2024.00373.000

George Hotel

Refurbishment (Planning & LBC)

Response – Historic England_v3

10.07.25

Shaping places that have
a positive impact

July 2025

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Revision	Date	By
01	04.07.25	AHR Building Consultancy (Draft)
02	10.07.25	AHR (TO) for planning
03	10.07.25	AHR (Proposed View 3 amended to show 4th floor junction glazing

Introduction

APPLICATION REFERENCE AND DOCUMENTS:

This mini-report seeks to record the matters pertaining to comments received from the following consultees:

Statutory Consultees:
- Historic England

AIM OF THIS REPORT:

The aim of this report is to provide the Lead Planning Officer and relevant parties with a singular point of reference in respect of the submitted material, the Statutory Consultee's and neighbourhood representative queries/ comments and a record of formal response by the applicant and/ or their appointed sub-consultants (Specialist).

In this case the response is Authored by the appointed Conservation Architect Consultant Richard Storah and Timothy Ordway - Associate (AHR Architects and Building Consultants).

This response is prepared in a paragraph by paragraph analysis and summary approach to ensure each item and paragraph of the Statutory Consultees letter below is fairly addressed:

- 2025-91147_+Consultee+Responses_1093249 - Historic England.pdf

Dialogue (Significance)

Ref: 2025-91147_+Consultee+Responses_1093249 - Historic England.pdf
Date: 20.06.25
From: Historic England - ref: L01592148
Officer: Alexander Harrison - Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas

The consultee has formally posted comments upon the portal and has made the following **Comments:**

HE - Thank you for your letters of 7 May 2025 regarding the above applications for listed building consent and planning permission. On the basis of the information available to date, we offer the following advice to assist your authority in determining the applications.

AHR - We are unable to comment as do not have detail of these internal correspondence or what information has been shared.

Historic England Advice
Significance
The George Hotel was constructed from 1849-50 in the Italianate style. It is the former railway hotel associated with Huddersfield Railway Station which is one of the finest stations in the country. The George Hotel, the station, and the Britannia Buildings surrounding St George's Square were constructed during a period of new building in Huddersfield under Ramsden Estate's 'New Towns Development' which was an example of town planning without precedent in terms of scale and ambition at this time. These three buildings whilst individually being incredibly architecturally significant in isolation, also therefore possess an important group value as a consequence.

AHR – Noted and agreed in all counts (matter of record). We would note the works by HE (Headed by Lucy Jessop PhD) in March 2023 researching the Heritage Action Zone where additional architectural investigations were performed for the George Hotel and its history prior to redevelopment and more importantly the NTD development over a period of time between 1848 and 1858 (George Hotel, Britania Buildings, &St Georges and the formation of John William St. It is important to note this 10-year period of development as the Hotel itself changed significantly during this period (Assumed John William St east wing block C initial construction iteration date unknown but likely after 1851 and before 1874). This is important to understand the significance and evolutionary nature of the New Town Development and George Hotel via 3rd party licensing of land (rather than a static masterplan delivered exactly to the appointed Architect Sir William Tite intent).

OS Plan surv 1848, Pub 1851

Dialogue (Significance)

HE - The George itself utilises high quality, decorative detailing to its exterior to visually impress those travelling via rail to Huddersfield. It has an almost landmark character when entering St George's Square form the Railway Station and this detailing and massing contribute highly to its significance.

AHR – Agreed, the reticulation at the rusticated base & Quoins, the close fit of the stonework and the highly articulated entablature at the 4th floor in the Georgian "House"/ Italianate Style (noting the fake windows to the main elevation) are unique and more importantly differing (demonstrating evolution) to the forms of the Brittania Buildings (Lesser extent), Railway station and other Historic buildings along John William St.

We agree that the principal Vista of significance are the viewpoints from the station, the square and the square section of John William st – but we note the significance and setting in respect of the "John William St Wall" to the rear of the main Block A building differs slightly in context where it would be a mistake to read the proposals in isolation without consideration of the massing of buildings immediately around the Hotel

The lesser discussed (yet within the conservation area and subsequent consideration) are Lion Chambers and 64-78 John William St which are lower in massing and as a result one of the reasons behind the reflective glazing approach to the new George Hotel rear extension 3rd & 4th Floors (description to be expanded upon further in this report).

Vista Context diagramme

Dialogue (Significance)

HE - The George Hotel itself has evolved over three main phases since its original construction and the original external appearance and internal plan form and circulation routes have been preserved in what is commonly known as 'Block A' which is the building facing onto the Square.

AHR – Agreed, we however refer back to the reporting supplied around evolution in this regard of the Ground Floor Area which in form and layout better represents a late 30s layout with much of the finishes (excepting windows and door architraves) being of a later derivative approximately 1970s.

HE - Historic England have worked closely with Applicants which led to the 1850 and 1938 rear blocks being removed from the listing with the exception of a portion of the John William Street elevation whose character contributes to formal and well detailed character of Block A.

AHR – Noted and acknowledged/ appreciated on behalf of the client.

HE - As well as The George's fine architectural appearance and association with the success of Huddersfield as a key point on the railway line between Manchester and Leeds, it is also the home of Rugby Football League. It was originally termed the Northern Rugby Football Union to distinguish it form middling-class southern clubs who wanted to keep the game at an amateur level.

This was an important point in history for the game of Rugby which allowed players who worked to not miss pay in order to play for their rugby team. the

HE - Whilst the exact room the paperwork was signed in 1895 has been speculated upon, it is considered that this important event happened in what is now called the Commercial Room.

AHR – Noted

HE - Overall the significance is characterised by the fine Italianate architecture, the connections with Rugby League, its plan form and volume of spaces, and its association with the success of Huddersfield Railway Station and new town building during the mid 19th century. Consequently, it has been designated at GII making it one of the country's most important heritage assets.*

AHR – Noted.

Dialogue (Impact - Demolition & JWS)

*HE – **Impact***

Demolition of Blocks B and C

The principle of the demolition of Blocks B and C was explored in the consented scheme (LPA REF: 2023/65/90112/E) and our advice was that the structural work required for large scale retention was extensive and we agreed that their loss would amount to a less than substantial amount of harm. We maintain this advice rel ating to the loss of Blocks B and C.

AHR – Noted. Subsequent reporting have highlighted however a causal link between the structural condition of Block C and the JWS façade which makes the previous designer's initial retention of a section of the JWS wall unviable from a performance of works and safety of works with associated risk of further harm caused by retention approach.

*HE - **Treatment of John William Street Elevation***

The proposal is to demolish, or take down, the John William Street elevation, record the individual stones and then rebuild the elevation in its original location whilst altering some of the fenestration.

AHR – A point of clarification, the proposal is to perform a stone by stone identification using laser scanning and rectified photography and the use of a specialist to deconstruct the wall stone by stone and reconstruct the external leaf into the new concrete frame proposed. The core aim and objective is to reconstruct where reasonably practicable to do so, the entirety of the main John William St Façade with the only proposed alterations being the loss of the internal leaf (mixed stone and brick), new Lime Mortar, Repair any stones as required during the deconstruction, relocation of 1nr window opening(3rd floor) 600mm horizontally (along with all stone reveal and dentile stonework) and the introduction of a new window opening 3rd floor with stonework sourced either from other areas of reclamaition on site or new from Wellfield Quarry with associated formwork and reveal stone to match existing.

We would request that the lanquage in this respect be more akin to the extensive conservator approach to the works and the efforts undertaken to address the fundamental issue of wall and foundation stability in this area.

HE - This would cause a moderate level of less than substantial harm to the significance of the listed building through diminished evidential values and therefore this harm should look to be clearly and convincingly justified and outweighed by any public benefits which are considered to arise from the proposal. The need for clear and convincing justification is explored below.

AHR – Noted and agreed – AHR have provided additional information in this regard and request the commenting party review the following submitted information:

- 02_2025_4891147_W - 05 - Response - JWS Wall.pdf
- 02_01 App A - Appendix 7 - RDG Temporary Works.pdf
- 02_03 App C - MGF Interim Retention Design.pdf
- 02_04 App D - Structural Inspection Report Extract.pdf
- 02_05 App E - Structural Deflection Record.pdf
- 02_06 App F - Construction Impact Risk Assessment. MK V04b.pdf

Dialogue (Impact – Conversion Block A)

*HE – **Conversion of Block A***

Broadly the conversion of Block A will have a positive impact on the significance which looks to largely preserve the 1930s lobby decorative scheme, the hierarchy of decorative schemes when moving throughout the hotel, the highly decorative stair is set to be repaired, and the upper, water-damage floors are to be repaired.

AHR – Noted and agreed, the intention is to retain the form, massing and plan form where practicable with much of the significance being derived from this. Our client has committed to repair and reinstatement of plasterwork in form based on previous plaster profile and recording performed prior to the more recent instances of loss (water ingress related).

We have some concerns about the potential cumulative harm which could be caused by some of the interior elements in Block A such as the visual impact of service rafts, lighting design in significant spaces, and the design of the balustrade to improve stair safety.

AHR – Noted, we have supplied details of where this exposed raft approach has been utilised successfully in the Liverpool Raddison Hotel. The benefits in our opinion outweigh the visual intrusion in respect of ensuring the services are not concealed which often leads to cumulative harm over time (operation, maintenance and upgrades) in particular the Levels 1-4 floors which have already received significant loss of strength works (notches etc) which will have to be rectified as part of the works.

HE - We acknowledge that it is a necessity to improve stair safety however we would ask the applicant to explore design options to lessen its potential visual impact.

AHR – Noted and agreed – The applicant is open to the balustrade and floor strengthening steelwork to the main central stair Levels 1-4 being conditioned “prior to commencement of that element of works” to ensure sufficient time to explore and discuss/ agree options are explored in detail.

Dialogue (Impact – New Build Element)

*HE – **New Build Element***

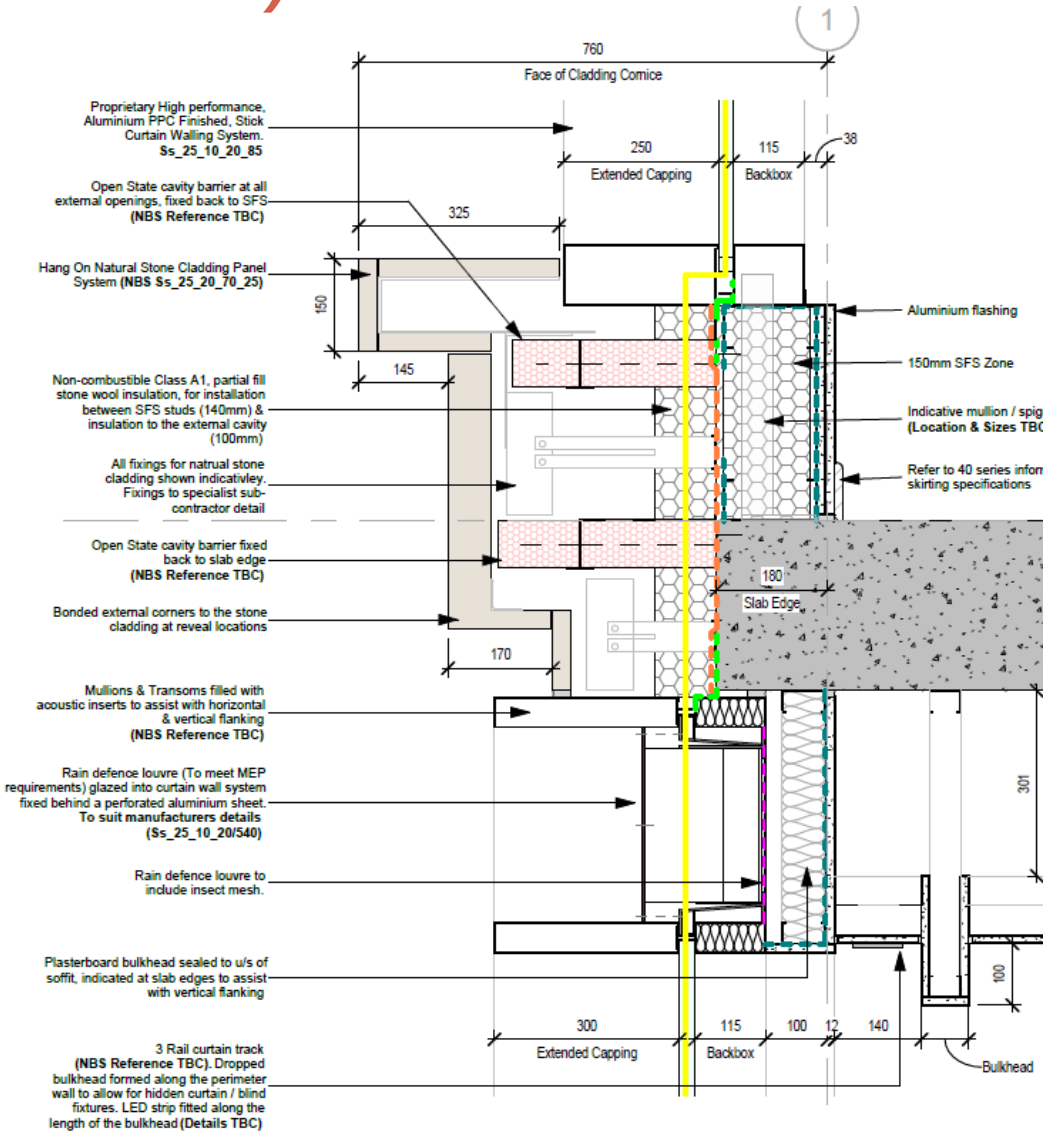
In our advice from the previous scheme, we advised that the materiality and design of the new build element should be of the highest quality given the heritage sensitivity of the area.

AHR – Noted and agreed, We iterate that the proposal utilises some of the highest quality materials currently available within the industry. The previous application was proposing to use “stone like” cladding and grey cladding for a vast amount of the elevation – The revised application proposes to utilise the following typical high quality materials:

- Natural Stone 40mm “cladding” sourced from Wellfield or Hilledge Quarry.
- Pilkington Glass with Light mirror finish to 4th floor and elements of curtain walling.
- 100mm wide curtain walling system with all cappings powdercoated light Bronze (as approved for Buxton House).

There are very few materials available of higher “quality” to the industry which would be suitable.

See adj - Example Detail Typical New Build Elements (Not JWS elevation)



Dialogue (Impact – New Build Element)

*HE – **New Build Element - Ctd***

The new build elevations could do more to enhance the significance of the listed buildings, including via their settings, by having more interesting and animated elevations. In its current form the design would not celebrate the significance of the site and does not contribute to our understanding of this as a landmark building visitors to Huddersfield will look across at when leaving the railway station.

At this stage we consider that the effect of the proposed new build element does not quite achieve that threshold and could be amended to ensure that the new build element enhances the significance of the listed building. Results in a level of modest level of less than substantial harm.

AHR – We would request clarification in this regard of comment "*more to enhance the significance of the listed buildings, including via their settings, by having more interesting and animated elevations."* It has been the express design intent to:

- Design the new build elements to be less fenestrated than the existing (but retain rhythm).
- Utilise Glass at upper levels to reduce massing via reflective/ transparent qualities along with accentuating the "material difference" old vs new (glazing is set back from main façade line also).

It is our proposal that by being deferential in material and fenestration – the principles sought in the HE comments have indeed been met (enhancement etc).

Example Building "the Majestic" Leeds discussed as one of the inspirational examples discussed in the DAS and previous HE Meetings.

Dialogue (Recent Discussion)

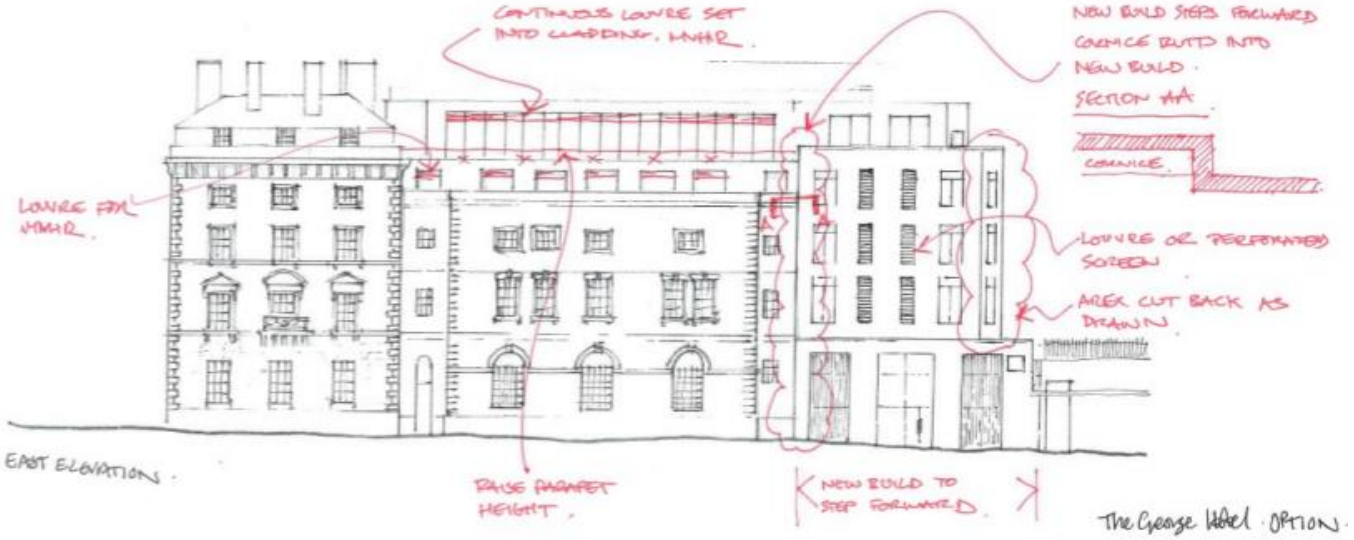
Ref: Consultation Meeting
Date: 04.07.25
Between: Historic England, Applicant, LPO, Conservation Officer & Lead Designer.
Officer: Alexander Harrison - Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas

The matters and queries of the applicant raised earlier in this report were clarified in the meeting as comprising:

1. John William St Scope of deconstruction & Justification.
2. General Quality of Materials & Samples.
3. John William Street New Build “Bookend”.
4. East & West Elevations New Build 4th floor glazing Height.
5. East Elevation Form as seen from Railway Station (relation to Block A).
6. West Facing Elevation – vertical Glazed Junction between Old and New.
7. Internal Staircase and associated works/ plaster.

This report does not seek to supplant the relevant officer's minutes but to represent the applicant's responses within the meeting and share/ signpost the reader to the relevant information discussed and related information.

Adjacent is an excerpt of the Previous application meeting held between the applicant and Historic England 07.03.23 recording advice provided on design and subsequently factored into the new designs/ application



Dialogue (Recent Discussion)

1. John William St Scope of deconstruction & justification.

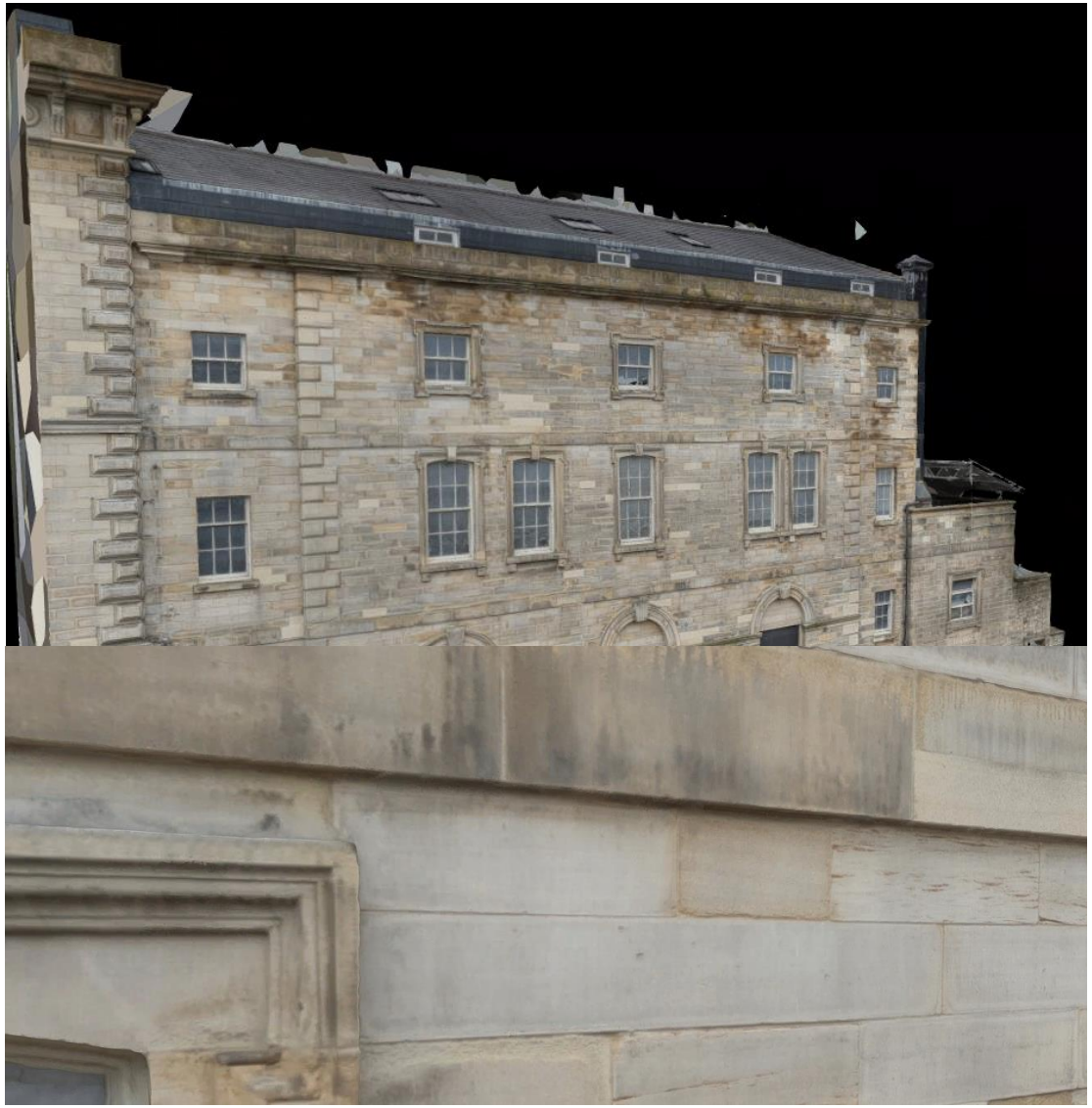
The Applicant noted that there appeared to be a misconception that this was a form of proposed “demolition” and that the intent is to perform conservator level works in this regard to:

a) Accurately record the current wall both in condition and stone by stone.
b) Perform Photometric ID scanning to assist stone ID and sequential deconstruction by hand for subsequent reconstruction stone by stone.
c) Removal of stone element by element and ID tag applied, palleted with vesting certification (offsite covered storage).
d) Reconstruction stone by stone of the façade (outer leaf) of the wall to be tied back to the new concrete frame and mortar bedded on lime.
e) Repairs/ replacement stone (unavoidable losses) shall be either:
    a) New cut/ shaped stone recovered form other parts of the demolition.
    b) Where above not practicable, new stone to be sourced from Wellfied or Hilledge quarries and carved to like for like replacement.
f) All works to be performed (deconstruct and reconstruct) by specialist stonemasons to ensure continuity of knowledge and information.

An example of the photometrics 3d scan has already been performed with an example supplied adjacent of the quality of this scan/ quality capability.

It was confirmed a full deconstruction justification report has been submitted:

- *02_2025_4891147_W - 05 - Response - JWS Wall.pdf*



Dialogue (Recent Discussion)

2. General Quality of Materials & Samples.

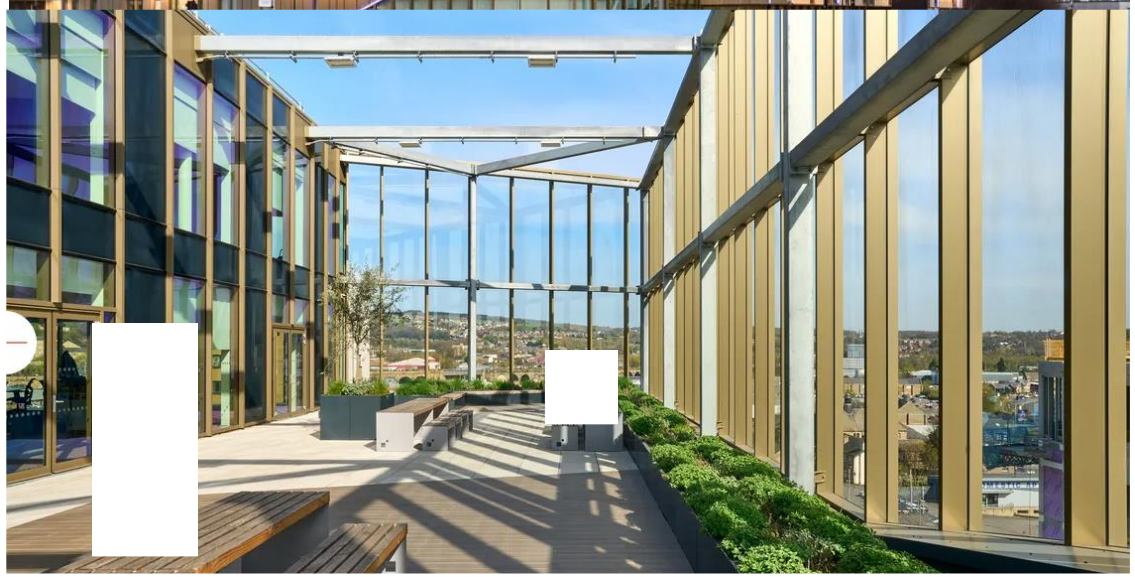
The matters around the high-quality materials being proposed within Page 8 of this report were raised and discussed and in particular the awareness around the stone “cladding” actually being 40mm natural stone sourced from Wellfied Quarry was noted and acknowledged.

AHR clarified the palate had been intentionally limited to the curtain walling, stone “cladding” wall system and feature panels of bronze herringbone aluminium so as to respect the natural palette of the existing building.

AHR noted that the previous CGIs did not clearly represent the “light bronze/ gold” curtain walling capping and feature panels as proposed which the new CGI’s in this report now better demonstrate. It was also noted this is a colour currently approved for the Daphne Steel Building (AHR Design) and Buxton House which whilst being uncompromisingly modern in form, lying just outside the conservation area were specifically chosen and approved by planning for their contributory nature appropriate to the Huddersfield townscape.

AHR are in the process of sourcing material samples (large) as part of this demonstration, and it was accepted in principle by the HE representative that this could reasonably be controlled by material condition.

Images adjacent of the Daphne Steel Building By AHR Architects (Located on Southgate opposite Northumberland street with the elevation Facing Listed Properties Northumberland House and the Mechanics Institute. https://www.ahr.co.uk/projects/daphne-steele-building



Dialogue (Recent Discussion)

3. John William Street New Build "Bookend".

AHR clarified that this was an intentional element on the basis that:

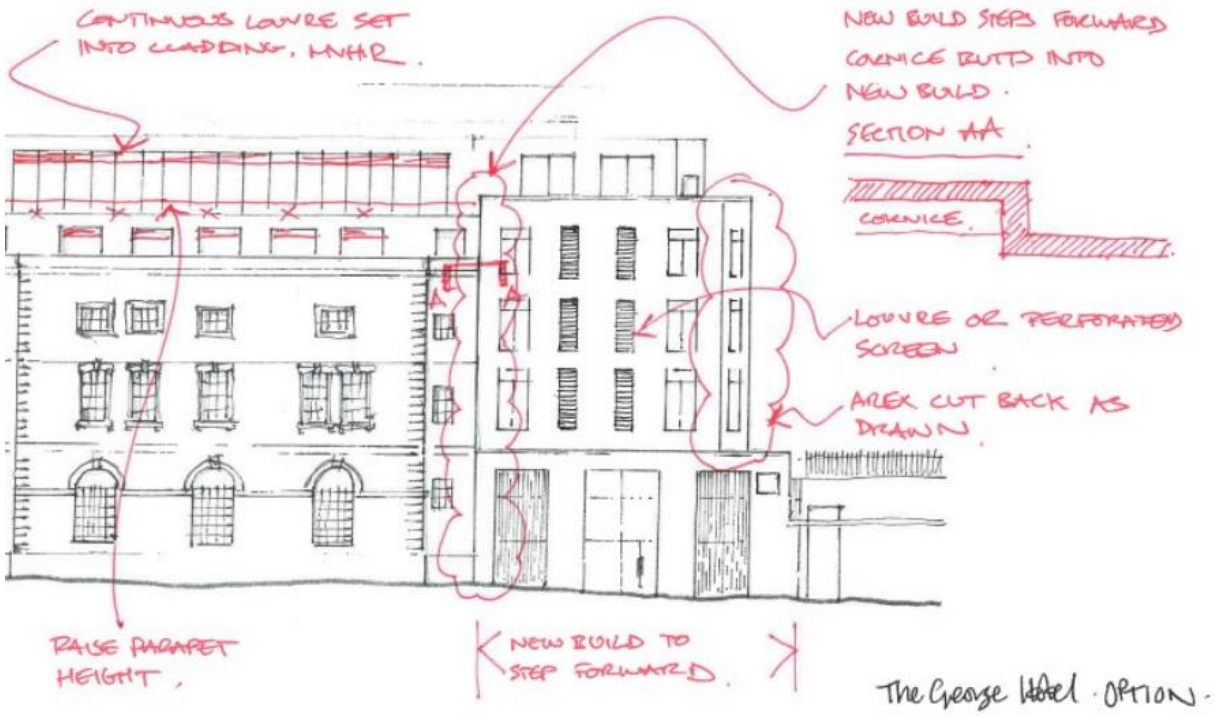
- Previous application meeting held between the applicant and Historic England 07.03.23 recording advice provided on design and subsequently factored into the new designs/ application specifically requested this to create a new "resolution to the JWS Wall" and to allow for termination of the Cornice, this was recorded robustly in Sections 2.1 (Text) and 4.1 in drawing form.

- AHR Agree that a bookend would better terminate the new build "wrap around" and would better "balance" the building form when seen as a whole elevation against the original Block A Building.

- AHR Noted this would allow for the curved end of the new build to be better articulated (and in particular at Ground Floor Level) when seen against the "masculine" buttressed stone retaining wall of the now upper car park.

- Note that it has been intentional in the new design to introduce the Ground to 1st floor stone band along JWS on this bookend so as to be evocatively communicating the location of the former historic kitchen extension and public toilets in this location.

Adjacent is an excerpt of the Previous application meeting held between the applicant and Historic England 07.03.23. Note specific request to have the new build element step forward to line up with the main central section of the JWS façade (noting the reveal/ step back at either end of this wall).



2.1 Feedback Received

Extensive consultation has been held with Historic England in order to address feedback received. The following timeline shows the consultation process:

2021:

- Meeting Historic England—Initial feasibility feedback

2022:

- Site meeting Historic England—Review of existing building
- Meeting with Historic England Structural Engineers—review

The following queries were raised in relation to the design of the elevations:

1. Query raised ref. elevational treatment to JWS new build.

- Should read separate to the retained section of façade

- Consider 'book-end' stone element at the apex to split the elevation into 3 distinct buildings.

2. Query raised ref. elevational treatment to car park side

Dialogue (Recent Discussion)

4. East & West Elevations New Build 4th floor glazing Height.

This had previously been discussed with the applicant by the Conservation Officer and we confirm:

- We have reduced the height of the 4th floor glazing by 1.1m – this has resulted in the requirement for a guardrail set approx. 3m back from the edge (form echoes the adjacent water tower iron pressings).
- The opportunity to reduce this further is limited without loss of a whole floor due to the construction depth of the concrete frame and roof insulation.
- We reiterate our designers position that the glazed panels are highly reflective and as such are visually read as a much lighter element when viewed from the street or Railway Carriage (when entering the station Westbound).

Adjacent is examples of current submitted drawings:

- *L054-AHR-20-ZZ-ZZ-D-A-20120_P3 -Proposed Elevations.pdf*
  - *This submission (and document upon which this applications original consultation/ advertising sought).*
- *L054-AHR-20-ZZ-ZZ-D-A-20120_P5 -Proposed Elevations.pdf*
  - *Submitted to replace above 25.307.25*

Not: there is little opportunity to reduce this further due to accommodation, structural and M&E requirements.

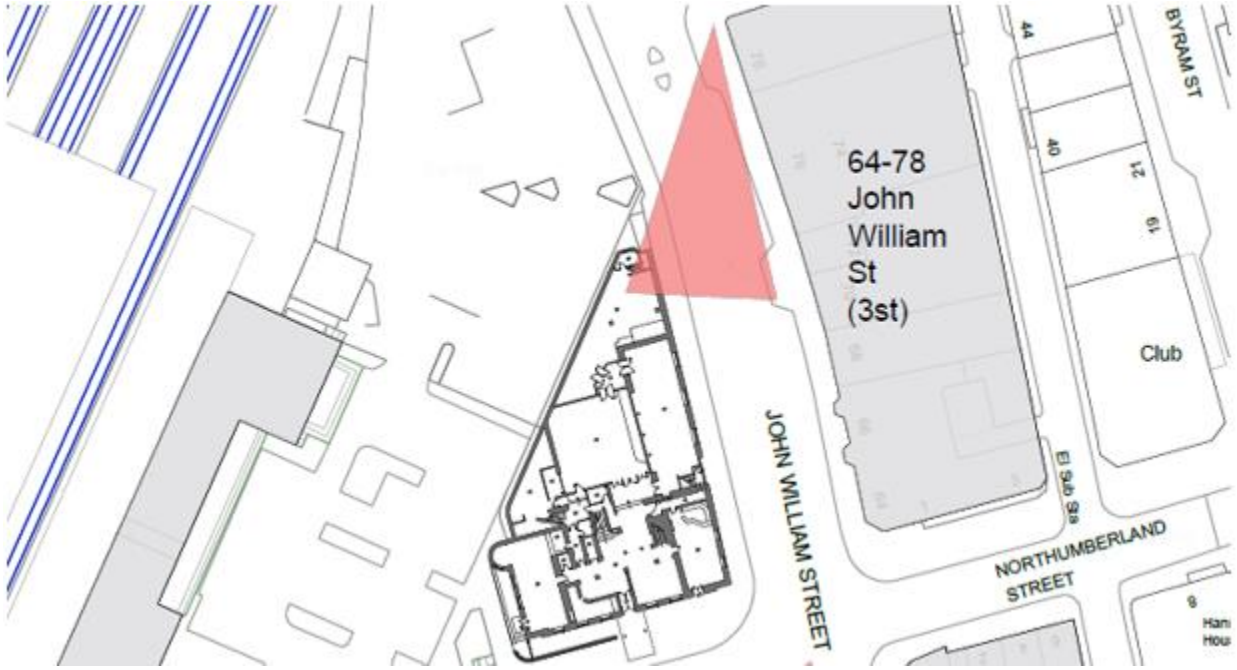
Dialogue (Recent Discussion)

4. East & West Elevations New Build 4th floor glazing Height (Ctd)

AHR Have noted in the meeting the concern that insufficient consideration may be made by non-resident consultees in respect to the proposal's relationship to other buildings in the conservation area – in particular the 3 storey property opposite “64-78 John William St” which are lower in massing but demonstrate significant Architectural Merit in their own right.

This is one of the key reasons as to why the designers in their Design & access statement and Impact Assessment have chosen to form the 3rd and 4th floors in the “light glazed” material.

It is the applicant's position that to introduce heavier materials at these levels would not only detract from the significance of the John William St wall (albeit conservator reconstructed under the proposals) and its ability to communicate the past form of the hotel but would also fail to address the current relationship with buildings opposite in respect of experiential value.



Adjacent is at the top, diagramme of the buildings opposite the George Hotel JWS area and at the bottom a typical view as seen from John William St Facing Northward.

Dialogue (Recent Discussion)

5. East Elevation Form as seen from Railway Station relation to Block A

In the discussion the following key matters were addressed:

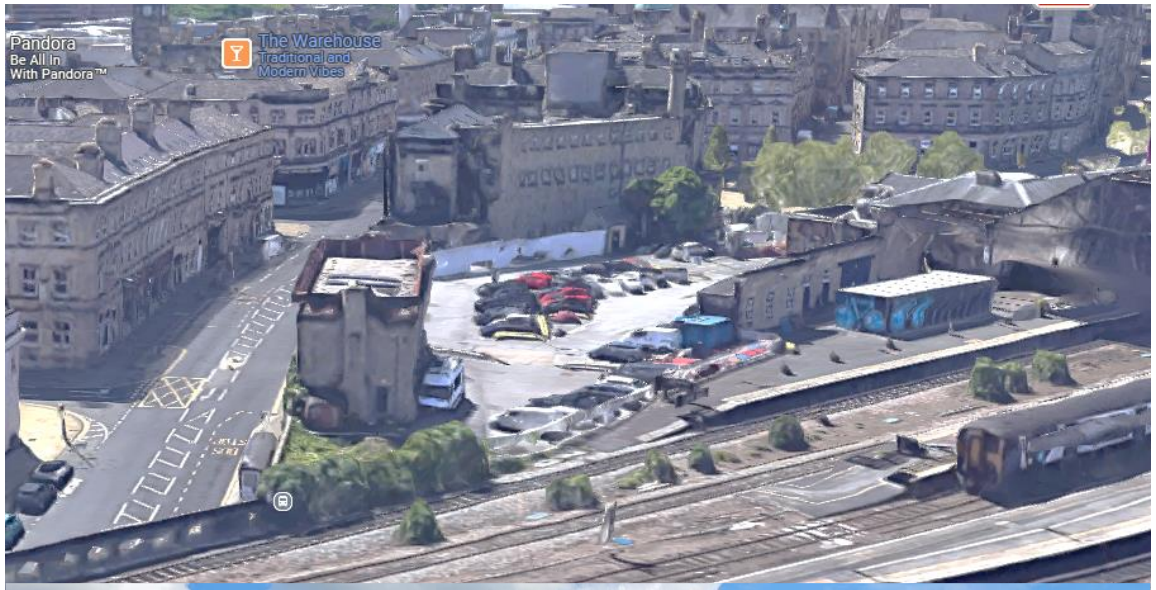
- The horizontal form of the “Bookend” along John William Street is driven largely by its relationship to Block A (highly articulated entablature & string coursing) and that this was more unifying a design approach than seeking to align with the JWS façade form.

- The current form of new build allows the articulation of the curved “end” of the building evocative of the Morning Post Building which was one of the precedence examples considered as a good way of resolving the acute north form junction.

- The new build element Is NW facing and in practice is not really viewed from the station entrance fully flat (as on elevation drawings) <u>the new build angles some 20 degrees</u> off to the West side of Block A and as such is viewed largely in colonnade form.

- The key viewpoint would solely be from the railway carriage which would be fleeting and is noted this view means the new build is seen largely independent to the Block A Building in this location.

Adjacent is examples of viewpoints:
- *Upper - Google Image (due to drone restrictions) of rail arrival view.*
- *Lower - View taken with “eye correct” 50mm lens stood on the Station Steps.*



Dialogue (Recent Discussion)

5. East Elevation Form as seen from Railway Station relation to Block A

To further illustrate the importance of the “Bookend” as a combining and continuous element of the design proposals we note:

- View as seen from the railway is read in conjunction with the listed water tower which is predominant structure initially viewed .
- The curved end along with its colonnade form and “squared off” framed cap (glazing and framing of 4th floor) was identified at early stages of design development as also utilising a similar language as when read against the Listed Water Tower.
- Other than an approximate 3 second view of the current Block B and chimney upon arrival, we note that at no time is the Block A or John William Street elevation fully visible.

In these images and dialogue we are seeking to demonstrate that all elements of vista and experiential value have been considered in the forming of the design proposals and the opportunity for the New Build element of the works to contribute to the conservation area upon arrival and moving around the station.

Adjacent is examples of viewpoints:

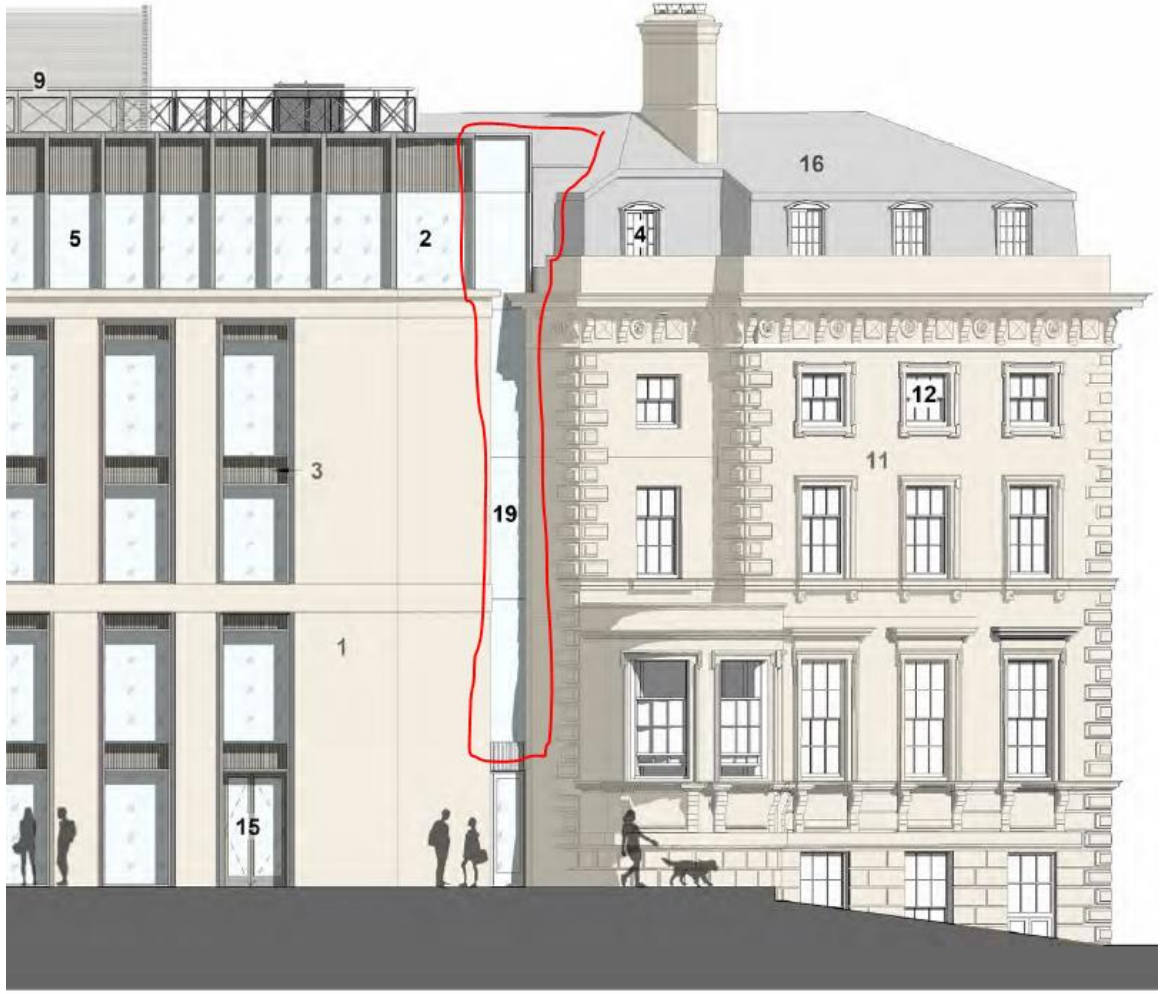
- *Upper – Image from Train Arrival Seated Position (Westbound)*
- *Lower - Image from Train Arrival Seated Position at station arrival prior to entering the Station Proper. (Westbound)*

Dialogue (Recent Discussion)

6. West Facing Elevation – vertical Glazed Junction between Old and New.

The Junction Between the old and new build elements (new build to Block A) was discussed and agreed in principle that the material separation was a good approach (noting the use of planar type glazing greating a clear, smooth and reflective “break” between the more solid stone to either side).

It was noted that this was exactly what was previously approved but that it was agreed between all parties this could be looked at as an area for detail improvement particularly in relation to execution at the 4th Floor junction with the Block A Mansard roof.



Adjacent is markup of the glazed area where further detail is proposed to be developed (in principle glazed separation agreed but roof resolution detail to be explored).

Dialogue (Recent Discussion)

6. West Facing Elevation – vertical Glazed Junction between Old and New. (ctd)

Structure limitation
During the Phase 2 works, this “mansard step back” was demonstrated to have one of the more unique structural arrangements with a sort of pegged ladder beam (Oak) to give additional strength to the corner. For this reason and so as to not compromise or connect to this rather unique timberwork, the decision was made to step the new/ old connection further back so as to meet with the 2nd mansard upright thereby reducing intervention with this more significant fabric thereby driving the “height reduction” to the right hand side of the glazing panel.

This whilst creating a slight difference in elevational level we believe is justifiable ultimately by the intention to reduce material harm to the more unique parts of the mansard timberwork.

Actual 3D impact
As demonstrated in the visual adjacent and in the proposed image further in this report, the “flattened” elevations again do not fully represent the visual experience and as you can see, the “step” between the glazing and the transfer to mansard is not as pronounced when seen from Ground Floor (station entrance).
Adjacent is:
Upper – Image of the complex oak junction mansard requiring the set back
Lower – Example 3d demonstrating the “actual” fisual from GF station entrance.

Dialogue (Recent Discussion)

7. Internal Staircase and associated works/ plaster.

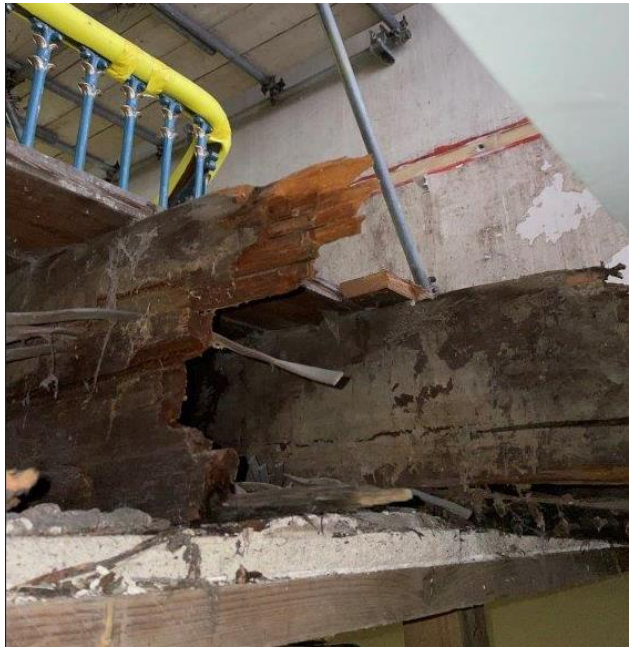
HE, VICSOC, and the Local Authority have rightfully requested clarity as to the proposed works in the main stairway (central) to Block A.

- Demonstrate areas of condition issue (structural report to be issued).
- Provide detail as to proposed structural support works and any steelwork if required.
- Provide relevant detail to communicate the plaster reinstatement (including the 4th floor plaster arch loss as part of the water tower removal works Phase 2).
- Provide further detail and justification around reinstatement of cast iron broken balusters and new handrail/ guard proposals.

The applicant is in agreement that further information is required around this but noted that there are issues around the basement wall stability which affect significant elements of the design which cannot be resolved until the planning is approved and the enabling works contractor under appointment to undertake the necessary propping work.

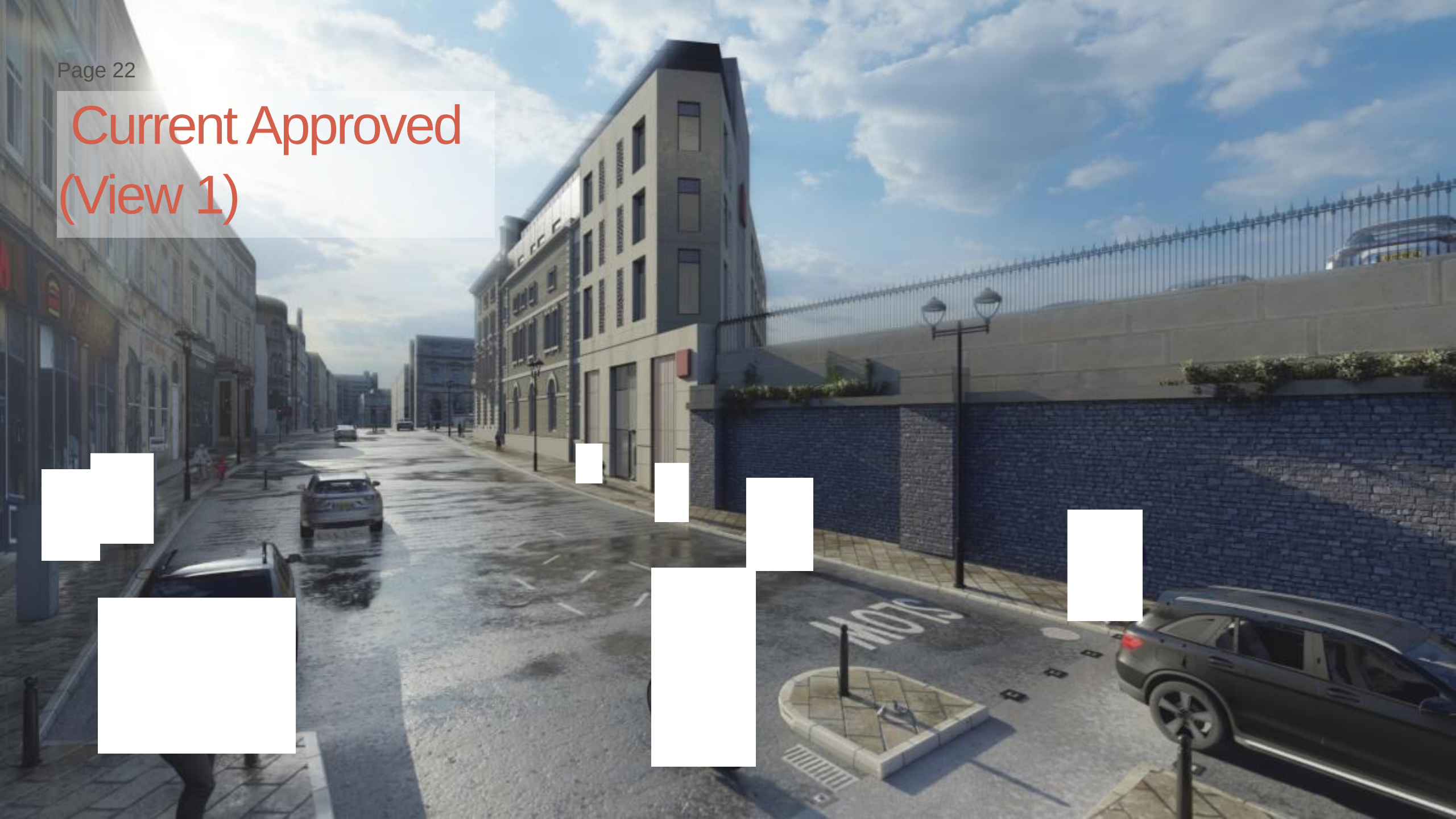
To this end, the applicant requests that the entirety of the works to the central staircase (including finishes) be conditioned “prior to the commencement of works on this area”.

Adjacent is examples of the current condition challenges facing the team and we reiterate that a vast of the central stair area be it stone lower or timber upper have been evidenced to be structurally poor sufficient to prevent work in these areas until further propping and support is in place.



Existing (View 1)

Current Approved (View 1)



Proposed (View 1)

Existing (View 2)

Current Approved (View 2)

Proposed (View 2)

Existing (View 3)

Existing (View 3)

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Current Approved (View 3)

Proposed (View 3)

Summary

Applicant Formal Response (Applicant Agent).

It is the applicants position that the current design as it stands now best reflects the consultation thus far and presents a thoroughly considered scheme both in respect of Heritage impact as well as practical benefit through bringing the Hotel back into sustainable use in a manner that makes due consideration as to the significance of the Hotel both now and in the future.

We remind the relevant parties that the proposals still present significant challenges in respect of the continued deterioration of Blocks B&C and the remaining legacy condition matters particularly around the Block A Main stair/ back wall structure.

Whilst the applicant always welcomes comment, we would ask you to consider that the works are not in to be viewed in conservation isolation but that the statutory duties around fire compliance, structural stability, occupation usage (public expenditure linked to viability), Air Quality, Heating, Ventilation and environmental impact (water control etc) have all to be considered and that the current design represents a thorough consideration in this regard.

We would specifically request Historic England consider making of suggestion around any conditions you feel the LPO should be considering if mindful to support the proposals.

Shaping places that have
a positive impact