Application No. 2023/90112. Listed Building Consent for partial demolition of Listed Building to facilitate refurbishment and extension of the George Hotel to form 90+ room hotel.

Comments made on behalf of Huddersfield Civic Society.

The Civic Society supports the refurbishment and extension of this Grade 2* listed building that constitutes a key feature in the outstanding historic and architectural importance of St. George's Square. However, there appears to be poor justification for the demolition of some of the later adaptations within the original !850 building. Whilst the society would not necessarily object to their demolition, it is felt that they are integral to the building's story and there must be a clear demonstration why these structures cannot be adapted. Similar issues have occurred in relation to other listed buildings (eg the Grade 2* former Infirmary off New North Road) when adjoining buildings or some internal features are considered to be historically integral to the whole.

The society recognises and supports the preservation of the existing building and appreciates the detail and consideration that has been taken over this. However, there are concerns regarding the proposed extensions to the building, especially in relation to Block B (facing the railway station) and Block C (fronting onto John William Street).

The Square and its buildings were constructed specifically to impress those who alighted from trains to visit the town and carry out their business. The critical importance of the proposed extensions is that they retain the visual impact of the square and enhance the collective importance of individual components. The society is unsure whether the proposed extensions reflect this special and unique quality.

The society supports the contemporary nature of the extensions and the functional requirements in creating a 90+ bed hotel. Concerns, therefore, are focussed on the rhythm, articulation and delineation of the elevations in relation to the retained part of the building and the relationship of these extensions to the architectural 'language' of the predominantly neo-classical Italianate architecture of the square as a whole.

The Heritage Statement in assessing the impact of the proposed design states as a key principle the 'introduction of new elements which make reference to the historical context of the site' and the form and massing of the extension appropriate to its location.

In this context there appears to be a relatively limited relationship between the key elevations of Block B and C with the special architectural significance of both the original building and the square. The society would suggest that, as illustrated in the drawings and visuals, the extensions would not contribute significantly to this special building and its setting.

In an attempt to articulate these concerns the society would request further consideration of the following:

Block B: This will be highly visible from the Grade 1 listed station. In our opinion it requires further design resolution, particularly the left side of this extension which loses the balance and references to the historic/architectural context of its surrounds. Every area of the building has been justified apart from this end corner. Page 25 (Visual 3) of the Design and Access Statement shows the view from coming out of the train station – where block A meets Block B. This is acceptable, but the transition to the corner is not fully considered, lacks the rhythm and permanence of its Italianate neighbours and requires re-modelling.

Block C: The John William Street elevation to this extended wing lacks the strength and formality of the buildings it faces. It is felt that some consideration should be given to reinforcing this relationship. Greater emphasis should be given to the architectural and historic context of adjacent buildings perhaps by the application of subtle detailing as indicated below.

Connection to the relative formality of the existing wing that it adjoins could perhaps be achieved by replicating the size of openings of the bay to include those within the lightwell on the chamfered corner and continuation of horizontal elements, particular in the form of a modern cornice above the second floor level and possibly string courses between floors. These would help strengthen massing and help acknowledge associations with the neo - classical features of adjacent mid-C19 buildings plus help reduce the visual impact of the upper floors with their metal cladded frontages.