
DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

5 & 6 The Square, Buxton

5 & 6 The Square, Buxton, Derbyshire, SK17 6AZ

Clients: High Peak Theatre Trust Limited (No 5) and No 6 The Square Tea Rooms (No 6)

Grade II* Listed Building, Buxton Town Centre Conservation Area

Prepared by	Walker Wood Limited
Prepared for	High Peak Theatre Trust Limited (No 5) No 6 The Square Tea Rooms (No 6)
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Photograph: corner view of the Grade II* listed terrace (List Entry 1257843) showing the open arcade and ashlar gritstone elevations of the application properties.

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Executive Summary

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Walker Wood Limited on behalf of High Peak Theatre Trust Limited (No 5) and 6 The Square Tea Rooms Limited (No 6) in support of a Listed Building Consent application, and any associated planning permission, for conservation-led structural and fabric repair works to 5 and 6 The Square, Buxton, Derbyshire SK17 6AZ and SK17 6BD (NHLE List Entry 1257843, Grade II*, first listed 25 January 1951).

The Statement is prepared in accordance with Article 9 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (SI 2015/595) and the equivalent provisions for Listed Building Consent under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990. It addresses (a) the design principles and concepts applied to the development; and (b) how issues relating to access have been dealt with. It has regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024 as amended February 2025), Historic England's Conservation Principles (2008) and Good Practice Advice notes 1, 2 and 3, and the policies of the High Peak Local Plan 2016 and the Buxton Conservation Area Character Appraisal (April 2007).

The proposed works are a programme of conservation-led repairs to the arcade and first-floor structure designed by Lucy Newport CARE of Castree Limited (Engineering Specification CAS-4064-EngSpec) and an associated tranche of fabric repair and making-good items specified by Walker Wood Limited (Conservation Works Specification Rev C, May 2026). There is no change of use, no increase in floor area, no alteration to layout, scale or external appearance, and no impact on existing vehicular or pedestrian access arrangements after completion. The fabric repairs are like-for-like using traditional materials, with one limited and fully justified exception: the rotted timber wall plate concealed between ground floor and first floor at the inner face of the arcade is to be replaced with a stainless-steel element incorporating concealed lateral ties between the external wall and the internal floor structure. The decision to depart from like-for-like timber in this single concealed location is recommended by Lucy Newport CARE (Conservation-Accredited Registered Engineer) of Castree Limited and is explained at Sections 3.2 and 4.5 of this Statement. Temporary scaffolding, pavement loading and pedestrian protection measures during the works are addressed in Section 5.

The design principles applied are: conservation-led intervention; minimum necessary intervention; like-for-like replacement of decayed fabric using traditional lime mortars, salvaged or sympathetic ashlar gritstone, haired-lime plaster, Westmorland green slate, lead and traditional joinery; reversibility of new interventions where practicable; departure from strict like-for-like only where conservation engineering judgement, made by a Conservation-Accredited Registered Engineer, requires it for the long-term preservation of the asset, and only in concealed locations; and the use of demonstrably qualified heritage trades. Access arrangements during and after the works comply with the Equality Act 2010, building regulations Approved Document M, and the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015.

The Heritage Statement (Walker Wood, Rev AB, 17 May 2026) and the Conservation Works Specification (Rev C) accompany this Statement and provide the full conservation rationale, significance assessment and detailed specification of the works.

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose and scope of this Statement

1.1.1 This Design and Access Statement (DAS) has been prepared to accompany an application for Listed Building Consent (and any associated planning permission required) for conservation-led structural and fabric repair works to 5 and 6 The Square, Buxton, Derbyshire SK17 6AZ and SK17 6BD. The properties form part of a unified Grade II* listed range of six apartments by John White, 1803 to 1806 (NHLE List Entry 1257843, first listed 25 January 1951), within the Buxton Town Centre Conservation Area, which is subject to an Article 4 Direction.

1.2 Statutory basis

1.2.1 This DAS is provided in compliance with article 9 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (SI 2015/595), which requires a Design and Access Statement to address (a) the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development, and (b) how issues relating to access to the development have been dealt with. A DAS is required for development affecting a listed building, development within a conservation area, and major development. The present application engages the first two of those triggers.

1.2.2 The Statement also has regard to Article 9 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990 (as amended) which engages parallel requirements for Listed Building Consent applications affecting the exterior of a listed building. As the works include external structural repair, repointing and re-roofing operations, a DAS is required for the LBC application.

1.3 Project team

- Employers: High Peak Theatre Trust Limited (No 5; company no. 01356378) and 6 The Square Tea Rooms Limited (No 6; company no. 06172724).
- Contract Administrator and Heritage Lead: Walker Wood Limited (Chartered Building Surveyors). Lead consultant: Richard Wood MRICS.
- Structural and conservation engineering: Castree Limited, Sheffield. Conservation-Accredited Registered Engineer (CARE): Lucy Newport.
- Principal Designer and Principal Contractor: as recorded in the Preliminaries (Rev G) and the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 register for the project.

1.4 Accompanying documents

- Walker Wood Heritage Statement, Rev AB, 17 May 2026.
- Walker Wood Conservation Works Specification, Rev C, May 2026.
- Walker Wood Schedule of Works, Rev F, 17 May 2026.
- Walker Wood Preliminaries, Rev G, 17 May 2026 (JCT ICD 2024).
- Walker Wood Fabric Report, April 2025.
- Castree Engineering Specification, CAS-4064-EngSpec.

- Castree Document Issue Register, CAS-4064-Doc_Register, and tender drawings 4064-EX-GA10, 4064-EX-S01, 4064-EX-D01, 4064-PR-GA00, 4064-PR-GA10, 4064-PR-D01, 4064-PR-D02 and 4064-PR-D03.

2. Site Description and Context

2.1 Location and site description

2.1.1 The properties form part of a Grade II* listed terrace of six former apartments on the east side of The Square, Buxton, in the historic spa core of the town. The terrace is built of ashlar gritstone with ashlar dressings under a Westmorland slate hipped roof with grouped stone stacks. The ground floor is set behind an open arcade of paired Tuscan columns; the upper floors are three storeys with eight bays of glazing-bar sash windows under a moulded cornice. The terrace relates closely to the constrained topography of the River Wye valley, with the river understood to be culverted below this part of the town.

2.2 Heritage designations

- Listed Building: NHLE List Entry 1257843, Nos 1 to 6 The Square, Grade II*, first listed 25 January 1951; recorded in the Derbyshire HER as DDR6592 (designation) and MDR24327 (monument record).
- Conservation Area: Buxton Town Centre Conservation Area (designated 1973; character appraisal adopted April 2007; subject to an Article 4 Direction).
- Setting: in the immediate setting of The Crescent (NHLE 1257876, Grade I), the Old Hall Hotel (NHLE 1257847, Grade II*), the Opera House (NHLE 1257789, Grade II*), the Church of St John the Baptist (NHLE 1258025, Grade II*), the Pavilion Gardens (NHLE 1000675, RPG Grade II*) and The Slopes (NHLE 1001456, RPG Grade II).

2.3 Surrounding context

2.3.1 The properties occupy a townscape position of high sensitivity within the Buxton Town Centre Conservation Area. The Square forms a coherent Georgian and early Victorian public space enclosed by The Crescent, the Old Hall Hotel and the Opera House, with the Pavilion Gardens to the west and the Church of St John the Baptist to the south. The unified ashlar elevations, the arcade, and the contained townscape volume are the principal characteristics that give The Square its special architectural and historic interest, and the contribution that Nos 5 and 6 make to that ensemble is direct and material.

3. Description of Proposed Works

3.1 Overview

3.1.1 The works comprise two related tranches: (a) the principal structural and fabric repairs to the arcade and first-floor structure designed by Castree Limited (Engineering Specification CAS-4064-EngSpec); and (b) an associated tranche of fabric repair and internal making-good items identified in the Walker Wood Fabric Report (April 2025) and specified in the Walker Wood Conservation Works Specification (Rev C, May 2026). The works are scheduled to commence on Monday 17 August 2026 with a contract period of 12 weeks (Date for Completion Monday 9 November 2026).

3.2 Castree-designed structural and fabric repairs

- Removal of failing lath and plaster arcade ceiling and modern EML repairs, and reinstatement in haired lime plaster on chestnut or oak laths.
- Section-by-section replacement of the rotted timber wall plate to the inner face of the arcade, located between ground floor and first floor and concealed behind the arcade ceiling. The replacement is a concealed stainless-steel element incorporating lateral ties from the external wall to the first-floor joist structure, seated on new gritstone padstones. The decision to replace with stainless steel rather than with new timber is recommended by Lucy Newport CARE (Castree Limited) on the basis that the original timber failure has been caused by long-term water ingress at the string-course level above, that timber replacement in the same location would be exposed to the same risk, and that a corrosion-resistant metal element with internal restraint ties is necessary to arrest the developing bulge in the external wall and to provide long-term stability. The element is entirely concealed once the arcade ceiling is reinstated and has no external visual effect.
- Repair of joist ends, restraint straps and ties, and stone stitching across cracks within the bed; all designed under BS 5628, BS 5950 and current Eurocode partial factors as applicable.
- Repair of slipped Westmorland green slates and lead soakers and flashings at abutments.
- Lime-mortar repointing of ashlar dressings and arcade stonework; removal of Portland cement pointing and replacement with lime mortar to match analysis.
- Defrassing of delaminating and decayed ashlar surfaces by hand and consolidation in lime mortar where required.

3.3 Walker Wood fabric repair and internal making-good

- Overhaul and redecoration of external timber sash windows (paint preparation by linseed-oil and infra-red softening; traditional linseed putty re-glazing; sash cord, weight and pulley overhaul).
- Cleaning out of lead-lined gutters, outlets and associated rainwater goods.
- Assessment and repair of distorted internal doors and frames by hand methods (eased by hand plane; ironmongery overhauled).
- Filling and decoration of cracks to internal walls, ceilings and return junctions following structural work, in breathable systems.

- Removal of moss and lichen growth from chimney and stone string course by hand methods only (no pressure washing, no DOFF or ThermoTech).

3.4 What the works are not

3.4.1 The works do not involve any change of use, any increase in floor area, any alteration to layout (no new openings, no removal of partitions, no reconfiguration of rooms), any alteration to scale or massing of the building, or any alteration to the external appearance of the building. There is no demolition of historic fabric beyond the minimum necessary to effect repair. With the single concealed exception of the stainless-steel wall-plate element described at clause 3.2 above, all repairs are like-for-like in traditional materials.

4. Design Principles and Concepts

4.0.1 This Section addresses paragraph (a) of Article 9(2) of the DMPO 2015: the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development.

4.1 The conservation-led approach

4.1.1 The overarching design principle is conservation. The works are properly characterised as repair rather than alteration. They are designed to arrest and reverse decay of the existing historic fabric, to extend the life of the building, and to retain its special architectural and historic interest. The conservation-led approach follows BS 7913:2013 Guide to the Conservation of Historic Buildings, Historic England's Conservation Principles (2008) and the Practical Building Conservation series, the technical guidance of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB), and the Historic Environment Scotland Technical Advice Notes consulted for specialist methods.

4.2 Use, amount, layout and scale (DMPO Article 9(2)(a))

- Use: unchanged. No 5 remains in office and residential use as offices for High Peak Theatre Trust Limited (operators of the Buxton Opera House). No 6 remains as tea rooms with letting bedrooms above.
- Amount: no change in floor area. No demolition of building envelope; no new floor area added; no removal of historic fabric beyond minimum necessary to effect repair.
- Layout: unchanged. No new openings, no infill of openings, no removal or addition of partitions, no reconfiguration of rooms. Existing room layouts retained.
- Scale: unchanged. No vertical or horizontal extension. Roof line, eaves, ridge and chimney positions retained.

4.3 Appearance and materials

4.3.1 Appearance: the principle for all visible fabric is like-for-like repair. The repaired elements are intended, on completion, to be indistinguishable from the pre-existing historic fabric to all but a trained eye on close inspection. Patch repointing, ashlar indents, joinery scarf repairs and slate replacements are detailed to match existing. The single concealed structural element identified at clause 3.2 (the stainless-steel wall plate with internal ties) has no visual effect because it is hidden behind the reinstated arcade ceiling and is therefore not part of the building's visible appearance.

4.3.2 Materials: traditional materials matched to the existing fabric.

- Mortars: lime-based to mortar-analysis match. Hot-mixed lime permitted as an alternative to NHL where appropriate.
- Stone: salvaged or sympathetic ashlar gritstone (matched for source, geological bed and grain).
- Plaster: 3-coat haired lime; chestnut or oak laths.
- Slate: Westmorland green slate to BS EN 12326, copper-nailed, with lead tingles where required.
- Lead: BS EN 12588 milled lead sheet for soakers and flashings.

- Timber: like-for-like species, traditionally jointed; linseed-oil paint system for external joinery.
- Paint and decoration: breathable systems internally (limewash, soft distemper, clay/silicate or mineral emulsion).

4.4 Workmanship

4.4.1 All works are specified to be executed by hand. Powered tools (cutting, drilling, sanding, planing, chasing, chiselling, blowing and pressurised cleaning systems) are prohibited throughout the contract (Conservation Works Specification, Rev C, Sections 4 to 11). Heritage trades are required: heritage stonemason (ICON ACR or equivalent), heritage lath and plaster specialist, heritage joiner, leadworker (LSTA / LCA accredited), heritage decorator.

4.5 Reversibility and minimum intervention

4.5.1 The interventions are designed to be reversible where reasonably practicable. Joist-end repairs use traditional scarfing techniques. Lath and plaster reinstatement uses lime that is compatible with the surviving substrate. No epoxy or proprietary structural resins are specified for use on historic fabric. Modern impervious materials (cement, gypsum, acrylic mastic, modern microporous alkyd paints) are excluded from contact with historic surfaces. The stainless-steel wall-plate element introduced at clause 3.2 is, of necessity, not strictly reversible in the same way as a timber repair, because the rotted timber it replaces is itself unrecoverable. It is, however, a discrete, demountable element bolted to new gritstone padstones, located between ground floor and first floor entirely behind the arcade ceiling, and could be removed and re-detailed in future without disturbance to historic external fabric. The element is specified in grade 1.4404 austenitic stainless steel to BS EN 10088 for long-term corrosion resistance in the moisture-rich micro-environment that caused the original timber failure. This is the smallest practical intervention consistent with arresting the existing bulge in the external wall and is recommended by Lucy Newport CARE.

4.6 Design context and the conservation area

4.6.1 The works preserve and arguably enhance the character and appearance of the Buxton Town Centre Conservation Area. The ashlar elevations, the arcade, and the unified roofscape that give The Square its special architectural and historic interest are protected and stabilised by the works. No external feature visible from public viewpoints (The Square, The Crescent, the Old Hall Hotel forecourt, Pavilion Gardens) is altered in form, scale or appearance.

5. Access

5.0.1 This Section addresses paragraph (b) of Article 9(2) of the DMPO 2015: how issues relating to access to the development have been dealt with.

5.1 Existing access

5.1.1 Vehicular access to The Square is via Hall Bank from the east and via the public highway network of Buxton town centre. Pedestrian access is from The Square itself via the arcade and via the front entrances of Nos 5 and 6 directly off the arcade. The properties are at level access from the arcade. The arcade itself is a Listed Building feature and is part of the public realm of The Square. There is no change to vehicular or pedestrian access arrangements as a consequence of these works.

5.2 Access during the works

- Vehicular access: deliveries to be by pre-booked time slots through High Peak Borough Council's permitted streetworks regime. A construction traffic plan is prepared by the Contractor under clause 8 of the Preliminaries.
- Pedestrian access: the arcade is to be protected by a temporary scaffold tunnel with debris netting and signage, so that pedestrian access along the arcade is maintained throughout the works in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. The tunnel is designed in accordance with BS 5975 and BS EN 12811.
- Scaffold and edge protection: independent scaffolding to the principal elevations with pavement loading agreed with the local highway authority and pedestrian protection retained at street level.
- Public protection: hoardings, signage and out-of-hours security as specified in the Preliminaries and the Pre-Construction Information.

5.3 Inclusive access (Equality Act 2010)

5.3.1 The properties currently provide level access from the arcade for both Nos 5 and 6. That level access is retained during and after the works. The temporary scaffold tunnel along the arcade will be designed to maintain a clear minimum corridor width of 1200 mm with level entry, in accordance with Approved Document M Volume 2 (Access to and use of buildings other than dwellings) and the Equality Act 2010 duty to make reasonable adjustments. Tactile paving, signage and contrasting edge marking will be provided at the temporary tunnel approaches.

5.4 Fire and emergency access

5.4.1 Fire service access to the front elevation is retained throughout the works. The scaffold design and pavement loading have been coordinated with Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service access requirements; means of escape from the upper floors is maintained at all times and reviewed in the Construction Phase Plan. The project is not higher-risk building work as defined in section 65 of the Building Safety Act 2022 and the Higher-Risk Buildings (Descriptions and Supplementary Provisions) Regulations 2023 (SI 2023/275).

5.5 Access on completion

5.5.1 On completion, all access arrangements revert to the existing arrangement: vehicular access via the public highway, pedestrian access from The Square via the arcade, level access to Nos 5 and 6, and the existing internal arrangements. No new access arrangements, vehicular movements or parking requirements are generated by the proposals.

6. Sustainability and Energy

6.1 Conservation as sustainability

6.1.1 The works retain the existing building, its embodied carbon and its embodied historic fabric. Repair of a listed building in continued use is the most sustainable form of construction available, avoiding the carbon cost of demolition and rebuild and retaining material that cannot be reproduced. This aligns with NPPF paragraph 159 and the Historic England Short Guide on Climate Change Adaptation for Traditional Buildings.

6.2 Materials

6.2.1 Lime mortars, traditional timber, lead, natural slate, gritstone and linseed-oil paint systems have lower embodied carbon than their modern equivalents and are vapour-open. Their re-use within the building maintains the moisture management characteristics of traditional construction and avoids the durability problems associated with the introduction of impervious modern materials into traditional fabric.

6.3 Energy efficiency considerations

6.3.1 The present application does not include energy-retrofit measures. Where draught-sealing of the sash windows is proposed under the Conservation Works Specification, it is limited to discreet brush-pile seals routed into the parting bead and meeting rails, in accordance with Historic England HEAG039 Traditional Windows; the intervention is reversible and is not visible externally. Wider energy-retrofit measures (secondary glazing, roof or wall insulation) are not part of this application and would be the subject of separate consideration under the Buxton Conservation Area Article 4 regime and any future LBC.

7. Conclusion

7.1.1 The proposed works are conservation-led repairs to a Grade II* listed building in the Buxton Town Centre Conservation Area. The design principles applied are: conservation-led, minimum intervention, like-for-like repair using traditional materials and methods, hand workmanship throughout, reversibility where practicable, and the use of demonstrably qualified heritage trades. The single departure from strict like-for-like repair is the concealed stainless-steel wall plate at the inner face of the arcade (clause 3.2 above), recommended by Lucy Newport CARE on conservation-engineering grounds, justified by the cause of the original timber failure, and entirely hidden behind the reinstated arcade ceiling. There is no change of use, no increase in floor area, and no alteration to layout, scale or external appearance.

7.1.2 Access arrangements during the works retain pedestrian movement through the arcade by means of a scaffold tunnel designed to Approved Document M and the Equality Act 2010. Fire service access is retained. On completion, all access arrangements revert to the existing arrangement.

7.1.3 The proposals comply with article 9 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 and the parallel requirements for Listed Building Consent. They are supported by the Heritage Statement (Rev AB), Conservation Works Specification (Rev C), Schedule of Works (Rev F), and Preliminaries (Rev G), which together set out the conservation rationale, significance assessment, detailed specification and procurement arrangements. Listed Building Consent (and any associated planning permission) is recommended to be granted, subject to any reasonable conditions the Local Planning Authority may impose.

Appendix A, References

Legislation and regulations

- Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (SI 2015/595), article 9.
- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, sections 16(2), 66(1), 72(1).
- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990 (as amended).
- Equality Act 2010.
- Building Safety Act 2022 and Higher-Risk Buildings (Descriptions and Supplementary Provisions) Regulations 2023 (SI 2023/275).
- Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/51).

National policy and guidance

- National Planning Policy Framework, December 2024 (as amended February 2025), Chapter 16.
- Planning Practice Guidance: Design and Access Statements (GOV.UK).
- Historic England, Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance (2008).
- Historic England, Good Practice Advice notes 1, 2 and 3.
- Building Regulations Approved Document M, Volume 2.
- BS 7913:2013 Guide to the Conservation of Historic Buildings.

Project documents

- Walker Wood Heritage Statement, 5 and 6 The Square, Buxton, Rev AB, 17 May 2026.
- Walker Wood Conservation Works Specification, Rev C, May 2026.
- Walker Wood Schedule of Works, ICD 2024, Rev F, 17 May 2026.
- Walker Wood Preliminaries, ICD 2024, Rev G, 17 May 2026.
- Walker Wood Fabric Report, April 2025.
- Castree Engineering Specification CAS-4064-EngSpec and tender drawings 4064-EX-GA10, 4064-EX-S01, 4064-EX-D01, 4064-PR-GA00, 4064-PR-GA10, 4064-PR-D01, 4064-PR-D02, 4064-PR-D03.