sliding lantern to enable roofing works and to allow for the preparation for the reinstatement of a lantern at a future date

Heritage assets affected:		
Designated Heritage Asset(s):	☒	Grade II* Buxton Opera House
		Buxton Central Conservation Area
Non-Designated Heritage Assets(s) (NDHAs):	☐	

Conservation Advice

Summary of Significance

The Buxton Opera House is a Grade II* listed building located within the Buxton Central Conservation Area. The Opera house was constructed in 1901 – 03, designed by Frank Matcham as a purpose-built Opera House. The building has since been used as a cinema, converted back to a theatre in the 1970s.

The building is located in the Buxton Central conservation area, and holds some group value with the nearby Grade II listed Conservatory and The Grade II* registered Pavilion Gardens. The relationship with the Conservatory and registered gardens forms to a positive group heritage value.

Assessment and Impact

The application seeks to conduct various roof repairs to the existing asphalt-covered roofs. It is also proposed to install roof upstands to facilitate the future installation of louvred external natural ventilation outlets and expose the original lantern.

Asphalt repairs

Plans show that roof repairs will largely consist of removing and replacing or retaining

the existing asphalt and overlaying. The replacement/overlay roof will consist of a 'warm roof' build-up with new insulation system and liquid applied water proofing system applied on top. This approach has been informed by core sampling of the existing roof structure undertaken following HPK/2024/0301. Therefore existing material will only be removed where necessary, where existing fabric is considered to be in good repair it will be retained to limit the impact upon the existing building fabric. The existing asphalt roof is thought to have been highly altered from Matcham's original design. As such the installation of a modern roof overlay/replacement, in a location which is not visible from the public domain is considered acceptable in this instance. While not like-for-like the proposed repairs will not harm the special architectural or historic interest of the Grade II* listed building.

Upstand and Lantern Alterations

The application proposes to alterations to existing roof make up to facilitate the future reinstatement of Matcham's original roof features. Appendix A to the *Design and Access Statement* outlines Matcham's original natural ventilation scheme for the building, and how this has been removed or "scalped".

This application seeks to reopen the original vents while undertaking the necessary roof repairs. While the ventilation will not be reinstated at this time, this will allow the level of required intervention to be reduced when these ducts are reopening formally in future. Facilitating the reinstatement of an original ventilation feature is considered a benefit to architectural interest of the Listed Building.

Appendix A also references an original roof lantern which has been removed. The application further proposes to define the original lantern and install an upstand to allow for reinstatement of the roof lantern in future. This will allow for roof works to be further future-proofed for a future capital project which will enhance the architectural interest of the Listed Building.

Legislation and Policy

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

Section 66(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

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).

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

Conclusions and Recommendations

In summary, the application seeks to undertake necessary roof repairs while future-proofing the works for upcoming conservation projects to the building. These works will repair the existing failing roof, and allow for Matchams original ventilation features to be reinstated at a future date which will allow for the future enhancement of the Listed Building. As such there are no heritage objections to the proposed scheme.

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