

Inc Architects Limited

PLANNING STATEMENT

Mixed Use Development
at Hardwick Hall / Buxton Museum,
Terrace Road, Buxton,
Derbyshire, SK17 6DY

Issued: August 2026

Job Reference: 25 012-INC-RP-PS



Site Address:

Hardwick Hall / Buxton Museum, Terrace Road, Buxton, Derbyshire, SK17 6DY

Client:

Vanguard Group Developments (Uk1) Limited

Proposal:

Mixed Use Development at Hardwick Hall / Buxton Museum,
Terrace Road, Buxton, Derbyshire, SK17 6DY

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1. INTRODUCTION

This Supporting Planning Statement has been prepared in support of an application for the conversion and sensitive adaptation of the former Buxton Museum and Art Gallery / Hardwick Hall building on Terrace Road, Buxton.

The application proposes the comprehensive reuse of the existing vacant building to provide:

- 39no. residential apartments;
 - Compromising 34no. one-bedroom apartments; 3no. two-bedroom apartments; 2no. three-bedroom apartments
- New Class E office accommodation; and
- retention of the community hall within Hardwick Hall under Use Class F2.

The proposal also includes associated alterations to the existing landscaping to facilitate an additional five on-site parking spaces, together with refuse storage and other works necessary to facilitate the conversion.

The application site occupies a highly sustainable town-centre location within Buxton and lies within the Buxton Central Conservation Area. The building itself is not listed.

The proposal represents the sustainable reuse of an important and prominent existing building which has remained vacant following the closure of Buxton Museum and Art Gallery in June 2023. The closure followed the discovery of serious dry rot affecting structural timbers and floor joists. Derbyshire County Council subsequently undertook investigations into the condition and future of the building and ultimately concluded that the cost and complexity of bringing the building back into use as a museum were prohibitive. The Council announced in May 2024 that it would move the museum and place the building on the market. Derbyshire County Council's contemporary public statements confirm that the building had been closed following the discovery of dry rot in structural timbers and floor joists.

The application consequently provides an opportunity to secure a viable and sustainable long-term use for a building which would otherwise remain vacant and vulnerable to further deterioration.

The proposal is considered to accord with the overall objectives of the High Peak Local Plan 2016 and the National Planning Policy Framework ("NPPF"), particularly in relation to the effective use of land, the delivery of housing, the regeneration of existing buildings, sustainable transport, town-centre vitality, economic development and the conservation of the historic environment.

2. THE SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

2.1 Site Location

The application site comprises Hardwick Hall / the former Buxton Museum and Art Gallery at Terrace Road, Buxton, Derbyshire, SK17 6DY. The site is located within the established urban area of Buxton and occupies a highly accessible town-centre location.

The site is within convenient walking distance of:

- Buxton town centre;
- Spring Gardens;
- Market Place;
- local shops and services;
- employment opportunities;
- restaurants and cafés;



- community facilities;
- cultural and leisure facilities;
- Buxton Railway Station;
- Buxton Bus Station; and
- the wider network of pedestrian routes serving central Buxton.

The site is therefore exceptionally well placed to accommodate a mixed-use development which reduces reliance on the private car and supports the continued vitality of the town centre.

2.2 Existing Building

The building historically accommodated Buxton Museum and Art Gallery, together with community functions.

The existing lawful planning uses comprise Use Classes F1 and F2.

The building is currently vacant.

The museum was required to close in June 2023 following the discovery of dry rot in structural timbers and floor joists. Derbyshire County Council subsequently confirmed that investigations had identified extensive problems and that bringing the building back into use as a modern museum would require substantial and costly remedial works. The Council ultimately decided to relocate the museum service and sell the existing premises.

The vacancy is therefore not a consequence of a short-term commercial decision but results from significant structural problems associated with the historic building and the decision by the former occupier to relocate the museum function.

The proposal should accordingly be viewed as an opportunity to secure the long-term future of the building through viable and complementary uses.

3. PLANNING HISTORY AND CURRENT STATUS OF THE BUILDING

The building has historically played an important public and community role in Buxton.

The museum occupied the Peak Buildings complex for many decades and became an established part of Buxton's cultural identity. Its sudden closure in 2023 left a substantial and locally important building vacant. Derbyshire County Council subsequently confirmed its intention to relocate the museum and sell the building. The Council's public statement in May 2024 explained that continuing assessment of the dry rot was demonstrating the scale and cost of works necessary to make the building safe and suitable for continued public use.

This background is an important material consideration in assessing the proposed development.

The question is not whether an occupied and viable community building should simply be converted to residential use. Rather, the proposal concerns a building which has become vacant following significant structural problems and the decision of its previous public-sector owner to relocate its principal use.

The proposed development provides a realistic opportunity to return the building to active use whilst retaining an important community function and introducing employment-generating accommodation.



4. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposal comprises the following principal elements.

Use	Proposed provision
Total Residential Units	39
Class E office accommodation	300sq.m
F2 community hall	Retained – approximately 270sq.m
Air BNB units	5no.
On-site parking	Existing provision + 5 spaces

The proposed development therefore retains the mixed-use character of the building.

The community hall will remain in use by the community and will continue to provide an important local facility.

The proposal also introduces new Class E office accommodation, ensuring that the building does not become an exclusively residential property and retaining a meaningful employment-generating function within the town centre.

5. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

5.1 Development Plan

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The principal adopted development plan document is the High Peak Local Plan 2016. The Council continues to identify the adopted Local Plan as its development plan pending preparation of its replacement Local Plan.

The policies of greatest relevance to the proposal include:

- Policy S1 – Sustainable Development Principles;
- Policy S1a – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development;
- Policy S2 – Settlement Hierarchy;
- Policy S7 – Buxton Sub-area Strategy;
- Policy EQ1 – Climate Change;
- Policy EQ5 – Biodiversity;
- Policy EQ6 – Design and Place Making;
- Policy EQ7 – Built and Historic Environment;
- Policy EQ10 – Pollution Control and Unstable Land;
- Policy EQ11 – Flood Risk Management;
- Policy H1 – Location of Housing Development;
- Policy H3 – New Housing Development;
- Policy H4 – Affordable Housing;
- Policy CF3 – Local Infrastructure Provision;
- Policy CF6 – Accessibility and Transport; and
- Policy CF7 – Planning Obligations and Community Infrastructure Levy.

These policies remain relevant to the assessment of development proposals in Buxton. The Council's own recent planning documentation continues to identify these policies as relevant to development within the Borough.



6. POLICY S7 – BUXTON SUB-AREA STRATEGY

Policy S7 is particularly relevant.

The policy recognises Buxton as an important settlement and seeks to:

- protect and enhance its distinctive character;
- provide for the housing needs of the community;
- encourage local employment opportunities;
- support the town's role as a service centre; and
- promote sustainable economic growth and regeneration.

The Council's evidence base describes Buxton as a sustainable location for accommodating housing growth because of its relative self-containment and the accessible services and facilities available within the town. The policy also recognises the potential for development within Buxton to contribute to sustainable economic growth and regeneration. The proposed development directly supports these objectives. It provides housing within the existing urban area, retains a community use, introduces office accommodation and brings a vacant building back into productive use.

The proposal is therefore closely aligned with the spatial objectives of Policy S7.

7. PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

7.1 Reuse of an Existing Building

The fundamental principle of the proposal is the reuse of an existing building. The NPPF places substantial weight on the effective use of land and specifically states that planning policies and decisions should make as much use as possible of previously developed land.

Paragraph 125 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs and should promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, particularly where this can help meet identified housing needs in areas where land supply is constrained.

The proposal is an especially strong example of this principle. It:

- reuses an existing building;
- avoids the need for a new greenfield housing site;
- makes efficient use of land within the existing settlement;
- brings a long-vacant building back into productive use;
- provides housing;
- retains community accommodation;
- creates office accommodation; and
- supports the regeneration of central Buxton.

The NPPF therefore provides substantial policy support for the principle of the development.

8. HOUSING LAND SUPPLY

8.1 Current Position

The housing land supply position in High Peak is a significant material consideration.

The Council's latest available appeal evidence confirms that High Peak cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites.

The Statement of Common Ground prepared for the current Talbot Road appeal records that the Council's stated maximum housing land supply is only 2.47 years. It also records that High Peak does not have an up-to-date Local Plan identifying sufficient sites to meet current housing need.

The same evidence records a significant deterioration in housing delivery, with completions falling from 426 dwellings in 2022/23 to 268 in 2023/24 and 202 in 2024/25. Against the then applicable standard-method requirement of 595 dwellings per annum, the 2024/25 delivery represented only approximately 34% of the requirement.

This is highly material to the present application.

The proposal would deliver 39 additional dwellings at a time when High Peak has a substantial shortfall in deliverable housing land.

8.2 Weight to Housing Provision

The provision of 39 homes should be afforded significant weight in the planning balance.

The NPPF identifies the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes.

The current NPPF also places particular emphasis on making effective use of land, with substantial weight given to the use of suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs.

The proposal performs particularly well against these objectives because the housing is not being delivered through the release of countryside or greenfield land. Instead, 39 homes are being delivered through the conversion of an existing, vacant building in the heart of an established settlement.

This is precisely the type of development which can assist the Council in addressing its housing shortfall without placing additional pressure on undeveloped land.

8.3 Paragraph 11(d) and the Planning Balance

The current housing land supply position means that the provisions of paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF are engaged where the relevant policies for the supply of housing are out of date.

High Peak's own current appeal evidence confirms both the absence of a five-year housing land supply and the absence of an up-to-date Local Plan capable of meeting current identified housing need.

Accordingly, substantial weight should be given to the contribution which this development makes towards housing delivery.

The proposal is also precisely the type of development contemplated by the NPPF's emphasis on sustainable locations, effective use of land and the reuse of under-utilised buildings.

9. HOUSING MIX

9.1 Proposed Mix

The proposed residential mix is:

- 34 x one-bedroom apartments;
- 3 x two-bedroom apartments; and
- 2 x three-bedroom apartments.

This equates to approximately:

- 87% one-bedroom accommodation;
- 8% two-bedroom accommodation; and
- 5% three-bedroom accommodation.

The applicant acknowledges that the Council's housing evidence and development management policies seek an appropriate mix of dwelling types and sizes, including a greater proportion of two- and three-bedroom accommodation than is proposed. However, the proposed mix should be assessed in the context of the specific characteristics and viability of this site.

9.2 Site-Specific Constraints

This is not a conventional greenfield housing development capable of being designed from first principles. The proposal concerns the conversion of an existing historic building within Buxton town centre.

The building has an established structural envelope, floor-to-floor relationships, circulation arrangements, window positions, structural walls and other physical constraints.

The ability to introduce larger apartments is therefore constrained by the existing building.

Increasing the number of two- and three-bedroom units would require significant internal reconfiguration and would reduce the number of units capable of being created from the existing building.

Such changes would also have implications for:

- construction costs;
- structural intervention;
- servicing;
- fire strategy;
- accessibility;
- circulation;
- daylight and outlook;
- heritage considerations; and
- overall scheme viability.

The proposed mix should therefore not be assessed against a theoretical housing mix which could be achieved on a vacant development site.

9.3 Viability

The town-centre location and the complexity of converting the existing building materially affect development viability.

The building has suffered from serious dry rot affecting structural timbers and floor joists, and its conversion requires significant investment to bring the property back into a safe and viable use.

The applicant's viability evidence demonstrates that the proposed housing mix is necessary to enable the comprehensive conversion of the building.

A greater proportion of larger two- and three-bedroom units would materially reduce the efficiency and financial viability of the conversion and risks undermining the ability to bring the building back into productive use.

The proposed mix should therefore be accepted as a proportionate and site-specific response to the physical and financial constraints of the building.

This approach is consistent with the NPPF's emphasis on making effective use of land and securing viable development which can actually be delivered.

10. SUSTAINABLE LOCATION

The site is exceptionally well located for sustainable modes of transport.

Its town-centre position provides residents, office workers and community users with convenient access to existing services and facilities.

The site is within walking distance of Buxton's:

- principal shopping areas;
- employment areas;
- restaurants and cafés;

- leisure facilities;
- cultural facilities;
- public services;
- bus station;
- railway station;
- healthcare facilities; and
- community facilities.

The site's location is therefore fundamentally different from development in a peripheral or rural location. Residents will be able to undertake a substantial proportion of everyday journeys by walking, cycling or public transport.

The NPPF requires development to be located and designed so that sustainable transport modes can be prioritised and recognises that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport will vary between urban and rural locations.

This is an urban town-centre site where the opportunity for sustainable travel is particularly strong.

11. TRANSPORT AND PARKING

11.1 Parking Provision

The proposal provides an additional five on-site parking spaces through the reconfiguration of existing landscaping.

This represents a positive improvement over the existing situation.

The applicant has nevertheless deliberately avoided seeking to provide a conventional suburban level of parking because of the highly sustainable town-centre location of the site.

The provision of excessive on-site parking would be inconsistent with the objective of making efficient use of land and would unnecessarily encourage private car ownership and use.

11.2 Existing F1/F2 Parking Demand

The existing lawful F1/F2 uses have historically generated a substantially different parking requirement from the proposed residential use.

A museum/art gallery and community hall are uses which can generate concentrated visitor and staff trips, often during the same periods, and consequently generate a higher level of parking demand relative to a town-centre residential scheme.

The proposed residential use is more evenly distributed throughout the day and does not generate the same concentration of visitor trips.

The proposed development should therefore be assessed against the actual characteristics of the site and the accessibility of its location rather than simply by applying a theoretical suburban parking ratio.

11.3 Availability of Public Parking

The site benefits from extensive public parking provision in the immediate town-centre area.

Publicly available parking within and around central Buxton includes:

- Market Place / Town Hall parking;
- Market Street Car Park;
- Spring Gardens and Wye Street Car Park;
- Sylvan Car Park;
- Pavilion Gardens Car Park;
- Bridge Street Car Park; and
- other on-street parking within the central area.

The local visitor information for Buxton confirms public pay-and-display parking at the Square, Pavilion Gardens, Market Place, Buxton Railway Station, Spring Gardens and Sylvan Park. Market Street Car Park is a substantial long-stay facility serving central Buxton, while the wider town-centre network provides further public parking opportunities. The availability of these facilities is particularly relevant to the assessment of a town-centre conversion where residents are not dependent upon a dedicated private parking space for every dwelling.

11.4 Town-Centre Location and Reduced Parking

The NPPF states that local planning policies should take into account the accessibility of development and opportunities for sustainable transport when setting parking standards. The proposed five-space increase therefore represents an appropriate balance between providing some additional on-site parking and recognising the sustainable nature of the location.

The proposal should not be judged against the parking expectations of a peripheral housing development. Its location within the centre of Buxton means that residents have genuine alternatives to private car ownership. Furthermore, the retention of the existing building and the reconfiguration of existing landscaping provides an opportunity to secure additional parking without creating a new extensive car park or substantially increasing the developed footprint.

12. OFFICE ACCOMMODATION

The proposal creates new Class E office accommodation. This is a significant benefit. The development therefore does not simply result in the loss of a former community/public building to residential use.

Instead, the scheme establishes a genuine mixed-use development incorporating:

- residential accommodation;
- employment accommodation; and
- community accommodation.

The office accommodation will support local employment and provide opportunities for businesses and professionals to operate from a central Buxton location. This is consistent with Policy S7, which seeks to encourage local employment opportunities and support Buxton's role as a service centre.

It is also consistent with the economic dimension of sustainable development in the NPPF. The office accommodation can further reduce the need for longer-distance commuting by providing employment opportunities within the town centre.

13. RETENTION OF COMMUNITY USE

A particularly important aspect of the proposal is the retention of the community hall within Hardwick Hall. The existing F2 community function is not being lost. Instead, the proposal retains dedicated community accommodation which can continue to serve local residents and community organisations. This is a substantial planning benefit.

The proposal therefore does not represent a straightforward loss of community infrastructure. The scheme maintains a community presence within the building while introducing new housing and employment accommodation. This mixed-use approach is entirely appropriate to a central urban location and supports the NPPF's objectives of creating healthy, inclusive and sustainable communities.

14. CONSERVATION AREA

14.1 Designated Heritage Asset

The application site is located within the Buxton Central Conservation Area. The building itself is not listed.



The proposal must therefore preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area and have regard to the significance of the surrounding historic environment. Policy EQ7 of the High Peak Local Plan is particularly relevant, alongside Policy EQ6 and the High Peak Design Guide.

The NPPF requires great weight to be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets and requires development proposals affecting heritage assets to clearly understand their significance.

14.2 Conservation and Viable Use

The building's current vacancy is a material consideration.

The building has already suffered significant structural deterioration and has remained vacant since the closure of the museum in 2023.

The NPPF recognises the importance of securing the viable use of heritage assets and of finding sustainable solutions which enable buildings to remain in productive use.

The proposed conversion provides an opportunity to secure the building's long-term future through a viable mixed-use scheme.

This is preferable to a scenario in which the building remains vacant and continues to deteriorate.

The scheme should therefore be viewed as a conservation-led regeneration project which seeks to secure a viable future for an important building within the Buxton Central Conservation Area.

15. DESIGN AND HERITAGE RESPONSE

The proposed works have been developed with regard to the existing architectural form and historic character of the building. The principal objective is to retain and enhance the architectural qualities which contribute to the character of the Conservation Area while allowing the building to accommodate modern residential, employment and community uses.

The conversion will retain the established building envelope wherever practicable.

The accompanying Heritage Statement should be read alongside this document and provides the detailed assessment of heritage significance and impact.

16. FLOOD RISK

The site lies within Flood Zone 1. The proposal is therefore located within the lowest category of fluvial flood risk. The development also represents the reuse of an existing building rather than the introduction of development onto an undeveloped floodplain site. Flood risk is consequently not considered to represent a constraint to the principle of development. Appropriate drainage measures will be incorporated into the scheme in accordance with Policy EQ11 and relevant national planning policy.

17. ECOLOGY

There are no identified ecological constraints affecting the site.

An ecological assessment has been undertaken and no emerging bats were identified within the property. The proposal therefore does not involve the loss of an identified bat roost or other protected ecological feature. Any ecological matters arising during construction can be addressed through appropriate precautionary measures and planning conditions where necessary.

The proposal is consequently considered to accord with Policy EQ5 and the relevant provisions of the NPPF relating to biodiversity.



18. CLIMATE CHANGE AND EMBODIED CARBON

The conversion of an existing building represents a fundamentally sustainable form of development. Retaining the existing building avoids the carbon emissions associated with wholesale demolition and new construction and retains the embodied carbon within the existing structure.

The proposal also places 39 new homes within an established town centre where residents can access services and facilities by sustainable modes. The development therefore provides sustainability benefits through:

- reuse of an existing building;
- avoidance of greenfield development;
- retention of embodied carbon;
- increased residential density within the existing settlement;
- proximity to public transport;
- proximity to shops and services;
- retention of employment accommodation; and
- retention of community accommodation.

These benefits are consistent with Policy EQ1 and the environmental objectives of the NPPF.

19. EFFECTIVE USE OF LAND

The proposal is particularly strongly supported by the NPPF's approach to the effective use of land. Paragraph 124 of the NPPF requires planning policies and decisions to promote the effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses.

Paragraph 125 states that policies and decisions should give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs and should promote the development of under-utilised land and buildings, particularly where this can assist in meeting housing needs where land supply is constrained. The proposal meets these objectives in several ways. It reuses:

- an existing building;
- an existing town-centre site;
- existing infrastructure;
- existing access arrangements; and
- an existing community facility.

At the same time it delivers:

- 39 homes;
- office accommodation;
- community accommodation; and
- additional on-site parking.

The scheme therefore achieves multiple benefits from a single urban site.

20. ECONOMIC BENEFITS

The proposal provides a number of economic benefits. These include:

- construction employment;
- expenditure associated with the conversion works;
- occupation of new office accommodation;
- creation of employment opportunities;
- additional residents supporting local shops and businesses;



- increased activity within the town centre;
- retention of community activity; and
- the regeneration of a currently vacant property.

The additional residents will provide a larger customer base for existing shops, cafés, restaurants, cultural attractions and services within Buxton. This is particularly important in the context of the Council's current wider regeneration objectives for Buxton.

High Peak Borough Council is currently promoting substantial town-centre regeneration, including a major mixed-use scheme involving hundreds of new homes and commercial floorspace, demonstrating the strategic importance being placed upon bringing vacant and under-utilised central sites back into productive use. The proposal complements this wider strategy by delivering a smaller-scale, building-led regeneration project in the heart of the town.

21. SOCIAL BENEFITS

The principal social benefit is the provision of 39 additional homes. This is particularly important given the Council's current housing land supply position. The scheme also:

- retains community accommodation;
- provides additional local employment;
- increases the population living within the town centre;
- supports local services;
- provides additional housing choice; and
- makes use of an existing building rather than requiring development of greenfield land.

The development therefore contributes to all three dimensions of sustainable development.

22. LOCAL HOUSING NEED

The proposed development will contribute towards meeting housing need within High Peak at a time when the Council's ability to demonstrate a sufficient supply of housing land is significantly constrained. High Peak's current appeal evidence identifies a maximum supply of only 2.47 years and confirms that the Council does not have an up-to-date Local Plan identifying sufficient sites to meet current housing need. This gives the delivery of additional housing significant weight.

The development is also appropriately located to accommodate additional population growth because the site is within the established settlement and immediately accessible to existing services and facilities.

23. RELATIONSHIP WITH HIGH PEAK'S HOUSING STRATEGY

High Peak Borough Council's current Housing Strategy recognises the importance of increasing housing provision and bringing vacant properties back into use. The Council's housing strategy identifies objectives including bringing empty private-sector properties back into use and improving the availability and quality of housing within the Borough.

The proposal is therefore directly consistent with the Council's wider housing objectives. The application provides an opportunity to bring a substantial vacant building back into use while delivering 39 homes.

24. PLANNING BALANCE

The proposal should be assessed as a comprehensive regeneration scheme rather than as a conventional residential development. The principal benefits are as follows.

24.1 Housing

The development provides 39 new homes in a Borough which has a significant housing land supply deficit. The Council's latest appeal evidence identifies only 2.47 years of deliverable housing land supply. This benefit attracts significant weight.

24.2 Brownfield / Existing Building Reuse

The proposal reuses an existing vacant building within an established town centre. The NPPF gives substantial weight to this principle.

24.3 Regeneration

The development brings a long-vacant and structurally compromised building back into productive use. This is a significant regeneration benefit.

24.4 Heritage

The scheme provides a viable long-term use for a locally important historic building within the Buxton Central Conservation Area. Securing a viable use reduces the risk associated with continued vacancy and deterioration.

24.5 Community

The F2 community hall is retained. The proposal therefore maintains a community function within the building.

24.6 Employment

New Class E office accommodation provides an employment-generating use within the town centre.

24.7 Sustainable Location

The site is exceptionally well located for walking, cycling and public transport.

24.8 Environmental Sustainability

The proposal retains an existing building, preserves embodied carbon and avoids development of undeveloped land.

24.9 Biodiversity and Flood Risk

The site is within Flood Zone 1 and no ecological constraints or bat roosts have been identified.

25. WEIGHT TO THE HERITAGE AND REGENERATION BENEFITS

The historic importance of the building should not be considered in isolation from its current condition and vacancy. The building is not listed, although it is located within the Buxton Central Conservation Area. The former public use has ceased and the building is vacant as a consequence of significant structural problems. The previous owner has decided that the building is not capable of being viably returned to its former museum use and has disposed of the property.

The proposed development therefore represents a realistic means of securing the building's continued existence and productive use.

The realistic alternative is the continued vacancy of the building or the introduction of another viable use. Against this background, the proposal should be afforded substantial weight as a means of securing the building's long-term future.



26. OVERALL POLICY COMPLIANCE

The proposal is considered to comply with the principal development plan policies as follows:

Policy	Assessment
S1 – Sustainable Development	Complies – reuse of existing building, housing, employment and community benefits
S1a – Presumption in Favour	Complies – sustainable development in an established town centre
S2 – Settlement Hierarchy	Complies – development within Buxton
S7 – Buxton Strategy	Complies – housing, employment, community and regeneration
EQ1 – Climate Change	Complies – reuse of existing building and sustainable location
EQ5 – Biodiversity	Complies – no identified ecological constraints
EQ6 – Design and Place Making	Complies – conversion retains existing building and responds to townscape
EQ7 – Built and Historic Environment	Complies – building retained within Conservation Area
EQ11 – Flood Risk	Complies – Flood Zone 1
H1 – Location of Housing	Complies – housing in established sustainable settlement
H3 – New Housing	Complies – appropriate development and provides new dwellings
H4 – Affordable Housing	Subject to viability / contribution
CF6 – Accessibility and Transport	Complies – sustainable location and appropriate parking strategy
CF7 – Planning Obligations	Subject to appropriate obligations

27. CONCLUSION

The proposed conversion of Hardwick Hall / the former Buxton Museum and Art Gallery at Terrace Road represents an important opportunity to secure the future of a vacant and locally important building within Buxton.

The building has remained vacant since the closure of Buxton Museum and Art Gallery in June 2023 following the discovery of severe dry rot affecting structural timbers and floor joists. The former owner subsequently determined that the building was not viable for continued museum use and the property was placed on the market.

The application provides a viable alternative future. It will deliver:

- 39 new residential apartments
 - comprising: 34 one-bedroom apartments;
 - 3 two-bedroom apartments;
 - and 2 three-bedroom apartments.

In addition, the scheme will provide:

- new Class E office accommodation;
- retention of the F2 community hall;
- improved and reconfigured landscaping; and
- the sustainable reuse of the existing building.

The proposal is in one of the most sustainable locations within the Borough. The site is within central Buxton and is within walking distance of shops, employment, services, community facilities, public transport and cultural and leisure facilities. The proposal therefore makes efficient use of a highly accessible urban site.



The housing benefits are particularly significant. High Peak's current appeal evidence confirms that the Council has only 2.47 years of deliverable housing land supply, substantially below the five-year requirement. Housing delivery has also fallen significantly, with 202 dwellings completed in 2024/25 against a standard-method requirement of approximately 595 dwellings per annum. The delivery of 39 homes on this site should therefore be afforded substantial weight.

The proposed housing mix is necessarily influenced by the constraints of converting an existing historic building. While the applicant recognises the Council's preference for a greater proportion of two- and three-bedroom homes, the provision of such a mix must be balanced against the physical constraints and viability of the conversion. The proposed mix is considered necessary to secure the comprehensive redevelopment and long-term use of the building.

The proposal also retains the community function of the building through the continued provision of F2 community hall accommodation and introduces new Class E office accommodation. The scheme therefore provides a genuine mixed-use development rather than a wholesale loss of community or employment uses.

The development also makes a positive contribution to the conservation of the Buxton Central Conservation Area by providing a viable future use for a vacant building which has already experienced serious structural problems.

The site lies within Flood Zone 1 and no ecological constraints have been identified. No emerging bats were found within the building.

Overall, the proposal represents sustainable development which:

- makes effective use of an existing building;
- delivers 39 new homes;
- assists High Peak in addressing its significant housing shortfall;
- supports the regeneration of Buxton town centre;
- retains community accommodation;
- creates new employment accommodation;
- protects the long-term future of a locally important historic building;
- promotes sustainable transport;
- avoids greenfield development;
- retains embodied carbon;
- makes efficient use of existing infrastructure; and

The proposal is consequently considered to accord with the overall objectives of the High Peak Local Plan and the NPPF.

Having regard to the substantial housing, regeneration, economic, community, heritage and sustainability benefits, it is considered that the adverse impacts of the development would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh its benefits.

Planning permission should therefore be granted, subject to appropriate planning conditions and planning obligations where necessary.