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**Report of the Head of Planning and Development****STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE****Date: 08-Jun-2023**

**Subject: Planning Application 2023/90024 Partial demolition of Listed Building to facilitate refurbishment and extension of the George Hotel to form 90+ room C1 hotel with associated ancillary uses (including bar, restaurant, gym, conference room) (within a Conservation Area) George Hotel, St George's Square, Huddersfield, HD1 1JA**

**APPLICANT**

Sarah Collins, Kirklees  
Council, Growth &  
Regeneration

**DATE VALID**

16-Jan-2023

**TARGET DATE**

17-Apr-2023

**EXTENSION EXPIRY DATE**

16-Jun-2023

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Please click the following link for guidance notes on public speaking at planning committees, including how to pre-register your intention to speak.

[Public speaking at committee link](#)

**LOCATION PLAN**

**Map not to scale – for identification purposes only**

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**Electoral wards affected: Newsome**

**Ward Councillors consulted:**

**Public or private: Public**

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**RECOMMENDATION: DELEGATE approval of the application and the issuing of the decision notice to the Head of Planning and Development in order to complete the list of conditions including those contained within this report and to secure an agreement to cover the following matters:**

Sustainable Transport- A financial contribution of £10,000 would also be required for Travel Plan assessment and monitoring for five years.

In the circumstances where the requisite agreement has not been completed within three months of the date of the Committee's resolution then the Head of Planning and Development shall consider whether permission should be refused on the grounds that the proposals are unacceptable in the absence of the mitigation and benefits that would have been secured; if so, the Head of Planning and Development is authorised to determine the application and impose appropriate reasons for refusal under Delegated Powers

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This application is a Regulation 3 (of The Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992) application. Regulation 3 applications concern Local Authorities applying to themselves, as the Local Planning Authority, for planning permission.
- 1.2 The application has been brought before the Strategic Planning Committee as a non-residential development with a site area over 0.5 hectares. This is in accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation.
- 1.3 A separate application for Listed Building Consent (2023/90112) for the works proposed to the George Hotel is under consideration. In general, listed building consent is required for all works of demolition, alteration and extension of a listed building that affect its character as a building of special historic architectural or historic interest. Determination of the listed building consent application is delegated under the council's scheme of delegation. If the committee are minded to support the approval of this planning application, the listed building consent would be granted at the same time as the planning permission.

## **2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS**

- 2.1 The application site is formed of the existing historic George Hotel building and a small area of incidental landscaping to the north, and measures c. 0.5 hectares in area.

- 2.2 The hotel has occupied the site in various forms since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century. The hotel has undergone several renovations during its lifetime, with additional wings added in the 1870s and 1930s, and additional storeys added in the 1960s. The existing building forms a roughly triangular shape, with a central external courtyard area. The George Hotel has played a significant role in the history of Huddersfield and the birth of Rugby League in 1895 and has more recently been the home of the National Rugby League Museum. Given its heritage, the hotel is considered to be of significant local and international importance. The George Hotel was last used as a C1-use hotel in 2013, after which it fell into its current state of disrepair.
- 2.3 The site lies in a very prominent position in Huddersfield Town Centre at the corner of John William Street and Railway Street. The site lies c. 30m to the east of Huddersfield Railway Station and the Kings Head public house. To the immediate north of the site lies the existing railway station car park. To the south, the site fronts onto the St George's Square area of public realm which is occasionally used as a social and events space. There are a number of trees in within the public realm which are considered to be of good amenity value, as they add to the character of the area surrounding the site.
- 2.4 The George Hotel is constructed from ashlar sandstone with rusticated stone at the ground floor level, heavy quoins and a deep cornice at the roof level with fine detailing. The main building which faces St George's Square is four storeys high with attic rooms set within a slate mansard roof. The three-storey wing facing the John William Street elevation is simpler in design, although it follows a similar theme to the main façade. The northwest-facing wing (facing the railway station) is a later addition constructed in coursed hammer dressed stonework with top-hung casement windows, a flat roof, and a tall stone chimney. Within the building is a small inner courtyard.
- 2.5 The George Hotel is a Grade II\* listed building and is within the vicinity and setting of other designated heritage assets, including:
- Grade I listed Huddersfield Railway Station (c. 30m west)
  - Grade II\* listed Britannia Buildings (c. 45m south)
  - Grade II\* listed 7 St Georges Square (c. 70m south)
  - Grade II\* listed Lion Building (c. 37m southeast)
  - Grade II listed railings to Station Yard (immediately west of the site)
  - Grade II listed 64 and 66 John William Street (c. 20m east)
  - Grade II listed 68 John William Street (c. 20m east)
  - Grade II listed 70-78 John William Street (c. 20m east)
  - Grade II listed 1 and 3 Northumberland Street (c. 20m east)
  - Grade II listed f ormer Empire Cinema (c. 40m northeast)
- 2.6 There are a number of other listed heritage assets within the vicinity of the site, but these are further afield and are considered to be shielded from the site by other existing buildings.
- 2.7 The site also lies in the Huddersfield Town Centre Conservation Area.

### 3.0 THE PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The applicant is seeking full planning permission for the *'partial demolition of a Listed Building to facilitate refurbishment and extension of the George Hotel to form a 90+ room C1 hotel with associated ancillary uses (including bar, restaurant, gym, conference room) (within a Conservation Area)'*.
- 3.2 The proposal can be broken down into three main elements:
- Retention and internal refurbishment of the main historic building fronting Railway Street and St Georges Square (Block A);
  - Demolition of the newest part of the hotel facing the railway station and its replacement with a new building extension (Block B); and,
  - Demolition and replacement of most of the structure of the historic extension facing John William Street, with the retention of the building's historic façade (Block C).
- 3.3 The proposal would change the existing layout of the building, lower the floorplate of the basement area by c. 1m to achieve requisite ceiling heights, and increase the overall height of the building at the John William Street and western elevations by one storey to achieve the proposed number of rooms, bringing the height of the building to four storeys plus basement. The eastern wing would also be extended to take in the current area of incidental landscaping at the north of the site. The new build areas would include the use of mansard roofs to accommodate the additional rooms on the 4th floor and be of a more modern design than that of the historic hotel façade. The proposal would also make use of additional external signage on certain elevations to advertise its function.
- 3.4 The proposed changes to the existing layout include the provision of;
- 91 ensuite guest bedrooms
  - 100 cover banqueting suite at basement level with serving kitchen
  - Gym/fitness suite at basement level
  - 70-cover restaurant and bar at ground floor level with serving kitchen
  - 30-person conference room at ground floor level
  - 24-person conference room at first floor level
  - Back of house and staff facilities at all levels
  - Sculptured glass canopy covered central atrium
  - Area of green roof (c. 30 sqm)
- 3.5 The proposed development forms Phase 3 of the wider George Hotel renovation scheme following Stage 1 (asbestos removal) and Stage 2 (external conservation works), which is ongoing and forms part of the Huddersfield High Street Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) project.

## Supporting Information

3.6 In addition to the submitted plans, the following documents have been submitted in support of this application:

- Application Form
- Cover Letter
- Design and Access Statement
- Heritage Statement
- Planning Policy Statement
- Statement of Community Involvement
- Option Selection Report
- Sustainability Statement
- Ecological Impact Assessment & Biodiversity Net Gain
- Noise Impact Assessment
- Air Quality Assessment
- Supply and Extract Ventilation Statement
- Phase 1 Contaminated Land Desk Study
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Drainage Strategy
- Transport Statement
- Travel Plan
- KC Cabinet Report 11 October 2022
- Listed Building Consent Structural Report
- Listed Building Consent Mechanical, Electrical & Plumbing (MEP) Report

## **4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

*Application:* 2023/90112

*Description:* Listed Building Consent for the partial demolition of a Listed Building to facilitate refurbishment and extension of the George Hotel to form a 90+ room C1 hotel with associated ancillary uses (including bar, restaurant, gym, conference room) (within a Conservation Area)

*Decision:* Pending Determination

*Application:* 2021/94596

*Description:* Listed Building Consent for repair works to the external facade with window replacements and re-roofing [within a Conservation Area]

*Decision:* Approved 25/05/2022

*Application:* 2021/93807

*Description:* Advertisement Consent for erection of non illuminated image attached to scaffolding (Listed Building within a Conservation Area)

*Decision:* Approved 18/02/2022

*Application:* 2019/91506

*Description:* Listed Building consent for Partial change of use of hotel to 50 apart-hotel rooms, A3 (restaurant/cafe/function room), A4 (drinking establishment ), D1 (museum), Spa, ancillary storage and associated internal and external works (within a Conservation Area)

*Decision:* Approved 19/09/2019

*Application:* 2019/91505

*Description:* Partial change of use of hotel to 50 apart-hotel rooms, A3 (restaurant/cafe/function room), A4 (drinking establishment), D1 (museum), Spa, ancillary storage and associated internal and external works (within a Conservation Area)

*Decision:* Approved 19/09/2019

*Application:* 2014/90693

*Description:* Listed Building Consent for erection of rooftop coffee shop/diner and balustrade, canopies and internal and external alterations (within a Conservation Area)

*Decision:* Approved 02/09/2015

*Application:* 2014/90692

*Description:* Change of use to mixed use 30 bedroom hotel with function rooms, part of first floor to dental centre and educational facility, basement to spa, formation of 11 apartments on parts of first, second and third floor, erection of rooftop coffee shop/diner with creation of terrace with balustrade, erection of canopies and external alterations (Listed Building within a Conservation Area)

*Decision:* Approved 02/09/2015

*Application:* 2012/93694

*Description:* Listed Building Consent for re-location of plaque (within a Conservation Area)

*Decision:* Approved 16/01/2013

*Application:* 2009/92329

*Description:* Listed Building Consent for installation of façade lighting to front (Within a Conservation Area)

*Decision:* Approved 20/12/2011

*Application:* 2009/92328

*Description:* Installation of façade lighting to front (Listed Building Within a Conservation Area)

*Decision:* Approved 21/12/2011

*Application:* 2007/92606

*Description:* Erection of non illuminated fascia sign (Listed Building within a Conservation Area)

*Decision:* Refused 02/07/2007

*Application:* 2007/92248

*Description:* Listed Building Consent for erection of non-illuminated entrance sign (within a Conservation Area)

*Decision:* Refused 03/08/2007

*Application:* 1990/06041

*Description:* Listed Building Consent for erection of illuminated signs

*Decision:* Approved 15/01/1991

*Application:* 1990/06040

*Description:* Erection of illuminated signs (Listed Building)

*Decision:* Approved 15/01/1991

*Application:* 1990/03353

*Description:* Listed Building Consent for extension and refurbishment

*Decision:* Approved 11/09/1990

*Application:* 1990/03306

*Description:* Erection of extension to hotel to form additional bedrooms and enclosed fire escape (Listed Building)

*Decision:* Approved 11/09/1990

*Application:* 1990/04309

*Description:* Listed Building Consent for internal alterations

*Decision:* Approved 06/11/1990

*Application:* 1986/00583

*Description:* Listed Building Consent for erection of 4 flag poles (Listed Building within Conservation Area)

*Decision:* Approved 06/06/1986

## **5.0 HISTORY OF NEGOTIATIONS**

### **5.1 Officers negotiated with the applicant to:**

- Amend the description of the proposal to better reflect the proposed development, including partial demolition of the existing building.
- Consider internal and external refuse and waste storage and collection.
- Re-assess the external design and amend the new-build elevations to be sensitive to the historic host building.
- Provide additional detailed assessment of the historic fabric and structures to be removed from the site.
- Provide viability information to justify the proposed quantum of C1-use hotel rooms.
- Provide viability information to justify the loss of the building's historic fabric on the scale proposed to facilitate a 91 room C1-use hotel.
- Undertake additional modelling/justification for the loss of historic floorplates from Block A.
- Consider the provision of cycle storage associated with the proposal.
- Alterations/retention of internal floor plates at 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floor.

## **6.0 PLANNING LEGISLATION AND POLICY**

- 6.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The statutory Development Plan for Kirklees is the Kirklees Local Plan. The Kirklees Local Plan was adopted on 27 February 2019 and comprises the strategy and policies document, allocations and designations document and associated proposals map.
- 6.2 The following legislation, policies, and guidance are considered relevant to the determination of this application:

### Kirklees Local Plan (February 2019)

- Policy LP1 – Presumption in favour of sustainable development
- Policy LP2 – Place Shaping
- Policy LP3 – Location of new development
- Policy LP7 – Efficient and effective use of land and buildings
- Policy LP9 – Supporting skilled and flexible communities and workforce
- Policy LP13 – Town centre uses
- Policy LP16 – Food and drink uses and the evening economy
- Policy LP17 – Huddersfield Town Centre
- Policy LP20 – Sustainable travel
- Policy LP21 – Highways and access
- Policy LP22 – Parking
- Policy LP24 – Design
- Policy LP25 – Advertisements and shop fronts
- Policy LP27 – Flood risk
- Policy LP28 – Drainage
- Policy LP30 – Biodiversity & Geodiversity
- Policy LP32 – Landscape
- Policy LP33 – Trees
- Policy LP35 – Historic environment
- Policy LP48 – Community facilities and services
- Policy LP51 – Protection and improvement of local air quality
- Policy LP52 – Protection and improvements of environmental quality
- Policy LP53 – Contaminated and unstable land

### Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance

- Kirklees Economic Strategy 2019-2025
- Huddersfield Blueprint (2021)
- Biodiversity Net Gain Technical Advice Note (June 2021)
- Planning Applications Climate Change Guidance (June 2021)
- Kirklees Waste Management Design Guide 2020
- Highway Design Guide SPD (November 2019)

## National Policies and Guidance

- 6.3 National planning policy and guidance is set out in National Policy Statements, primarily the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published in 2012 and updated most latterly in July 2021, the Planning Practice Guidance Suite (PPGS) first launched 6th March 2014 together with Circulars, Ministerial Statements and associated technical guidance. The NPPF constitutes guidance for Local Planning Authorities and is a material consideration in determining planning applications.

### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (July 2019)

- Chapter 2 – Achieving sustainable development
- Chapter 4 – Decision-making
- Chapter 6 – Building a strong, competitive economy
- Chapter 7 – Ensuring the vitality of town centres
- Chapter 8 – Promoting healthy and safe communities
- Chapter 9 – Promoting sustainable transport
- Chapter 11 – Making effective use of land
- Chapter 12 – Achieving well-designed places
- Chapter 14 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- Chapter 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- Chapter 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

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

- Section 16 – Decision on application
- Section 66 – General duty as respects listed buildings in exercise of planning functions
- Section 72 – General duty as respects conservation areas in exercise of planning functions

## Climate Change

- 6.4 The Council approved Climate Emergency measures at its meeting of full Council on the 16th of January 2019, and the West Yorkshire Combined Authority has pledged that the Leeds City Region would reach net zero carbon emissions by 2038. A draft Carbon Emission Reduction Pathways Technical Report (July 2020, Element Energy), setting out how carbon reductions might be achieved, has been published by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority.
- 6.5 On the 12th of November 2019 the Council adopted a target for achieving 'net zero' carbon emissions by 2038, with an accompanying carbon budget set by the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research. National Planning Policy includes a requirement to promote carbon reduction and enhance resilience to climate change through the planning system, and these principles have been incorporated into the formulation of Local Plan policies. The Local Plan predates the declaration of a climate emergency and the net zero carbon target; however, it includes a series of policies which are used to assess the suitability of planning applications in the context of climate change. When determining planning applications, the council would use the relevant Local Plan policies and guidance documents to embed the climate change agenda.

## **7.0 REPRESENTATIONS (PUBLIC)**

7.1 This application has been advertised jointly as a major development, as a development affecting a Listed Building and within a Conservation Area, and as a development for Listed Building Consent where works to the exterior of the building are proposed.

7.2 Publication of the applications has been undertaken in accordance with the Council's Development Management Charter (July 2015) and in line with the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement (December 2019).

7.3 The statutory public consultation period took place between 27/01/2023 and 01/03/2023.

7.4 During the public consultation, a total of two representations were received (one per each application). One was made in objection (full application) and one as a general comment (LBC application).

7.5 The key points raised in OBJECTION are as follows:

- A modern building extension would be out of place with its historic surroundings, particularly Huddersfield Railway Station.

7.6 The key points raised as COMMENT are as follows:

- The adjacent car park should be able to be used by/given over to the hotel and the existing pick up/drop off point relocated to the west of the railway station.

7.7 Local Members:

Cllr Karen Allison (Newsome) – No comments received.

Cllr Andrew Cooper (Newsome) – No comments received.

Cllr Susan Lee-Richards (Newsome) – No comments received.

7.8 The applicant has also submitted a Statement of Community Involvement setting out their approach to pre-application engagement with the local community, key stakeholders, and local Members in line with NPPF (Chapter 4) Paragraph 39. The SCI also provides an analysis of the pre-application consultation feedback received by the applicant team.

## **8.0 CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

8.1 Invitations to comment on this application were sent to the following consultees:

### **Kirklees Council:**

KC Building Control – No comments received.

KC Business Economy and Regeneration – No comments received.

KC Conservation and Design – No objections subject to conditions

KC Ecology – No objections subject to conditions.

KC Environmental Health – No objections subject to conditions.

KC Highways Development Management – No objections subject to conditions.

KC Highways Structures – No objections subject to conditions.

KC Landscape – No objections subject to conditions.

KC Lead Local Flood Authority – Supports the proposal subject to conditions.

KC Tourism – No comments received.

KC Town Centres – No comments received.

KC Trees – No objections.

KC Waste Strategy – No objections.

**External Consultees:**

Coal Authority – No objections subject to conditions.

Historic England – Is supportive of the proposal to secure a viable hotel use however required further justification on two matters.

Huddersfield Civic Society – Supports the principle of the proposal but requires further justification and information.

National Amenity Societies (Victorian Society) – Objects.

West Yorkshire Archaeology Advisory Service – No objections.

West Yorkshire Fire Authority – No comments received.

West Yorkshire Police Designing Out Crime Officer – No objections subject to conditions.

Yorkshire Water – Advice received and conditions recommended.

## **9.0 MAIN ISSUES**

9.1 Taking into consideration the site allocations and constraints, the main issues for consideration as part of the appraisal of the application are:

- Principle of Development
- Design
- Landscape Character
- Sustainable Development
- Heritage
- Amenity

- Flood Risk and Drainage
- Highways Safety
- Ecology and Biodiversity
- Other Material Considerations

## 10.0 OFFICER ASSESSMENT

### Principle of Development

#### Spatial Strategy

- 10.1 Policy LP1 of the Kirklees Local Plan (KLP) sets out the Local Planning Authority's approach to the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as laid out in National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Chapter 2), particularly Paragraph 11(c). Policy LP1 states that 'when considering development proposals, the council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework'.
- 10.2 Policy LP2 requires that proposals should seek to build on the strengths, opportunities and help address challenges identified in the Local Plan, in order to protect and enhance the qualities which contribute to the character of these places. The policy's supporting text identifies the Huddersfield sub-area as being a priority area for investment in the Kirklees Economic Strategy 2019-2025 to revitalise the town centre and benefits from attractive buildings and spaces of historic and architectural interest. The policy also notes that some of Huddersfield's historic buildings are in poor condition and that the sub-area has pockets of high unemployment and deprivation.
- 10.3 Policy LP3 concerns the location of new development. In considering the abovementioned requirements of Policies LP1 and LP2, proposals are also required to reflect a settlement's size and function, place shaping strengths and opportunities/challenges for growth, spatial priorities for urban renaissance and regeneration, and the need to provide new homes and jobs.
- 10.4 Kirklees Council launched its Huddersfield Blueprint in June 2019. This is a 10-year masterplan regeneration vision to assist in stimulating significant regeneration and investment for Huddersfield town Centre. The Huddersfield Blueprint forms a material consideration in determining this planning application. The George Hotel forms an integral part of the Station Gateway area, which is one of six key areas of Huddersfield Town Centre: Station Gateway, St Peter's, Kingsgate / King Street, New Street, The Civic Quarter and a new Cultural Heart in the Queensgate and Piazza area.
- 10.5 A report to the Kirklees Council Cabinet on 11/10/2022 details that:

*2.2. The Council purchased the George at a time when its condition was continuing to deteriorate in private ownership in order to secure and influence the future of this important gateway building. By bringing it back in to use and ensuring it supports the delivery of the blueprint it will kickstart the wider regeneration of St. George's Square and the town as a whole.*

*2.4. It must be noted though that the proposed hotel at the George will not be dependent on the delivery of other Blueprint projects to be successful. There is a clear requirement for the hotel which will bring inward investment for years to come into Huddersfield and the surrounding area. There is also an expectation that making a success out of the George Hotel may generate further hotel investment into the town centre.*

- 10.6 As the proposal is for the refurbishment of a key strategic asset in the wider regeneration of Huddersfield Town Centre, and builds on the strengths and weaknesses of the wider Huddersfield sub-area by providing a means to bring a Listed heritage asset back into functional use and provide tourism and employment opportunities, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policies LP1, LP2, and LP3 of the adopted Kirklees Local Plan and the Huddersfield Blueprint.

#### Efficient Use of Land

- 10.7 Policy LP7 states that to ensure the best use of land and buildings, proposals should encourage the efficient use of previously developed land in sustainable locations that are not of high environmental value, encourage the reuse or adaption of vacant or underused properties, give priority to brownfield land which is not of high environmental value, and allow for access to adjoining undeveloped land for subsequent re-development.
- 10.8 NPPF (Chapter 11) Paragraph 120(d) states that Local Planning Authorities should support the development of under-utilised land and buildings. Furthermore, Paragraph 124 states that Local Planning Authorities should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account the identified need for different forms of development, local market conditions and viability, the availability of capacity and infrastructure, the desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting or of promoting regeneration and change, and the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places.
- 10.9 As the site has previously been used as a hotel, the proposal is a continuation of this historic use whilst providing modern facilities for future guests and visitors. The rationalisation of the site, in terms of incorporating its existing central service courtyard area and the inclusion of an area of incidental landscaping to the north within the refurbished proposed hotel, is further considered to be an efficient use of previously underused/unusable land within the curtilage of the site. Officers consider that the proposal would be an efficient and effective reuse of existing brownfield land. As such, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policy LP7 of the adopted Kirklees Local Plan and NPPF (Chapter 11), particularly Paragraphs 120(d) and 124.

#### Economic Development and Town Centre Development

- 10.10 Policy LP13 states that main town centre uses shall be located within defined centres. Furthermore, main town centre uses which are appropriate in scale, help to retain an existing centre's market share, and enhance the experience of those visiting the centre and the businesses which operate in that centre will be supported.

- 10.11 Policy LP16 states that proposals for food and drink, licensed entertainment uses and associated proposals will be supported, provided they are located within a defined centre, and subject to ensuring the concentration of food and drink and licensed entertainment uses are not located in a particular centre or part of a centre, where they would result in harm to the character, function, vitality and viability of the centre, either individually or cumulatively.
- 10.12 Policy LP17 states that proposals for new development within Huddersfield Town Centre will be supported where they provide a range of material benefits to the area and its residents and visitors. These include (but are not limited to) preserving and enhancing the town's cultural and architectural heritage, providing a safe and inclusive destination providing for the daytime and evening economies, and retaining and regenerating the town's key historic features and listed buildings.
- 10.13 NPPF (Chapter 6) Paragraph 81 states that Local Planning Authorities should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future.
- 10.14 The Council published the Kirklees Economic Strategy 2019-2025 in April 2019. This provides an overarching vision to create an inclusive and productive local economy with revitalising Huddersfield Town Centre as a priority and central action programme.
- 10.15 Paragraph 2.9 of the submitted Planning Policy Statement highlights that:
- by bringing [The George Hotel] back in to use and ensuring it supports the delivery of the blueprint it will kickstart the wider regeneration of St. George's Square and the town as a whole. The aspiration is to restore the Grade II\* listed George Hotel, and reinstate the George as a thriving, sustainable, hotel and hospitality development.*
- 10.16 The site lies within the defined Huddersfield Town Centre. The proposal is considered to be an appropriate use within the defined town centre as a refurbishment and reinstating of the previous C1 hotel use. The proposal is considered to promote and enhance the town centre's cultural and architectural heritage through the regeneration of a Grade II\* listed building which has fallen into disrepair in recent years and which would provide a range of material benefits, including job creation and a varied tourism offer. The proposal is also considered to be a key driver in the regeneration of this area of Huddersfield more widely by acting as a catalyst for the wider regeneration of the St George's Square area under the Huddersfield Blueprint. The NPPF is clear that significant weight should be afforded to these material considerations in supporting economic growth in the town centre.
- 10.17 Given the above assessment, Officers consider that the proposal is in accordance with Policies LP13, LP16, and LP17 of the adopted Kirklees Local Plan and NPPF (Chapter 6) Paragraph 81.

## Viability

10.18 Paragraphs 2.9 to 2.13 of the submitted Planning Policy Statement set out the viability rationale for the proposal for a 91-bed C1 hotel on this site. The statement sets out that in order to attract long-term investment from a mid- to upper-scale level hotel operator (to be equivalent to a 3 / 4 star hotel), sufficient income would need to be able to be generated through the provision of a minimum of 90 bedrooms and other ancillary hospitality uses (e.g., bar and restaurant). The statement further notes that redevelopment of the George Hotel on this scale and to this quality would reflect the significance of the listed building itself by bringing it back into use as a prominent tourist accommodation offer in the town centre, and by it being operated by a widely recognised quality hotel operator to attract custom in the long term.

10.19 The Victorian Society (part of the statutory National Amenity Societies) objects to the proposal, principally due to:

*the lack of a convincing justification for the demolition and the proposed extension's inappropriate design for a very prominent, and historically significant, location beside the Grade I listed Huddersfield station.*

10.20 No additional comments have been received from the Victorian Society following a re-consultation on amended elevations and additional heritage information.

10.21 Historic England note that they are:

*supportive of the proposal to secure a viable hotel use for the George following a period of vacancy and deterioration. The current project provides an opportunity to capitalise on the investment made by Kirklees Council and Historic England into the repair and enhancement of the exterior of the building as part of the Huddersfield High Street Heritage Action Zone.*

10.22 However, Historic England also state that:

*the current application argues that in order for the proposed hotel use to be viable and sustainable it would require a considerable amount of change to the building, some of which is harmful. A financial viability appraisal has been submitted in support of the proposals. We defer to your authority to assess this justification and recommend that an independent review of the report is undertaken by someone with expertise in the hospitality sector in the local area.*

10.23 Following receipt of Historic England's comments, the applicant submitted some additional confidential viability information. This information has been thoroughly assessed by Officers and has been taken into consideration against the other policy and materials considerations of this proposal.

10.24 The submitted information details that in order to attract a well-known mid-scale level branded hotel operator, the number of rooms usually likely to be required in a new hotel would be c. 120, due to the economies of scale of staffing and overall running costs. In short, the more rooms to be provided the better the overall viability of the hotel use due to the higher levels of revenue able to be achieved. Given the likely very high costs associated with the

refurbishment and construction of the proposal, and works to preserve its historic fabric where possible, the applicant states that a 60-room hotel would not be commercially viable, despite the market opportunity for a hotel on this site. Due to these considerations, the proposal for 91 rooms plus associated facilities is considered by the applicant to represent the most viable option without substantially harming the Grade II\* listed building whilst still being able to attract an appropriate operator.

- 10.25 It is also recognised that the hotel would be retained by the Council for at least 12 years post-development. The preferred operator would act under a Hotel Management Agreement (HMA) rather than a lease agreement. The submitted information states that yields are expected to be relatively low based on the proposed number of rooms, likely achievable occupancy rates, likely price per room able to be achieved in this location for this range of operator, and taking staffing and running costs into consideration. The proposal would not be expected to return a profit for the building owner for c. 15 years. Notwithstanding this, the social return on investment in terms of protecting and re-using the listed heritage asset and other associated benefits are considered to be key considerations. Furthermore, the submitted information considers that due to the commercial viability pressures arising from the above-mentioned considerations, it is unlikely that redevelopment of the existing hotel would occur were it not for the involvement of the Council/public sector. In stating this, the applicant notes the lack of private sector investment under the George Hotel's previous private ownership for the maintenance of the historic building over the past decade and to return it to a commercially viable use.
- 10.26 Officers have considered the applicant's viability documents submitted with the application. The potential options for redevelopment of the site have been thoroughly explored and officers are of the opinion that the applicant has adequately demonstrated that the proposal would provide the optimum viable reuse of the building and the site given the policy requirements of Chapter 16 of the NPPF.

## **Design**

- 10.27 Policy LP24 of the Kirklees Local Plan states that good design should be at the core of all proposals in the district and should be considered at the outset of the development process. Furthermore, proposals should promote good design by ensuring that the form, scale, layout and details of the development respect and enhance the character of the area, provide high levels of sustainability, and minimise the risk of crime, amongst other criteria.
- 10.28 NPPF (Chapter 12) sets out the national approach to achieving well-designed places. Paragraph 130 states that proposals should function well and add to the overall quality of the area for the lifetime of the development, be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, be sympathetic to local character and history, establish or maintain a strong sense of place, optimise the site's potential to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development, and create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible.

## Demolition Works

- 10.29 To facilitate the regeneration of the existing hotel building, this application proposes the complete demolition of northwest wing (Block B) to the west of the site, and the central ballroom and in part the eastern wing to the east of John William Street (Block C). The partial demolition of Block C would leave the historic façade to be incorporated into the redevelopment works, but would remove the existing internal rooms, corridors, and interiors.
- 10.30 The upper section of Block B would be replaced with a new wing. While this will involve a high degree of demolition, the earlier lower section of surviving wall is to be retained. The upper section is a later addition of no historic merit. There are also structural concerns with this section of the building, which would require substantial engineering work amounting to significant intervention. It is therefore considered acceptable for Block B to be demolished down to the level of the original wall.
- 10.31 The eastern wing, Block C, fronting John William Street is to have its façade retained and the remainder of the structure is to be demolished. As detailed in the submitted structural report there are structural concerns relating to this element of the building. This appears to be in part as a result of works which were undertaken during its construction, later alterations, and subsequent poor and inappropriate repairs. It is understood that consideration was given to the retention of this wing, but the need to add additional stories to the roof to meet operator viability requirements and provide the required additional space would equate to significant additional loading and strain on the historic structure. This approach was discounted owing to the identified structural concerns and level of intervention that would be required to the historic structure (tantamount to rebuilding but with significant associated structural complexities attached to it). As set out in the submitted detail, the building is suffering from severe structural defects and so it is considered that on balance, the proposed approach is justified.
- 10.32 The proposed approach to Block C would see the historic façade retained with a new contemporary steel-framed structure erected behind the it. This would involve a high degree of loss of this part of the building which in itself is considered to have a reasonable degree of significance attached to it, including the internal dining room which sits within Block C. Whilst façade retention should ordinarily be a matter of last resort, the upper floors of the wing have seen a higher degree of alteration and in most cases do not retain any historic details or features and have seen significant works undertaken in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and more recently under previous consents contributing to its dilution of interest. More recent steel beams and roof construction are clearly evident. Additionally, some of the suggested “historic” timbers are likely to be more recent 20th-century additions as the timbers appear to be machine sawn and of softwood.
- 10.33 There are also concerns in respect of floor levels. Due to the nature of its construction, the floor levels are varied and present concerns and complexities in terms of retention and reuse (having regard to the need to meet accessibility standards and comply with the Building Regulations). Retention would result in uneven floor plates, preventing level access. The structural and viability issues must again be considered. The submitted structural report clearly shows and details the work which would be required to make the existing structure safe, which as previously stated would require a high degree of intervention and would likely make the scheme economically/commercially unviable.

- 10.34 The preferred solution would usually be to secure the retention and repair of the entire structure of the building. However, in this case it has been clearly evidenced that there are significant associated structural defects in Block C, which need to be taken into consideration, alongside the need to make reasonable adjustment to provide level access throughout the building and also balancing the economic viability of the scheme. Officers have had sight of information which addresses and supports the viability concerns and demonstrates that in order to make the scheme viable the additional space is required, as is the extent of intervention.

#### Building Layout

- 10.35 Block A, the main range of the hotel, has four floors and a basement, Block B has three floors and a mezzanine level and a partial basement, Block C has three floors and basement. The ground floor layout connects the three blocks with two further areas, the courtyard, and the kitchen and public toilets. The existing building was previously in use as a hotel, and its total GIFA was 4,309sqm. As proposed, the combination of the retained historic element Block A and the new extension would result in a building with a total GIFA of 5,064sqm. The applicant would also lower the floorplate of the basement area by circa 1m to achieve requisite ceiling heights.

#### Form, Scale and Massing

- 10.36 Block A of the existing building (which fronts on to St George's Square) has six storeys, five of which are visible above ground from the southeast and reduces to four storeys towards the west as the ground slopes. Level 04, the top storey, is set back and utilises a mansard roof. This is retained in the proposal and is therefore considered appropriate in the setting given there would be no material change in scale or massing.
- 10.37 With regard to Blocks B and C, the applicant has carefully considered the scale of and massing of Block A to create a coherent design. The existing façade on John William Street (Block C) would remain as three storeys, however, the existing roof would be removed and an additional two storeys of accommodation are proposed. Each new level would be set back from the façade, stepping back in consideration of the visibility from ground level and in acknowledgement of the historic elements. Block B would be of four storeys. The new proposal for block B and C would be consistent at an upper level to manage the scale and relationship to Block A. How each upper level is set back is relatively consistent along the east and west elevations. The massing at the conjunction of Block B and C where the external fabric converges has been considered in its material and appearance. The atrium and covered canopy are a key node referencing the existing space between Block A to C. On the west elevation, the service core and lift would extend to accommodate the required functions. The new massing of Block B and C would link into the existing Block A roofscape across the rear elevation. The connection between the new Block B and Block A has been set back to differentiate and express the massing, a note back to the historic development of Block B. Overall, block B and C respect the unchanged block A with regard to scale and massing, in accordance with Local Plan Policy LP24.

### External Materials

- 10.38 The proposed external materials to be used in the new-build sections of the proposal are shown as being of a range of stone facings, feature/decorative panels, and metal cladding. These would be of a mix of browns and greys to distinguish between the retained historic materials and those of the new development, whilst being complementary. The colours would also differentiate between the levels of the new-build areas, as has been highlighted in Section 5.9 of the submitted Design and Access Statement.
- 10.39 Officers note that the final specifications and proposed colours of the external materials to be used have not been provided at this stage. Notwithstanding this, KC Conservation and Design note that following an iterative design process, the materials have been varied to further break up the elevation[s] and to aid visual subservience when viewed from street level. It is recommended that full details of the external materials to be used are conditioned to ensure that they are appropriate and do not harm the historic value of the listed heritage asset. Officers agree with this approach and shall secure the relevant conditions.

### On-Site Landscaping

- 10.40 The applicant is proposing the installation of an extensive green roof, measuring an area of c. 30sqm, to the north of the hotel. This area would result in an increase of c. 5sqm of additional on-site landscaping compared with that provided by the existing area of incidental landscaping to be subsumed into the proposed hotel extension. On such a physically constrained site with little to no access to ground level soft landscaping opportunities, Officers consider the installation of a green roof to be a welcomed and well-considered solution.
- 10.41 Although no substantive landscaping plans have been submitted at this stage, KC Landscape have reviewed this application and consider the proposed on-site landscape to be acceptable in principle. Conditions have been requested for a full hard and soft landscaping strategy, inclusive of native species planting strategy to attract pollinators, and a five-year maintenance and management plan. Officers agree with this approach and shall secure the relevant conditions if planning permission is granted.
- 10.42 Overall, the proposal, in relation to design policy and guidance only, is considered to be in accordance with Policy LP24 of the adopted Kirklees Local Plan and NPPF (Chapter 12), particularly Paragraph 130. It represents a high-quality development which respects the scale, massing and form of the surrounding area. The impact regarding the site's heritage constraints shall be assessed later within the report.

### **Landscape Character**

- 10.43 Policy LP32 requires that proposals should be designed to take into account and seek to enhance the landscape character of the area, with particular consideration of the setting of settlements and buildings within the landscape, as well as other environmental features in the vicinity.

- 10.44 The proposal is located in an urban town centre with a range of listed heritage assets in the vicinity. As a regeneration scheme intended to bring a disused hotel back into use with a more modern refurbishment and extension, and by using majoritively the same building footprint in a prominent central location, Officers consider that the proposal has been designed to preserve and enhance the character of the area. The retention of the John William Street façade is also considered to tie the redevelopment of the George Hotel into the street scene and allow for the continuation of the historic railway station and public realm area to integrate with the new-build sections of the proposal.
- 10.45 Given the above, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policy LP32 of the adopted Kirklees Local Plan and NPPF (Chapter 12) Paragraph 130 in relation to landscape character.

### **Sustainable Development**

- 10.46 NPPF (Chapter 14) Paragraph 154 states that new development should be planned for in ways that avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change and can help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as through its location, orientation and design. Paragraph 157 states that proposals should comply with any development plan policies on local requirements for decentralised energy supply (subject to feasibility and viability) and take account of landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption.
- 10.47 The applicant has submitted a Sustainability Statement in support of the proposal. This details that the proposed design would put The George Hotel on the pathway to a net zero carbon future by 2038 in accordance with Kirklees Council's vision.
- 10.48 To achieve this aim, the applicant is proposing to implement a range sustainable construction and operation techniques. These include:
- Minimising carbon dioxide emissions and energy consumption by installation and running mechanical and electrical systems at maximum operational efficiency;
  - Provision of air source heat pumps to reduce reliance on fossil fuels;
  - Improvements to the building's thermal properties;
  - Re-use of the existing building fabric and materials where possible to reduce the amount of waste generated by construction (including a site waste management plan);
  - Carbon sequestration through the re-use of materials;
  - Use of sustainably sourced materials;
  - Minimising water consumption through low flow/low output water and drainage systems;
  - Implementation of sustainable urban drainage systems;
- 10.49 As a result of these measures, the proposal is aiming to achieve a minimum BREEAM rating of 'Very Good', as highlighted in Section 5.11 of the submitted Design and Access Statement.

- 10.50 Officers consider this approach to be a good example of implementing sustainable development techniques into the refurbishment of a sensitive listed heritage asset. The retention and re-use of much of the existing building would, in particular, achieve a significant saving in relation to embodied energy and carbon. It is recommended that conditions be secured for compliance with the abovementioned measures as set out in the submitted Sustainability Statement. Given the above assessment, Officers consider the proposal to be in accordance with Policy LP24(d) and NPPF (Chapter 14) particularly Paragraphs 154 and 157.

## **Heritage**

- 10.51 Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that Local Planning Authorities 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 when considering whether to grant listed building consent. Furthermore, it requires that any listed building consent shall (except in so far as it otherwise provides) ensure for the benefit of the building and of all persons for the time being interested in it.
- 10.52 Under the provisions of Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, special attention is to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance and settings of listed buildings or any features of special architectural or historic interest, and the appearance and character of a conservation area.
- 10.53 NPPF Chapter 16 sets out the national planning policy requirements for developments affecting a listed heritage asset and/or conservation area:
- 10.54 Paragraph 199 states that:

*when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.*

- 10.55 Paragraph 200 states that:

*any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:*

- a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;*
- b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II\* listed buildings, grade I and II\* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.*

10.56 Paragraph 201 states that:

*where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:*

- a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and*
- b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and*
- c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and*
- d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.*

10.57 Paragraph 202 states that:

*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.*

10.58 Policy LP35 requires that:

*1. Development proposals affecting a designated heritage asset (or an archaeological site of national importance) should preserve or enhance the significance of the asset. In cases likely to result in substantial harm or loss, development will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the proposals would bring substantial public benefits that clearly outweigh the harm, or all of the following are met:*

- a. the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site;*
- b. no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation;*
- c. conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and*
- d. the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.*

*[...]*

*3. Proposals should retain those elements of the historic environment which contribute to the distinct identity of the Kirklees area and ensure they are appropriately conserved, to the extent warranted by their significance, also having regard to the wider benefits of development. Consideration should be given to the need to:*

- a. ensure that proposals maintain and reinforce local distinctiveness and conserve the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets;*
- b. ensure that proposals within Conservation Areas conserve those elements which contribute to their significance;*

- c. secure a sustainable future for heritage assets at risk and those associated with the local textile industry, historic farm buildings, places of worship and civic and institutional buildings constructed on the back of the wealth created by the textile industry as expressions of local civic pride and identity;*
- d. identify opportunities, including use of new technologies, to mitigate, and adapt to, the effects of climate change in ways that do not harm the significance of heritage assets and, where conflict is unavoidable, to balance the public benefit of climate change mitigation measures with the harm caused to the heritage assets' significance;*
- e. accommodate innovative design where this does not prejudice the significance of heritage assets;*
- f. preserve the setting of Castle Hill where appropriate and proposals which detrimentally impact on the setting of Castle Hill will not be permitted.*

#### Impacts on Listed Buildings

##### *The George Hotel (Grade II\* listed)*

- 10.59 KC Conservation and Design note that a detailed listing assessment was undertaken by Historic England in 2022 which further improved and enhanced the understanding of the significance of the building. Elements which were not considered to be of special architectural or historic interest were excluded from the listing. Notably, as a result of this review, the northwest wing and the west end of the ballroom were specifically excluded from the listing. The central ballroom, owing to the high level of alteration and loss of the sprung floor was noted as not being of special interest.
- 10.60 The building has been vacant for over a decade, and has been neglected. Conservation works to the external envelope of the building were granted consent in 2021. Internally, there is a reasonable degree of surviving fabric, however, in certain areas, there has been a significant degree of intervention and alteration which has resulted in some areas to the total loss of plasterwork, skirting boards, ceilings and cornice details and other historic fabric/features.
- 10.61 Of the surviving historic fabric, there is a high degree that dates from the 1930s, a key phase of development and change for the building. There are some sections of fabric which are extant from the first phase of development. One of these notable areas is on the first floor in Block A which was known as the Commercial Room, which is a highly ornate room with decorative plasterwork detail and pedimented doorcases. It appears that during the works at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there was a high degree of alteration to the internal fabric and sections of the earliest fabric were lost during this period. In this case, it is considered that the special interest of the building does not only derive from the architectural merit of the building but also from its evolution as a hotel, continually adapting to ensure its long-term survival in its original intended use, and this is clearly evidenced in the various phases of development of the building which have secured its continued viability and use over the years.
- 10.62 Regarding the proposed new build elements, there has been considerable engagement and discussions during the design evolution of the scheme. In relation to the initial submission, concerns were raised in respect of certain elements of the design and detailed discussions followed, including working design meetings with statutory consultees. This is evidenced in the appendix to the Heritage Statement, which sets out the key points of concern which were raised, and how these have now been addressed.

- 10.63 The proposed design has focused on following the footprint of the existing building. It also follows some of the historic precedents. For example, historically, prior to the construction of the central ballroom in the 1930s phase of development, The George had a central open courtyard. It is intended to reinstate/replicate this, with a covered glazed roof detail. Much of the design evolution is in response to the proposed functionality of the building in order to facilitate its continued use as a hotel and in meeting the necessary standards and requirements to achieve this. While this would require new additions/extension to the original building, it is necessary in order to continue in its original use and the new blocks can be viewed as a contemporary interpretation of past phases of extension/alteration.
- 10.64 As shown in the appendix to the Design and Access/Heritage Statement, a series of alterations and amendments have been made to accommodate and address key consultee concerns with the proposed design. The new build element along John William Street was initially shown on plans as being on the same plane as the historic façade. There were also concerns in regard to the materials proposed and lack of clear definition between old and new. The design has now been amended, stepping it forward so as to make it distinguishable with a clear visual break from this historic frontage. The corner on the junction between John William Street and the western elevation facing the railway station has been bookended, to again make a clear visual break and to more closely replicate the existing building arrangement. It also takes cues from the surrounding character of the conservation area, where there are several examples of such architectural style/feature and where corners are chamfered or similar, to soften an otherwise sharp corner detail.
- 10.65 The additional mansard/dormer structures to the roof line have been stepped back to try and reduce the impact of the massing and break up the elevation. The materials have been varied to further break up the elevation and to aid visual subservience when viewed from street level.
- 10.66 In relation to the structural aspects and the works involving proposed fire and acoustic upgrade, these would involve a degree of alteration and loss but for greater long-term benefit and to facilitate the viable re-use of the heritage asset. Officers are satisfied that this has been clearly and convincingly justified and in addition, upon Officer advice, the most significant area of surviving historic fabric and detailing including the decorative plaster ceiling within the Commercial Room would be retained and a workable solution identified to enable its retention, repair and preservation. In earlier plans, the applicant proposed the removal of this ceiling, however amended plans have now been received, showing its retention.
- 10.67 On the western elevation of new Block B, facing the railway station, the join between the historic Block A of the building and the new block responds positively with a slight stepping in of the new building and a curved edge leading into the main elevation, reflecting the extant curved bay window. It is clear from the design evolution of the Western elevation of new Block B that it is intended to fulfil a dual purpose. On the one hand, this is a visually prominent elevation particularly when viewed from the adjacent listed station forecourt and indeed on entering the town by rail. It is also historically a service wing to the building and the design evolution reflects this with some initial design concerns having been raised during earlier iterations. These were particularly in relation to the furthest end of this elevation where the lift shaft and stairwell are featured and

where the building meets Block C. Whilst some of these concerns have been addressed with the introduction of more detailing to visually break up this large elevation, it is considered that further changes may have been possible. From a heritage perspective, it is important to retain this dual-purpose façade and to maintain the quality and architectural integrity of the building throughout the scheme particularly as often the first sight of this historically significant building to visitors to the town will be the eastern elevation and so the materiality and detailing are considered to be paramount to its overall success and sensitive integration with The George itself. Whilst the current design is generally acceptable, this is on the premise of securing high quality materials and finishes which will help to visually break-up what could otherwise result in a utilitarian appearance and should instead create new architectural interest which complements and enhances the historic asset.

10.68 Officers are also mindful that – as set out in the submitted documentation and comments – there are less significant sections to the heritage asset. Block B and the associated ballroom owing to their lack of significance have been omitted from the list entry. The proposals do, however, retain the original historic wall which runs to the base of block B, better revealing its significance, and this is deemed a heritage benefit. Block C does retain some significance and holds the dining room which has extant plasterwork detailing. However, on the upper floors of Block C, there is a lesser degree of surviving fabric and there have been many changes in the later 20<sup>th</sup> century which interrupts/alters the legibility of the block. As evidenced in the supporting reports there are significant structural concerns with Block C which are not easily remedied. Officers are broadly supportive of the newly designed elements of the scheme. Considerable officer time and discussions have gone into developing and further evolving the proposals.

10.69 As set out above, the proposed scheme is highly complex, with many interrelated issues and considerations to be balanced. The George is a highly significant building architecturally, socially and historically. The proposals involve demolition and alteration works which must be clearly and convincingly justified and weighed against public benefit in order to meet policy requirements, including where appropriate securing its optimum viable use. Officers are satisfied that the optimum viable use for this building is the proposed continued hotel use, as originally intended and as such significant weight is attributed to this. In addition, as clearly outlined in the submission, there are heritage, environmental, social and economic benefits arising from the scheme which when considered together significantly outweigh the identified heritage harm. Therefore, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policy LP35 of the adopted Kirklees Local Plan and NPPF (Chapter 16), particularly Paragraphs 200 and 202. The proposal is also considered to have appropriate regard to Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

#### *Railings to Station Yard (Grade II listed)*

10.70 Reconfiguration of the Grade II listed railings to Station Yard to the immediate west of the site is proposed, to allow access to the rear of the hotel for servicing and access.

10.71 It is considered that this intervention amounts to less than substantial harm, and that this harm is outweighed by the public benefits and practical considerations listed earlier in this report.

### Impact on Conservation Area and Setting of Huddersfield Railway Station

- 10.72 The site is within the Huddersfield Town Centre Conservation Area and is directly adjacent to the Grade I listed Huddersfield Railway Station.
- 10.73 Given the proposed development's respect for its site, existing footprint, and elevations of the retained elements, together with its appropriate height, massing, detailing and materials (subject to conditions), it is similarly considered to be appropriately respectful of its context, of the character and appearance of the Huddersfield Town Centre Conservation Area, and the settings of adjacent listed buildings.
- 10.74 In relation to the conservation area and listed building settings, the proposed development is again considered to be compliant with Policy LP35 of the adopted Kirklees Local Plan and Chapter 16 of the NPPF, and has appropriate regard to Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

### Archaeology

- 10.75 The submitted Heritage Statement identifies that the site is located in the vicinity of previously undertaken archaeological assessments at the railway station. Notwithstanding this, the Heritage Statement concludes that there is a low likelihood of finding buried archaeological evidence of significant value on the site.
- 10.76 West Yorkshire Archaeology Advisory Service have reviewed the submitted information and do not consider that any additional archaeological works are required.

### **Amenity**

- 10.77 Policy LP52 of the Kirklees Local Plan requires that proposals which have the potential to increase noise, vibration, light, dust, odour, shadow flicker, chemical or other forms of pollution must be accompanied by evidence to show that the impacts have been evaluated and measures have been incorporated to prevent or reduce the pollution, so as to ensure it does not reduce the quality of life and well-being of people to an unacceptable level or have unacceptable impacts on the environment.

### Noise

- 10.78 The applicant has submitted a Noise Impact Assessment in support of this application. This concludes that the hotel would not have significant adverse effects in noise generation terms, including the running of events within the hotel, or be significantly affected by existing noise levels in the area. Mitigation measures have been proposed to control noise and vibration impacts during the demolition and construction phase of development, so too for acoustically enhanced glazing along the eastern and southern façades to achieve appropriate internal ambient noise levels.

- 10.79 KC Environmental Health have reviewed the submitted information and note that the submitted report is of a reasonable standard, although it does make some unqualified assumptions which would require further information to be submitted at condition stage. Notably, KC Environmental Health note that the amenity of hotel rooms from noise impacts does not fall under their remit. Nonetheless, a condition is recommended to ensure that all noise from mechanical services and fixed plant equipment is effectively controlled to not exceed permitted background noise levels as defined in British Standards BS 4142:2014+A1:2019.
- 10.80 Officers consider that this approach is appropriate to safeguard the amenities of future guests and staff at the proposed hotel. As such, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policy LP52 of the adopted Kirklees Local Plan in terms of noise.

#### External Lighting

- 10.81 An indicative external lighting strategy has been submitted in support of this application. This shows the use of linear uplighting, lighting to highlight features of the historic aspects of the building, signage and windows, and the use of bollard lighting around the western site boundary.
- 10.82 The West Yorkshire Police Designing Out Crime Officer noted that the use of low-level bollard lighting is not conducive to CCTV facial recognition, and requested further information regarding an external lighting strategy to be provided via conditions. Officers note that the external lighting strategy is only indicative at this stage, and the relevant conditions are recommended to secure full details of a sensitive, safe, and complementary external lighting strategy. As such, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policy LP52 of the adopted Kirklees Local Plan with regards to external lighting.

#### Refuse and Waste

- 10.83 Policy LP24(d)(vi) requires that proposals incorporate adequate facilities to allow occupiers to separate and store waste for recycling and recovery that are well designed and visually unobtrusive and allows for the convenient collection of waste.
- 10.84 The proposal would locate its main secure and ventilated bin store to the north of the hotel, adjacent to John William Street to allow for collection from the kerbside. Provision would be made for three 1100-litre Eurobins, four 120-litre wheelie bins for recycling, and an empty bottle and keg store. KC Environmental Health have requested a condition to limit the waste collection times to avoid early mornings to protect the residential amenities of neighbouring occupiers on the opposite side of John William Street. Officers agree with this approach and have recommended the relevant conditions.
- 10.85 KC Waste Strategy have reviewed the submitted information and requested clarifications from the applicant regarding the provision of suitable refuse and waste storage and collection areas. Following receipt of these clarifications, KC Waste Strategy raised no objections to the proposal. As such, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policy LP24(d)(vi) of the adopted Kirklees Local Plan.

## Air Quality

- 10.86 Policy LP51 of the Kirklees Local Plan requires that proposals should demonstrate that they are not likely to result, directly or indirectly, in an increase in air pollution which would have an unacceptable impact on the natural and built environment or to people. Furthermore, proposals that have the potential to increase local air pollution either individually or cumulatively must be accompanied by evidence to show that the impact of the development has been assessed in accordance with the relevant guidance. Development which has the potential to cause levels of local air pollution to increase must incorporate sustainable mitigation measures that reduce the level of this impact. If sustainable measures cannot be introduced the development will not be permitted.
- 10.87 The site lies in Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) 9. The applicant has submitted an Air Quality Assessment in support of this application. This concludes that the proposal would not result in significant effects on air quality, nor would the hotel be at risk from exposure to existing airborne pollutants in the area. Mitigation measures are proposed during the demolition and construction phases of development, particularly in the form of dust and emissions control through a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).
- 10.88 KC Environmental Health have reviewed the submitted information and accept the methodology and conclusions of the Air Quality Assessment. A condition is recommended to ensure a CEMP to control fugitive dust emissions during the demolition and construction phases of development.
- 10.89 Officers note and agree with the recommended approach. As such, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policy LP51 of the adopted Kirklees Local Plan.

## Future Users

- 10.90 Policy LP24(b) requires that proposals provide a high standard of amenity for future and neighbouring occupiers; including maintaining appropriate distances between buildings and the creation of development-free buffer zones between housing and employment uses incorporating means of screening where necessary.
- 10.91 The proposal would provide a number of services and amenities for future guests, visitors, and staff as part of the hotel offer. These would include staff and back of house facilities across all floors, a public bar and restaurant, a gym, banqueting and conference facilities, access lifts (including a central glazed lift in the open atrium area), and 91 guest bedrooms. The proposed bedrooms would be c. 20sqm in size and would be equipped with ensuite bathrooms.
- 10.92 Officers note that there is no direct guidance or legislation governing the minimum sizes of hotel rooms and other facilities. However, Officers note the intention of the application to provide a comfortable place to stay which would encourage repeat custom. It is considered that to do so, a certain level of amenity would be expected by guests. In light of this, and the proposed operator's track record of successful hotel operations across the country, the proposal is considered to provide good levels of amenity for future guests, visitors, and staff in accordance with Policy LP24(b) of the adopted Kirklees Local Plan.

## **Flood Risk and Drainage**

### **Flooding Risk**

- 10.93 Policy LP27 requires that proposals must be supported by an appropriate site-specific Flood Risk Assessment in line with national planning policy. The national policy requirements are set out in NPPF (Chapter 14). This details the sequential approach to development and flood risk to steer new development to areas with the lowest risk of flooding from any source.
- 10.94 The applicant has submitted Flood Risk Statement in support of this application. This details that the site lies in Flood Zone 1, such that it is considered to be at low risk from fluvial/river flooding. Government flood mapping also shows the site to be at very low risk from surface water flooding. Notwithstanding this, there are areas considered to be at low risk of surface water flooding along Railway Street and John William Street adjacent to the site's red line boundary.
- 10.95 The Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) shows the site as being at medium risk (50% – 70%) of groundwater flooding. Officers noted the visible presence of high water tables in the basement areas of the existing building during a site visit. It is also noted that the basement levels are proposed to be lowered by c. 1m as part of the overall package of works, which could exacerbate the risk of groundwater flooding. The submitted FRS recommends a number of mitigation measures to manage the risk from groundwater flooding. These include:
- Appropriate drainage measures, such as channel interceptor drains, to be considered at the main building entrance and the access steps to the basement.
  - Raise levels to provide positive drainage (contour) away from the main entrance and access steps.
  - Consideration of appropriate waterproofing measures for below ground development.
- 10.96 KC Lead Local Flood Authority have reviewed the submitted information, including consideration of the submitted Drainage Strategy Note as detailed in the following section. They recommend that full details of the proposed surface water drainage strategy are dealt with by pre-commencement conditions, including details of land drainage. Officers also consider that conditions for the details of specific flood risk mitigation measures should be secured by conditions, in line with those recommended by the submitted FRS and with particular reference to groundwater flooding mitigation.
- 10.97 Given the above considerations, Officers consider that the proposal is in accordance with Policy LP27 of the adopted Kirklees Local Plan and NPPF (Chapter 14) in relation to flood risk.

### **Surface and Foul Water Drainage**

- 10.98 Policy LP28 contains a presumption for the use of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS). In addition to this presumption, the policy also states that development will only be permitted if it can be demonstrated that the water supply and waste water infrastructure required is available or can be co-ordinated to meet the demand generated by the new development.

- 10.99 NPPF (Chapter 14) Paragraph 169 requires major developments to incorporate sustainable drainage systems unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate.
- 10.100 The applicant has submitted a Drainage Strategy Note in support of this application. This outlines the existing and proposed surface and foul water drainage strategies, along with an analysis of the sustainable drainage hierarchy in relation to the proposals.
- 10.101 The proposed surface water drainage strategy would be partly based on the existing arrangements with connection to the existing drainage/sewerage system. Some surface water attenuation is proposed (c. 18 cubic metres) at basement level with a proposed restricted discharge rate of 8.7 litres per second (reduced from the current rate of 12.4 l/s (a c. 30% betterment)). The submitted DSN also notes that other options, such as pumping and blue roofs are also being investigated and that the precise surface water network routes, levels and arrangement and connections would need to be confirmed at Developed Design stage.
- 10.102 The proposed foul water drainage strategy would similarly be based on the existing sewerage arrangements. The submitted DSN notes that some areas of the proposal may required wastewater pumping to discharge effluent as site sewerage levels may restrict gravity connections to the sewerage network (i.e., basement levels). Any pumping systems would be fully monitored and alarmed in case of fault or failure. Officers note that the DSN states that the Public Health Engineering design details for the internal foul water layouts are subject to confirmation, and shall be clarified during the next design stage.
- 10.103 KC Lead Local Flood Authority and Yorkshire Water have reviewed the submitted information and consider that consideration of the full details of the proposed surface and foul water drainage strategies can be satisfactorily dealt with by pre-commencement conditions. Specific technical parameters and recommended use of particular approaches (or not – such as surface water pumping), further consideration of surface water drainage via infiltration (to include infiltration testing), and the requirements for a maintenance and management plan are laid out by consultees and should form part of the applicant's surface and foul water drainage strategies. Neither KC LLFA nor Yorkshire Water have raised objections to the proposal in drainage terms.
- 10.104 Officers consider that given the existing surface and foul water drainage arrangements, the information submitted at this stage, and the consultee recommendations conditions for the full details of proposed surface and foul water drainage strategies, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policy LP28 of the adopted Kirklees Local Plan and NPPF (Chapter 14).

## **Highways Safety**

### Location Sustainability

- 10.105 Policy LP20 requires that proposals are located in accordance with the Council's spatial strategy to ensure the need to travel is reduced and that essential travel needs can be met by forms of sustainable transport other than the private car. Furthermore, proposals should be designed to encourage sustainable modes of travel and demonstrate how links have been utilised to encourage connectivity.

- 10.106 The site lies directly adjacent to Huddersfield Railway Station which currently offers direct connections to every major city in the North, and hosts a Trans-Pennine Route Upgrade railway line which will, once completed, offer a more extensive railway service to the local and regional catchment areas. The site is also located within a short walking distance from the closest taxi rank, Huddersfield Bus Station, National Cycle Route 69, and a number of public car parks in and around the town centre. The proposal's town centre location also provides easy access to local goods, services, and other amenities via a range of active and sustainable travel options.
- 10.107 The applicant has submitted an intermediate Travel Plan in support of this application. This details specific measures which would be incorporated into the hotel's sustainable travel offer for staff and guests, and the ongoing management of a travel plan scheme. The measures identified include:
- Provision of a site-specific travel board
  - Staff meetings with Travel Plan Co-ordinator
  - Periodic travel newsletters
  - Promotion of walking apps
  - Advice on personal safety
  - Bicycle User Group
  - Provision of cycle repair kit and cyclist facilities
  - Discounted bus and travel and taster tickets
  - Provision of up-to-date timetable information
  - Cycle to Work scheme
  - Joining the West Yorkshire Travel Plan Network to access other benefits
  - Providing hotel guests with travel information at check-in
- 10.108 KC Highways have reviewed the submitted Travel Plan and note the limitations to reducing private vehicle reliance from a predominantly car free development, and that it would be most effective for staff rather than guests. Nevertheless, the submitted TP is keen to promote active and sustainable travel opportunities to and from the site. KC Highways recommend that the intermediate TP is worked up into a full Travel Plan to be secured by conditions. A financial contribution of £10,000 would also be required under for Travel Plan assessment and monitoring for five years. KC Highways also advise that the applicant provides discounted travel options, such as M-Cards, in liaison with the West Yorkshire Combined Authority Travel Plan Network.
- 10.109 Officers consider this approach to be acceptable to promote and deliver active and sustainable travel opportunities for future staff and guests and shall secure the relevant conditions and planning obligations. As such, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policy LP20 of the adopted Kirklees Local Plan.

#### Impacts on Highways Safety

- 10.110 Policy LP21 requires proposals to demonstrate sustainable modes of transport and be accessed effectively and safely by all users. New development will normally be permitted where safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people and where the residual cumulative

impacts of development are not severe. Furthermore, proposals are required to demonstrate adequate information and mitigation measures to avoid a detrimental impact on highway safety and the local highway network.

- 10.111 NPPF (Chapter 9) Paragraph 111 states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe. Paragraph 112 further details priority use of new roads, addressing the needs of people with disabilities, creating safe and secure places, allowing for efficient delivery of good and emergency service access, and enabling the use of electric vehicles.
- 10.112 The applicant has submitted a Transport Statement in support of this application. This sets out that the proposal would be a predominantly car-free development. For those journeys which would likely require private vehicle use, the TS concludes that c. 18 two-way car trips in the morning and evening peak times combined would be expected.
- 10.113 KC Highways Development Management have reviewed the submitted TS and note that it calculates likely trip on a *person* basis rather than on a *vehicle* basis, which can miss out service vehicle trips from the calculations. Notwithstanding this, KC Highways consider that a pro rata c. 33% increase in vehicle trips resulting from the proposed increase from the historic 60 rooms to 91 rooms (equivalent of c. 7 AM peak trips and c. 5 PM peak trips), is unlikely to have a *severe* impact on highways safety.
- 10.114 KC Highways Structures have requested a condition to secure full details of any new or affected highway retaining walls as part of the proposed demolition works and refurbished of the proposal. Officers agree with this approach and shall secure the necessary conditions if planning permission is granted.

#### *Servicing Arrangements*

- 10.115 As previously noted, refuse and waste collection would take place from the refuse collection area on John William Street. Other hotel servicing facilities would be located within the existing car park area to the immediate west of the site and be accessed via Railway Street. This would include provision of a loading bay and rearrangements of the existing retaining wall and Grade II listed railings to Station Yard, the heritage impacts of which are detailed earlier in this report. KC Highways Development Management note the provision of the proposed servicing area and raise no objections to its location of use.
- 10.116 To reduce any detrimental highways safety impacts resulting from the construction phase of development, a further condition has been proposed for a Construction Access Management Plan. Officers agree with this approach and shall secure the relevant condition to provide detailed information relating to construction traffic access to the site with consideration of potential off-site highways safety impacts.
- 10.117 Overall, Officers consider that as the proposal is sustainably located and would be predominantly car free, the proposal is in accordance with Policy LP21 of the adopted Kirklees Local Plan, Highway Design Guide SPD, and Chapter 9 of the NPPF.

### Car Parking

- 10.118 Policy LP22 requires that proposals provide full details of the design and levels of proposed parking provision following the principles set out in the policy wording. In doing so, they should demonstrate how the design and amount of parking proposed is the most efficient use of land within the development as part of encouraging sustainable travel.
- 10.119 The Highway Design Guide SPD does not set local parking standards but notes that it should be used as an initial point of reference in designing new schemes. In relation to non-residential proposals, the SPD recommends early engagement with the Local Highway Authority to determine the required quantum of provision of car parking spaces should be undertaken.

### *Car Parking*

- 10.120 As previously noted, the proposal would be a predominantly car-free development. As such, no associated car parking has been proposed. Notwithstanding this, Officers note the proposal's town centre location and the availability of public car parking opportunities in the vicinity of the site.
- 10.121 KC Highways Development Management note the historic function of the proposal as a hotel with no associated car parking, as well as the prominence of other nearby town centre uses which also do not have direct access to car parking facilities, or very limited access. It is noted that the proposed lack of proposed car parking is not an exceptional occurrence and can be managed via access to public car parks within a short walking distance from the site, throughout the town centre.

### *Cycle Parking*

- 10.123 The submitted TS notes the proximity of the site to an existing 54-space secure cycle hub at Huddersfield Railway Station. Officers note that some of this cycle storage provision is located outside of the railway station (uncovered Sheffield hoops). However, the majority of the existing provision is located behind the ticket barriers for the station platforms which would render it unusable for the likely majority of cyclists associated with the proposal.
- 10.124 It is noted that provision of some cyclist facilities for staff have been included within the submitted Travel Plan, however this does not extend to on-site cycle storage. Officers note the clear emphasis on cycling within the Travel Plan as a preferred means of sustainable travel to and from the hotel, mostly for staff. Therefore, to realistically achieve this, some consideration must be given to the provision of cycle storage. KC Highways note that this could be done through making space available in the proposed service and staff areas of the hotel and include the possibility of offering a valet cycle parking service for guests if required. The applicant notes that indoor cycle storage would not be feasible as all available internal space is already accounted for. There is also considered to be little to no scope for an outside cycle storage facility within the red line boundary area of the proposal.

- 10.125 No cycle storage provision has been submitted as part of this proposal. Following discussions with the applicant about potential on-site and off-site provision, KC Highways note the lack of any cycle storage provision and further note their disappointment that cycle storage has not been accommodated within the proposal, in line with the Council's sustainability objectives and promotion of active travel opportunities. Notwithstanding this, KC Highways Development Management do not raise an objection in this regard as the site is considered to be in a sustainable town centre location that is well served by public transport.
- 10.126 As such, the proposal is considered to be in broad accordance with Policy LP22 of the adopted Kirklees Local Plan and Highway Design Guide SPD in terms of car and cycle parking provision, although KC Highways Development Management's comments are duly noted.

## **Ecology and Biodiversity**

### Biodiversity Net Gain

- 10.127 Policy LP30 requires that proposals do not result in unmitigated or uncompensated significant loss of or harm to biodiversity and should provide biodiversity net gains through good design.
- 10.128 The Council's adopted Biodiversity Net Gain Technical Advice Note Paragraph 3.1.1 states that a minimum of 10% net gain in biodiversity is required.
- 10.129 NPPF (Chapter 15) Paragraph 174(d) further requires that proposals should minimise impacts on and provide net gains for biodiversity. In addition, Paragraph 180(a) also states that if a proposal would result in unmitigated or uncompensated significant harm to biodiversity, planning permission should be refused.
- 10.130 The applicant has submitted an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) report in support of this application. This details that at present, the site is predominantly covered in hardstanding, with only a small area of non-native shrub at the north of the site. The site is therefore considered to be of minimal ecological value.
- 10.131 The proposal would introduce a new area of green roof (c. 30sqm) onto the site. Given the constraints of the site/existing building in terms of its lack of ability to expand further than its current footprint, this is considered to represent an innovative solution to the provision of on-site biodiversity net gain. The submitted report identifies a potential delivery of 15.80% Biodiversity Net Gain on this site, which is considered to be a material benefit of the proposal which provides in excess of the 10% BNG required by adopted planning guidance.
- 10.132 KC Ecology have reviewed the submitted information and note the potential for BNG on this site. They recommend a condition for an Ecological Design Strategy to ensure that the proposed BNG uplift is achieved post-development. Officers agree with this approach and shall secure the necessary condition if planning permission is granted.

### Protected Species

- 10.133 Policy LP30 requires that proposals must protect Habitats and Species of Principal Importance unless the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the importance of the biodiversity interest, in which case long term compensatory measures will need to be secured.
- 10.134 The site lies in a Swift (*Apus apus*) (Birds of Conservation Concern Red List) Nesting Records area. The submitted EclA details that no Swift were recorded during an on-site assessment, although other Schedule 1 species have previously been identified within 2km of the site (although not within the site itself). The EclA concludes that *the site is considered to be of up to Site level importance for foraging and breeding use by a common assemblage of birds, typical of the urban environment*.
- 10.135 The EclA makes a series of recommendations to mitigate and enhance provision for nesting and breeding birds at the site. These include the provision of Swift, Starling, and other wall-mounted bird bricks and boxes to be installed at roof level, and for works to take place outside of bird nesting season (March – August).
- 10.136 KC Ecology have reviewed the submitted information and raise no objections, subject to conditions to secure the mitigation measures set out in the submitted EclA. As such, Officers consider the proposal to be in accordance with Policy LP30 of the adopted Kirklees Local Plan, Kirklees Council Biodiversity Net Gain Technical Advice, and NPPF (Chapter 15).

### Trees

- 10.137 Policy LP33 states that planning permission will not be granted for developments which directly or indirectly threaten trees or woodland of significant amenity. Furthermore, proposals should normally retain any valuable or important trees where they make a contribution to public amenity, the distinctiveness of a specific location or contribute to the environment.
- 10.138 There are a number of trees in the immediate vicinity of the site, which are predominantly located in the existing railway station car park to the west. Officers note that these trees are located outside of the site's red line boundary. KC Trees highlight the amenity value of the nearby public realm trees, but note that the proposal would not directly impact them. No objections to the proposal have been raised in arboricultural terms. As such, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policy LP33 of the adopted Kirklees Local Plan.

### **Other Material Considerations**

#### Contaminated Land and Coal Mining

- 10.139 Policy LP53 requires that development on land that is unstable, currently contaminated or suspected of being contaminated due to its previous history or geology will require the submission of an appropriate contamination assessment and/or land instability risk assessment. Furthermore, any development which cannot incorporate suitable and sustainable mitigation measures (if required) which protect the well-being of residents or protect the environment will not be permitted.

- 10.140 NPPF (Chapter 15) Paragraph 183 requires that proposals ensure that the site is suitable for its intended purpose taking into account the ground conditions and any risks arising from land instability and contamination, and that any contaminated land is remediated with works overseen by a competent person.
- 10.141 The site lies in a Coal Referral Area, which is an area considered to be at high risk resulting from its coal mining history and probability underlying unrecorded shallow coal mining works and associated features and hazards.
- 10.142 The applicant has submitted a Phase 1 Contaminated Land report in support of this application. This provides a preliminary Coal Mining Assessment which states that the site is at potential risk from past underground coal mining. The Coal Authority note that the submitted report is for information purposes only and does not provide the requisite assessment of the potential risks identified on the proposal. Notwithstanding this, the Coal Authority recognises that the applicant is willing to undertake a Phase 2 Ground Investigate report, which should include deep borehole analysis of the site which would in turn inform the extent of any necessary remedial/mitigation measures to ensure the safety of the proposal in relation to coal mining. Officers note the conditions proposed by the Coal Authority and secure them.
- 10.143 The Coal Authority and KC Environmental Health also note the moderate potential for the presence of ground/mine gas resulting from the area's coal mining heritage. Other potential sources of ground contamination at the site have also been identified, such as asbestos, heavy metals and certain hydrocarbons from other nearby uses, including the adjacent Huddersfield Railway Station.
- 10.144 As such, the submitted Phase I report recommends further Phase II intrusive ground investigations to ascertain the risks of contaminated land and ground/mine gas at the site. KC Environmental Health consider this to be an appropriate course of action and have recommended conditions to secure the necessary works. Officers agree with this approach and shall secure the relevant conditions if planning permission is granted.
- 10.145 Given the above, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policy LP53 of the adopted Kirklees Local Plan and NPPF (Chapter 15), particularly Paragraph 183.

#### External Signage

- 10.146 Policy LP25 requires that proposals for the alteration of existing shop fronts or installation of new shop fronts and display of advertisements on a Listed Building or within a Conservation Area should preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the building, the area in which it is located and any features of architectural or historical interest. Existing traditional shop fronts shall be retained and restored unless exceptional circumstances apply. Proposals for new shop fronts and advertisements must be of a high standard of design and be appropriate in style, scale and materials to the building and its setting.

- 10.147 Officers note that the proposed signage within this application is indicative only at this stage. Section 5.13 of the submitted Design and Access Statement notes that a separate advertisements consent application would be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for the external hotel signage.

#### Crime Prevention

- 10.148 A number of safety and security measures would be introduced to the proposed hotel. These would include, but are not limited to, ground floor windows to be made from laminated glass, provision of CCTV cameras, access controls (RFID/electronic locks) on certain entrances and doors, use of non-combustible cladding, and the provision of a reception desk panic button.
- 10.149 The West Yorkshire Police Designing Out Crime Officer has reviewed the application and has raised no objections to the proposal. Recommendations have been put forward for the use of internal laminate window film to be used to strengthen windows in publicly accessible places, although it is acknowledged that use of this material would only be appropriate if it does not harm the significance of the listed building. The applicant is also advised that the confidential advice given by the Counter Terrorism Security Advisors remains current.
- 10.150 Given the above crime and safety considerations, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policy LP24(e), NPPF (Chapters 8 and 12) particularly Paragraph 130(f), and Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

#### Employment Generation

- 10.151 Policy LP9 states that wherever possible, proposals for new development will be strongly encouraged to contribute to the creation of local employment opportunities within the district with the aim of increasing wage levels and to support growth in the overall proportion of the districts' residents in education or training.
- 10.152 Section 5.30 of the submitted Planning Statement estimates that the proposed C1 hotel use could create between 20 and 30 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs once operational which would likely cover a range of managerial, operational, and servicing roles (although no breakdown has been provided). The proposal could also create c. 250 jobs during the demolition and construction phases of development. Other incidental employment opportunities could also be created through third-party providers, such as off-site food preparation for conferences and parties, for example.
- 10.153 Officers note that the existing building has not been in use as a hotel since 2013. It is therefore considered that the proposed employment opportunities would be considered as new jobs. Officers also note that whilst a large quantum of construction-related jobs would be welcomed, these are likely to be temporary in nature. Notwithstanding this, the provision of new short and longer-term jobs resulting from the proposal is considered to be a material benefit to the application which would weigh positively in the planning balance of this application.

10.154 Given the above, Officers consider that the proposal is in accordance with Policy LP9 of the adopted Kirklees Local Plan.

#### Pre-Commencement Conditions

10.155 The officer recommendation includes pre-commencement planning conditions. Therefore, in accordance with Section 100ZA of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and The Town and Country Planning (Pre-commencement Conditions) Regulations 2018, the Local Planning Authority will serve notice on the agreement of these conditions with the applicant prior to the decision being issued, if Members resolve to approve the application.

### **11.0 PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION**

11.1 The NPPF has introduced a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The policies set out in the NPPF taken as a whole constitute the Government's view of what sustainable development means in practice.

11.2 In assessing this application, Officers consider that there would be numerous public benefits resulting from the proposal which carry their own weight. These are considered to be:

- Bringing a disused Grade II\* listed building back into beneficial use
- Preserving much of the historic fabric of The George Hotel
- Investment into Huddersfield town centre
- Opening up further Huddersfield Blueprint regeneration opportunities
- Short-term economic benefits during construction
- Long-term economic benefits from an increased tourism accommodation offer and events facilities
- Creation of 20-30 Full Time Equivalent jobs
- Provision of above 10% Biodiversity Net Gain
- The use being the optimum viable use for the listed building.

11.3 The application has been assessed against relevant policies in the Development Plan and other material considerations. It is considered that the development would constitute sustainable development. Therefore, planning application 2023/90024 is recommended for approval, subject to the imposition of the conditions as set out below and an agreement to secure the Sustainable Transport requirements for Travel Plan assessment and monitoring for five years.

## 12.0 CONDITIONS

1. Timescale – three years
2. Development in accordance with approved plans
3. Pre commencement condition for details for the proposed canopy to Block A – scaled drawings 1:20.
4. Pre-commencement condition for details of dropped kerb to be provided on John William Street adjacent to the hotel site into a full loading bay along with the footway being widened with a pedestrian crossing.
5. Pre-commencement condition for a waste management plan.
6. Prior to construction commencing, a schedule of the means of access to the site for construction traffic shall be submitted.
7. Pre-commencement condition for further / specific details of green roof (including substrate depth, watering details and confirmation that a sedum mat is not proposed).
8. Pre-commencement condition for the management of newly establishing trees.
9. Pre-commencement condition method statement regarding the protection of the existing trees and planting bed during the works.
10. Submission of a Travel Plan.
11. Pre-commencement condition for details of any works to retaining walls abutting the highway.
12. Pre-commencement condition for drainage scheme.
13. Pre-commencement condition for an Ecological Design Strategy (EDS) to ensure that a 15.80% biodiversity net gain is achieved.
14. Pre-commencement conditions for contaminated land investigation and remediation.
15. Pre-commencement conditions for intrusive site investigation with regard to the historic coal mining legacy.
16. Submission of a signed statement or declaration prepared by a suitably competent person confirming that the site is, or has been made, safe and stable for the approved development with regard to the coal mining legacy.
17. Pre-commencement condition for a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).
18. No site clearance works shall take place between 1st March and 31st August inclusive due to bird nesting.
19. No operational use of the doors on John William Street outside the hours of 0700hrs and 2300hrs Monday to Saturday and 0900hrs to 2300hrs Sunday.
20. The combined noise from any fixed mechanical services and external plant and equipment shall not exceed the background sound level at any time.

### Background Papers:

Application and history files for full planning application (2023/90024).

[Planning application details | Kirklees Council](#)

Application and history files for related listed building consent application (2023/90112).

[Planning application details | Kirklees Council](#)

### Certificate of Ownership:

Certificate B signed with notice served on Network Rail.