Applicant: Kirklees Council
Building: George Hotel
L054-AHR-XX-XX-RP-A-08804
Assessment of Significance (With addendum)
Revision P1 (Planning and LBC)

April 2025



Kirklees Council
George Hotel

Assessment of Significance
(With Addendum)

Revision P1

Addendum Statement

This report was originally prepared on behalf of Kirklees Council to accompany application ref: 2023/65/90112/E

The applicant has requested that this be resubmitted with addendum to schedule and clarify relevant design and commitment changes which may be pertinent to relevant statutory consulting parties.

We confirm the following addendum amendments to this previous submission:

- 7.1 – Proposals – Brief - Redacted
- 7.2 – Proposals – Parameters for Change – Redacted
- 7.3 – Proposals – Proposed Design Block A - Redacted
- 7.4 – Proposals – Proposed Design Block B - Redacted
- 7.5 – Proposals – Proposed Design Block C - Redacted
- 7.6 – Proposals – Central Courtyard - Redacted
- 8.1 – Proposals – Impact Assessment - Redacted
- 8.2 – Proposals – Assessment of Impact on Significance - Redacted
- 9.0 – Proposals – Conclusion - Redacted

In summary, the applicant recognises the works performed by Bowman Riley Architects as reflecting a robust assessment of significance and has chosen to remove the later section 7 references to the proposed works so that the document stands alone as an assessment of significance.

The Proposal in respect of assessment against significance is dealt with under separate report titled “Heritage Impact Assessment”.



THE GEORGE HOTEL

REVISION P1

BOW MAN RILEY | Kirklees COUNCIL | RED Radisson

HERITAGE STATEMENT

DECEMBER 2022

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Report

Bowman Riley have been appointed by Kirklees Council to work with Queensbury Properties in order to develop the proposals for the re-development of the Grade II* listed George Hotel in Huddersfield.

As the building is included on the National Heritage List for England at Grade II*, Helen Walker RIBA CA will be working with the architects to advise on the likely impact of the proposed designs and to assist with the development of a sympathetic scheme which achieves a balance between the need to protect the significance of the heritage asset with the need to secure a long-term, viable future for this historically important Hotel.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the requirement under paragraph 194 of the NPPF which requires the applicant to provide an impartial assessment of significance of the heritage assets in order to understand the potential impact of the proposals and provide advice on mitigation to reduce the impact.

This document has also been prepared in accordance with the Historic England Advice Note 12 (HEAG279) “Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets” and Historic England’s “Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance for the sustainable management for the historic environment”.

1.2 Authors

This report is written by Helen Walker RIBA CA, Dr. Joanne Harrison RIBA Assoc IHBC and Robert Sharples RIBA.

Helen is a Conservation Architect with over 10 years’ experience of working with heritage assets including Grade I, II* and II listed buildings as well as battlefields, scheduled ancient monuments and conservation areas. She has a broad range of experience including preparation of Heritage Impact Assessments, Quinquennial Inspections and advice on historic building repairs and identification of defects, and has provided heritage advice to local authorities, private clients, and organisations such as the National Trust.

Joanne is a heritage consultant and architect with a PhD in Building Conservation. She has experience in a wide range of project types and is conducting doctoral research on late 19th century workers’ housing in Leeds. Her publications and conference presentations cover housing in numerous periods and adaptive reuse of schools .

1.3 HER records

The West Yorkshire Archaeological Advice Service (WYAAS) identified the following close to the site:

- Railway station (Monument WYHER no.MWY4607)
- The Stables, former lavatory block and store rooms at the station (Monument WYHER no.MWY8149)
- Lion buildings (Monument WYHER no.MWY7301)
- Britannia Buildings (Monument WYHER no.MWY7294)
- Railway Station Water Tower (Monument WYHER no.MWY7473)

Research held by the HER shows development from the mid-19th century onwards. There are two records from the Excavation Index (EI), an archaeological assessment and fabric appraisal of the train station undertaken by Wessex Archaeology, and a historic building recording of a late 19th century water tower in St. George’s Square.

1.4 Additional sources of information

Helen Walker and Joanne Harrison visited the WYAS archives in Huddersfield on two occasions to research the historic development of The George Hotel.

Historic England have also developed a statement of significance for The George Hotel which was issued as draft and which has been consulted as part of this assessment. In addition to the archive visit, desktop research of online sources and historic maps has been undertaken by Robert Sharples.

Numerous site visits have been undertaken since 2020, to record various aspects of the building's architectural design, construction phasing and condition. A Matterport survey of the building was undertaken in 2022 which has captured the current state of the building internally and a point cloud survey of the building and photographic record was undertaken of the external built fabric in 2021.

Additional information has also been uncovered as part of the Phase 2 repair works.









2.0 Planning Context

2.1 Relevant planning policy

NPPF

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) identifies the Government's planning policies and how they should be applied in practice. They are used by Local Planning Authorities when preparing their development plans and is a material consideration in determining planning applications.

Section 16 of the NPPF provides guidance on conserving and enhancing the historic environment and the decision-making process in relation to heritage assets. This heritage statement has been prepared in accordance with the requirement under paragraph 194 of the NPPF which requires the applicant to:

> *"…describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance."*

This heritage statement enables the Local Planning Authority to assess the application in accordance with Paragraph 195 of the NPPF which states:

> *"Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal."*

The NPPF indicates that when assessing impact, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation and that this should be proportionate to the importance of the asset.

If the development will lead to substantial harm, paragraph 201 indicates that the development should be refused consent by the local planning authority, unless it can be proved that the loss or damage to the asset can be outweighed by substantial benefits to the public OR if the proposal can demonstrate all of the following:

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

If the development leads to less than substantial harm, paragraph 196 indicates:

> *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.*

In summary, substantial harm must be exceptional and less than substantial harm must be balanced against the public benefits of the scheme and the optimal viable use.

2.1 Relevant planning policy (cont)

Historic England

Historic England is a public body that helps people care for, enjoy and celebrate England's historic environment. They are also a statutory consultee on applications for Listed Building Consent.

This document has been prepared in accordance with:

Historic England Advice Note 12 (HEAG279) "Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets"

and

Historic England's "Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance for the sustainable management for the historic environment".

These publications advise that the development of the proposals for works to a heritage asset should be informed by an overarching understanding of the significance.

It is only by understanding significance can we then begin to understand the impact of any proposed change to that heritage asset. HEAG279 recommends a staged approach to the development of proposals for change:

- Understand the form, materials, and history of the affected heritage asset(s), and/or the nature and extent of archaeological deposits
- Understand the significance of the asset(s)
- Understand the impact of the proposal on that significance
- Avoid, minimise, and mitigate negative impact, in a way that meets the objectives of the NPPF
- Look for opportunities to better reveal or enhance significance.

HEAG279 recommends that when assessing the impact of development on a heritage asset this should be done in a way that is succinct, that identifies both positive and negative impact, identifies how harmful impact has been avoided and finally provides justification for any harm that is unavoidable when assessed against the public benefit.

In summary, what is needed is an impartial analysis of significance and the contribution of setting. A Statement of Heritage Significance is not an advocacy document, seeking to justify a scheme which has already been designed; it is more an objective analysis of significance, an opportunity to describe what matters and why, in terms of heritage significance.

2.2 Local Policies

The Kirkless Local Plan Policy LP35 states:

"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.

2. Proposals which would remove, harm or undermine the significance of a non-designated heritage asset, or its contribution to the character of a place will be permitted only where benefits of the development outweigh the harm having regard to the scale of the harm and the significance of the heritage asset. In the case of developments affecting archaeological sites of less than national importance where development affecting such sites is acceptable in principle, mitigation of damage will be ensured through preservation of the remains in situ as a preferred solution. When in situ preservation is not justified, the developer will be required to make adequate provision for excavation and recording before or during development.

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…"

2.2 Relevant Planning History

The following applications have been approved:

- Application 2021/94596 - Listed Building Consent for repair works to the external facade with window replacements and re-roofing [within a Conservation Area]
- Application 2021/93807 - Advertisement Consent for erection of non illuminated image attached to scaffolding (Listed Building within a Conservation Area)
- Application 2019/91505 - 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)
- Application 2019/91506 - 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)
- Application 2014/90692 - 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)
- Application 2014/90693 - Listed Building Consent for erection of rooftop coffee shop/diner and balustrade, canopies and internal and external alterations (within a Conservation Area)
- Application 2013/90511 - Discharge of condition 2 on previous permission 2012/93694 for Listed Building Consent for re-location of plaque (within a Conservation Area)
- Application 2012/93694 - Listed Building Consent for re-location of plaque (within a Conservation Area)
- Application 2009/92328 - Installation of facade lighting to front (Listed Building Within a Conservation Area)
- Application 2009/92329 - Listed Building Consent for installation of facade lighting to front (Within a Conservation Area)
- Application 90/06041 - Listed building consent for erection of illuminated signs
- Application 90/06040 - Erection of illuminated signs (listed building)
- Application 90/04309 - Listed building consent for internal alterations
- Application 90/03353 - Listed building consent for extension and refurbishment
- Application 90/03306 - Erection of extension to hotel to form additional bedrooms and enclosed fire escape (listed building)
- Application 86/00583 - Listed Building Consent for erection of 4 flag poles (Listed Building within Conservation Area)
- Application 86/00582 - Erection of 4 projecting flag poles (Listed Building within Conservation Area)

The following applications have been refused:

- Application 2007/92606 - Listed building consent for erection of non-illuminated entrance sign (within a conservation area)
- Application 2007/92248 - Erection of non-illuminated fascia sign (listed building within a conservation area)

3.0 Approach and Methodology

3.1 Heritage Values

In order to understand the significance of the heritage asset, it is necessary to first understand the perceived heritage value which contributes to that significance.

This assessment can be made using either the three interest categories in HEAG279 (archaeological, historical, and architectural and artistic) or with Historic England's Conservation Principles. The latter, used in this report, arranges heritage values into four groups:

Evidential:	The potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity.
Aesthetic:	The ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.
Historical:	The ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present – it tends to be illustrative or associative.
Communal:	The meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory .

3.2 Heritage significance

Once the interest has been ascertained, the level of contribution the interest makes to the heritage significance of the asset can then be determined and used to guide the development of the scheme. This level of significance has been classified as per the table shown below.

Since the building is particularly large and complex, significance is considered in terms of the significance of each room (and therefore its capacity for change), and also of the three wings of the building. The methodology for this is discussed more fully later.

The level of harm to the significance of the heritage can then be assessed by understanding the impact of undertaking the works and can range between major beneficial to major adverse. This impact is assessed as potential and final and takes into account the options for mitigation and public benefit.

Detrimental	The element is detrimental to our appreciation or understanding of the Significance
Negligible:	The element provides little or no contribution to the heritage asset.
Low:	The element provides some contribution to the heritage asset but not to the extent that any alteration will cause harm.
Moderate:	The element is important to the significance of the asset and requires assessment with the assumption that any harm will be less than substantial and can be mitigated.
High:	The element is very important to the significance of the asset and careful consideration is required to assess if the harm is substantial or less than substantial and whether the harm can be mitigated.
Considerable:	The element is essential to our understanding of the significance of the heritage asset with the assumption that any harm to that element would be constitute substantial harm to the heritage asset and would require full justification.

3.3 Assessing Impact

The level of harm to the significance of the heritage can then be assessed by understanding the impact of undertaking the works and can be substantial harm, less than substantial harm or no harm.

This impact is assessed as potential and final and considers the options for mitigation and public benefit.

To provide a succinct and accessible summation of the impact to the significance of the heritage asset, the impact has been displayed in table form as per the example opposite with a summary as part of the conclusion.

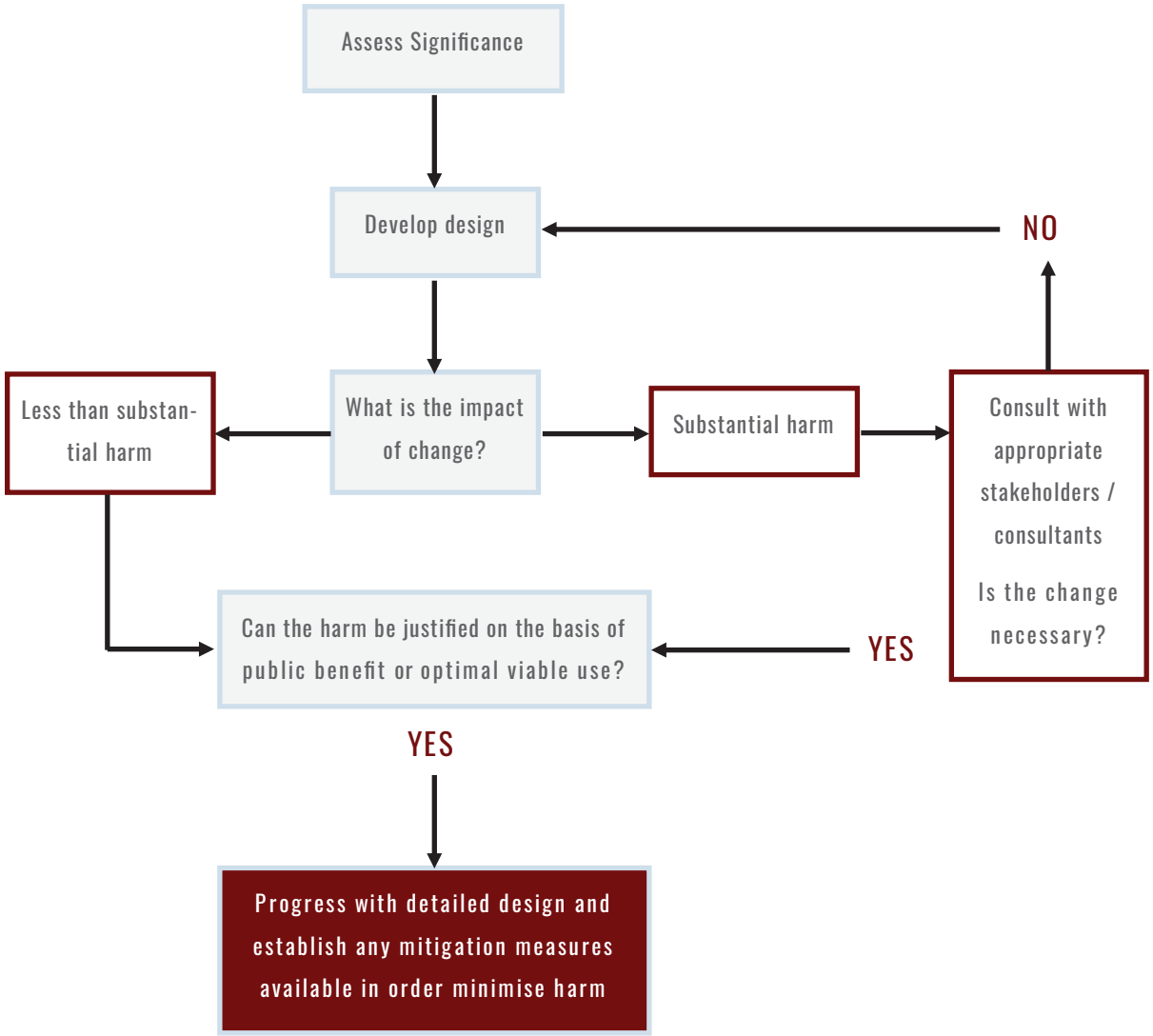
Element	Level of significance	Alteration	What is the potential impact	What is the need for change	Options for mitigation / enhancement	Can the harm be mitigated against public benefit	Final Impact
Walls	High & Moderate	Form openings	Less than substantial harm	Fire doors are required for escape in the event of fire	New doors have clearly been identified as modern insertions and escape routes have been designed to have the least impact	Insertion of these doors is required to protect life in the event of a fire and will allow this building to be brought back into use	Beneficial

3.4 Approach to assessment of proposals

The approach taken to the assessment of proposals and interventions has been one of continual assessment, justification and mitigation.

As with all historic buildings the first step is to understand the brief from the client and asses the significance of the historic fabric. The design is then based on balancing the brief with the need to retain and enhance the significance of the building.

Any proposed intervention which is likely to cause harm is challenged in accordance with the adjacent process of assessment.



4.0 Historic Development

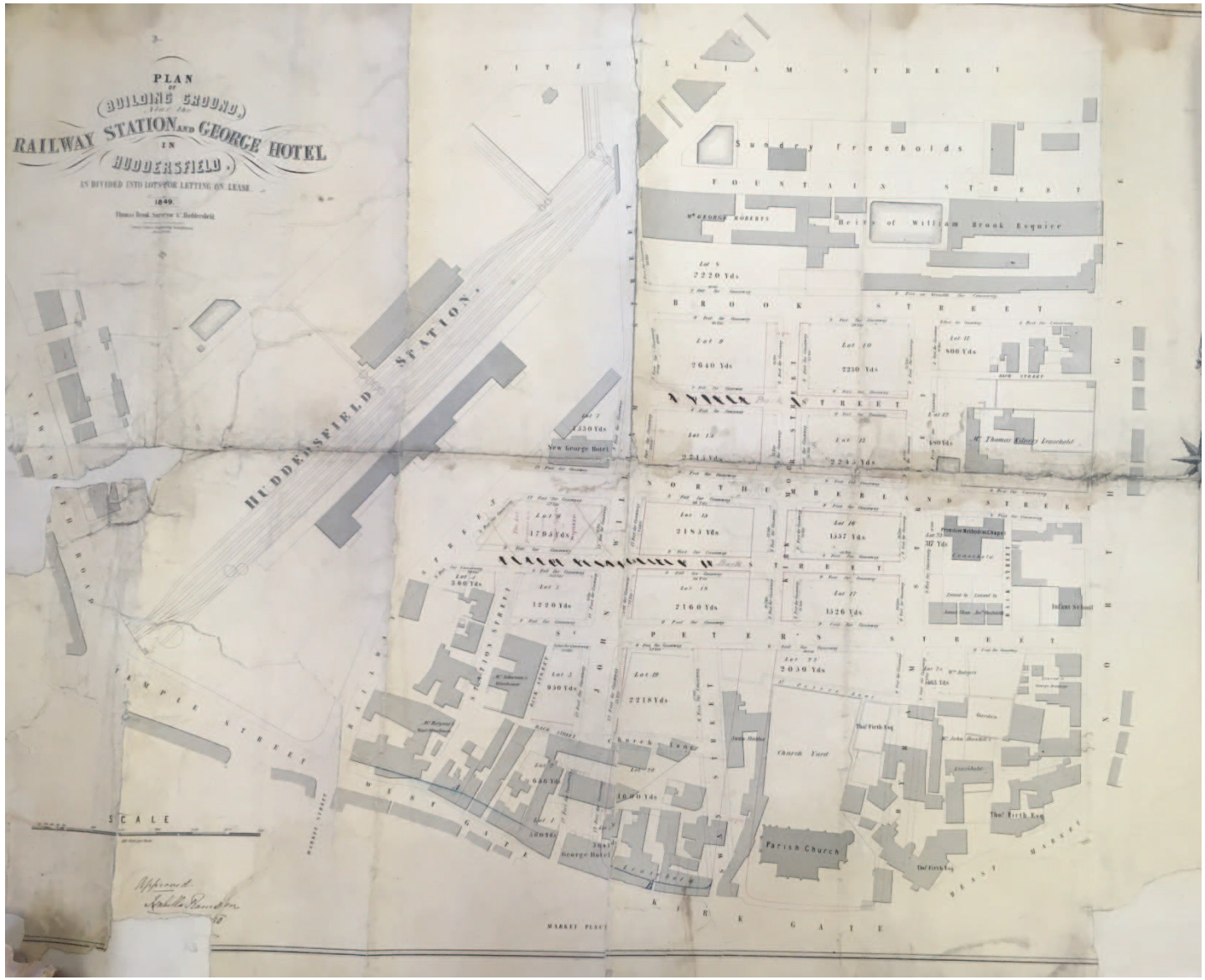
4.1 A Brief History of Huddersfield

The development of both the town of Huddersfield and the George Hotel is linked to the Ramsden family who were almost the sole landlords in Huddersfield and its surrounding area from the 16th century to 1920. As Lords of the Manor of Huddersfield, the Ramsdens were given the right to hold a market in the 17th century and exercised a substantial degree of economic and political control until the late 19th century.

Like many market towns in the West Riding of Yorkshire, Huddersfield grew exponentially in the 18th and 19th centuries, initially as a centre of the woollen trade and then as a place for manufacturing. The Ramsden Estate map of 1716 shows Huddersfield as a primarily linear settlement developed around Westgate, Kirkgate, and Beastmarket, with a small marketplace at its centre.

By 1778 the town was expanding southwards with the construction of the Cloth Hall to the south of Westgate. A plan shows the intended layout of new, wide, straight streets leading from the Cloth Hall and the Market Place, displaying the Estate's early penchant for town planning; these became Cloth Hall Street, King Street, and New Street.

Most of the town's development up to 1850 took place to the south of Westgate and along the Colne and Ramsden Canal. Huddersfield Railway Station was opened in 1847, starting a shift of the 'commercial centre of gravity of the town'. The Ramsden



4.1 A Brief History of Huddersfield (cont.)

Estate saw this as an opportunity to develop a 'New Town' to the north of Westgate and east of the new station. To achieve this, a new street was required, leading from the marketplace to the new railway station. This necessitated the removal of Huddersfield's principal inn, the George Hotel, which stood at the north end of the marketplace. The existing George Hotel was planned as a replacement for the former inn, and it was deliberately given a prominent site to take advantage of the new railway station.

The New Town was laid out in an approximate grid system, with wide straight streets and building plots let out to developers, as can be seen in a plan made for the purpose from 1850. Despite Huddersfield having improvement commissioners, the Ramsden Estate retained control of the laying out of the New Town, employing Sir William Tite (1798-1873), a London architect and designer of the Royal Exchange (opened 1844), to function in the manner of a modern building control officer. All leaseholders had to submit details of plans and elevations to Tite, who could refuse permission to build if the Estate's high standards were not met. The result of the 1850s development was an extensive area of new building, primarily built in the Italianate style and to a very high standard.

In 1868, the same year that Huddersfield became a municipal borough with its own council, the Ramsden Estate decided to build a new Estate Office on Railway Street and Westgate, relocating the Estate Office from the Ramsdens' ancestral home, Longley Hall, and completing the development of the New Town.

The majority of Huddersfield, including the George Hotel, remained the property of the Ramsden Estate throughout the 19th century and into the 20th century. However, in 1920, after years of deteriorating relations between the town council and the Ramsden family, the council purchased the entire freehold estate from Sir John Frenchville Ramsden, the 6th Baronet, via a proxy, earning Huddersfield the epithet of the town that bought itself. The estate, in the hands of the council, continued to be managed from the Ramsden Estate's former offices in Railway Street.



Photograph of the reconstructed George Hotel on St Peter's Street



Early drawing of the Estate Offices

4.2 History of the George Hotel

The George Hotel began life as the George Inn. Constructed by the Ramsden Family in 1726, and named in honour of George I, it was built to serve clothiers and merchants trading in Huddersfield's Market place. The original George Inn was demolished in 1787 to be rebuilt as a larger inn. The 1787 inn was eventually demolished but the central three bays of its façade can still be seen fronting a warehouse on St Peter's Street where it was moved in the 1850s.

In common with coaching inns in other market towns, the earlier George Inn acted as a commercial and civic hub. Trade directories from 1822 (the earliest found) to 1847 demonstrate that the inn (hotel from 1842) also served as an excise office, posting house, and subscription newsroom. It also hosted meetings of the Lighting and Watching commissioners, and it served as a meeting place and office for many local merchants.

As noted above, the construction of the railway station in 1847 brought an opportunity for the Ramsden Estate to capitalise on the expected growth in trade and also provided an opportunity to rebuild a larger hotel next to the station, taking advantage of the railway trade. The 1848-50 and 1849 OS maps show the oldest part of the building positioned in front of the train station, looking at that time, somewhat isolated and having an awkward relationship with the station range. The hotel and station framed the new St George's Square, presumably named for the hotel.

Trade directories list the new hotel's proprietor as Thomas Wigney, whose family had run the old George Hotel since at least 1822. It is also understood that left over building materials from the station, such as the stone and roofing materials were used in the construction of the George.

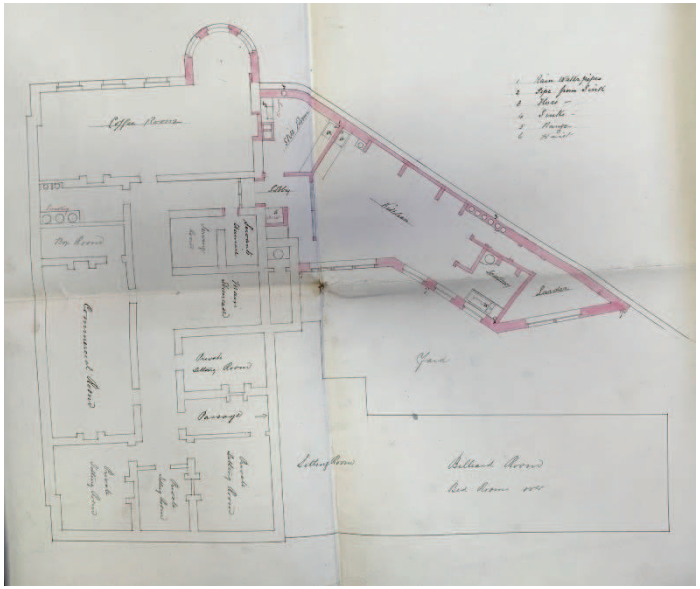
The ground floor of the East Wing (Block C) was constructed shortly after and was extant by 1853 . A historic postcard indicates there was a single storey block along John William Street, and that the building was operating as a commercial hotel and posting house.

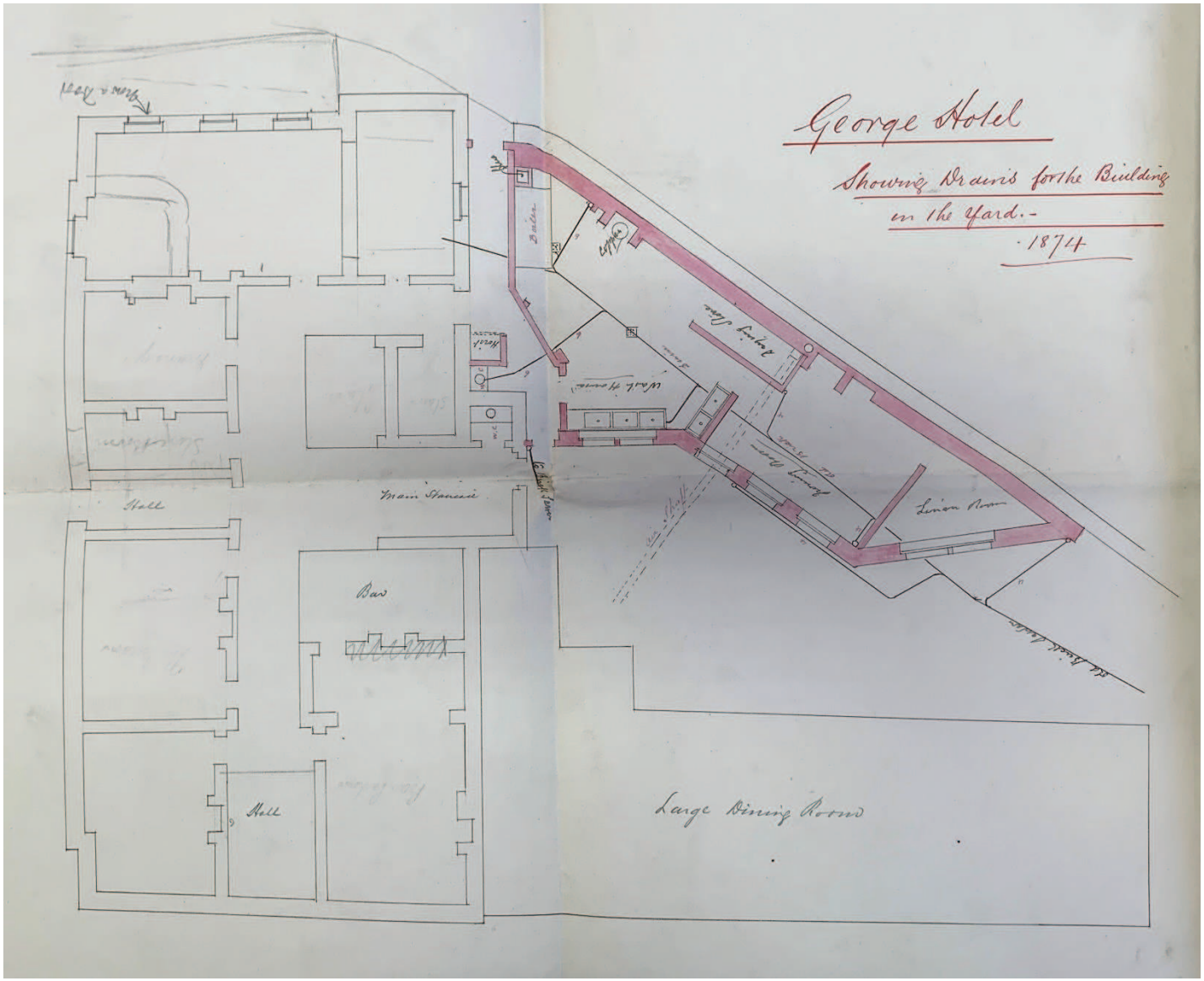


Photograph taken from the Station towards The George Hotel dating from between 1850 and 1874

4.2 History of the George Hotel (cont.)

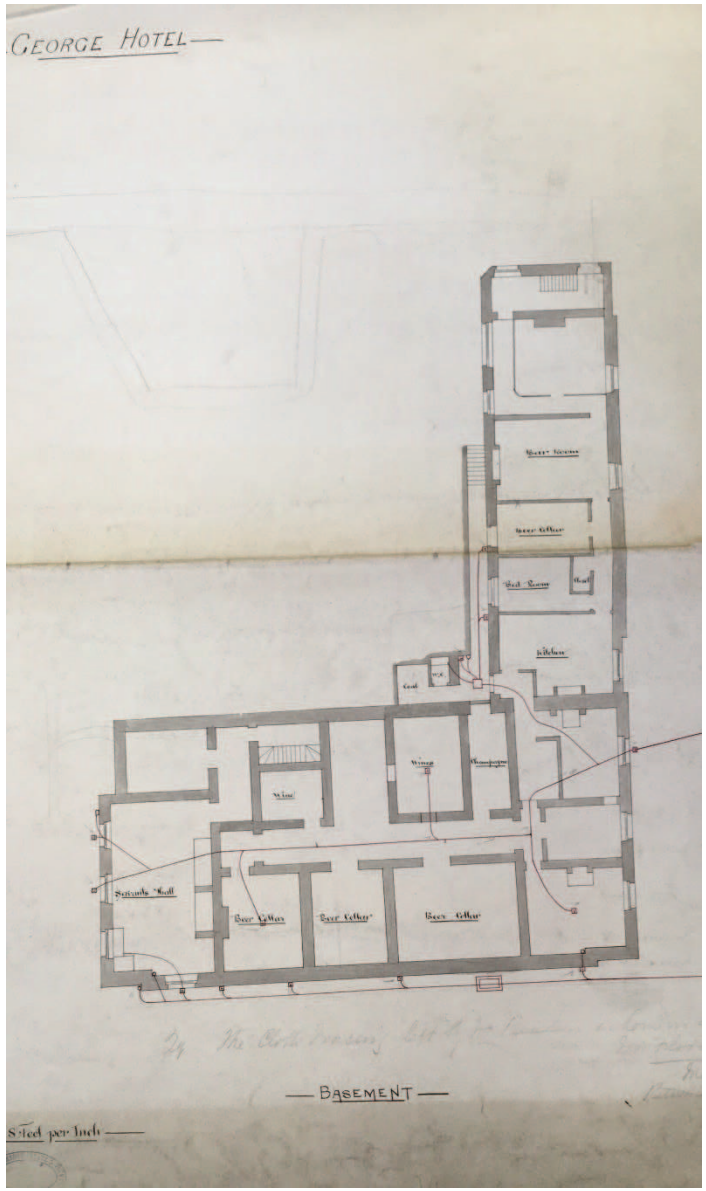
Drawings from 1874 show a proposal for a West Wing (Block B), and these suggest that the East Wing was extant, with a dining room to the ground floor, sitting rooms and a billiard room to the first floor, and bedrooms above. The proposed West Wing was to contain a wash house and linen stores to the ground floor, and kitchens at first floor. A photo (Figure 1) taken around this time, looking from the railway station towards the main range (Block A) shows the hotel in context; East Wing (Block C) was present but Block B was not. There is also no bow window on the west elevation of Block A but there is a staircase which was probably a key or main entrance into the hotel from the train station.

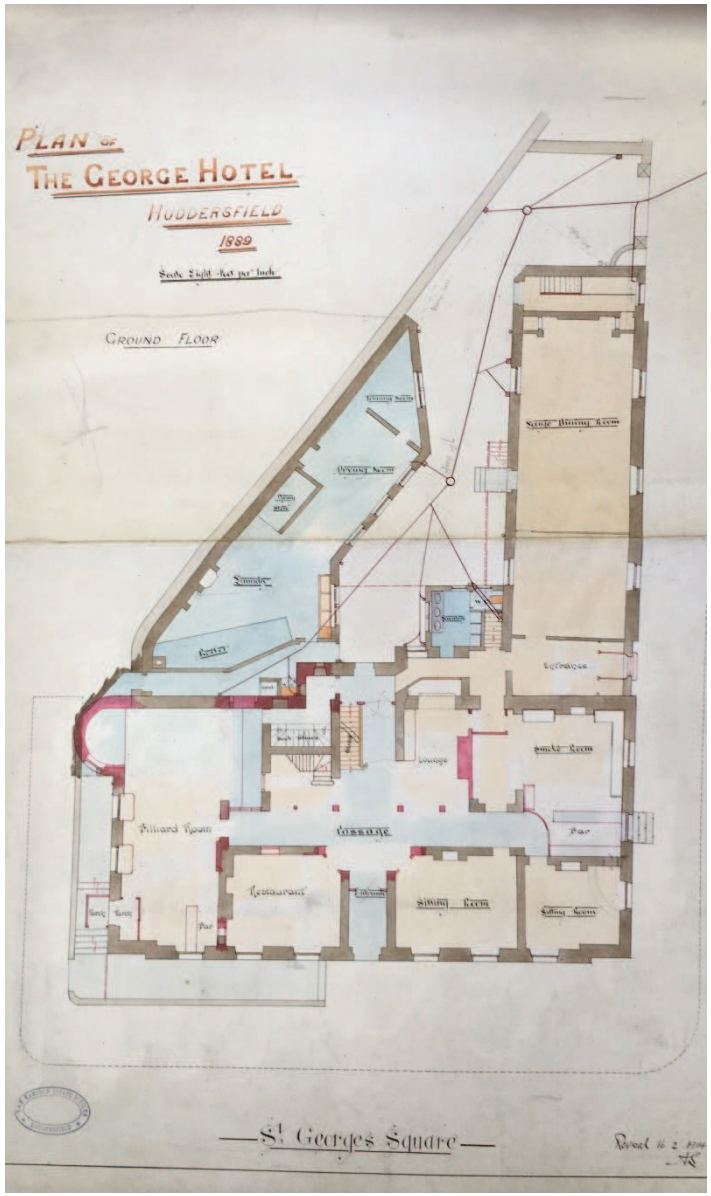




4.2 History of the George Hotel (cont.)

Drawings from 1886 provide further information, notably, that the East Wing had a basement containing ancillary accommodation, however there is no basement accommodation indicated for the West Wing. The ground and first floors of this wing show the same type of spaces, but not the same layout as shown on the 1874 plan. In addition, changes are shown to the original building (e.g. the inclusion of the bow window and making the ground floor circulation space more open), and a glazed walkway is shown to the courtyard side of the East Wing at first floor. The footprint of these drawings matches the OS plan of 1887 and the town plan of 1889. At this time, the East Wing did not extend Northwards to the full extent of the site, and a Cabman's shelter is shown at the Northern tip of the site, with the cab stand indicated next to it on John William Street.





4.2 History of the George Hotel (cont.)

A photo from the late 19th century shows the main range (Block A) facing St. George's square and provides some indication of how the space was occupied. It also confirms that there was no canopy above what is understood as the main entrance .



Photograph of the front façade from the late 19th century

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, an event in the hotel secured it an important historical association; Rugby League was founded in one of its rooms. This event originated from a divide by around 1890, between largely middle-class teams based in the south of England, who were keen to maintain the amateur nature of the sport, and working-class teams in Yorkshire who needed compensation for work lost when playing games, known as broken time payment.

The refusal of the Rugby Football Union to allow this payment, and the harsh punishment given to clubs and players who broke the rules, precipitated a crisis that came to a head with a meeting of 22 northern clubs at the George Hotel on 29th August 1895. The meeting saw the creation of the Northern Football Union allowing for the payment of 'bona fide broken time'. This group eventually became the Rugby Football League.

It is impossible to be certain of the precise location of the historic Rugby League meeting, but it was most likely to have been carried out in the first floor Commercial Room due to the numbers who attended.

Small-scale block plans of 1904 and 1930 suggest the layout remained largely the same between these dates A photo from 1912 shows the main range (Block A) in context, with what appears to be a staircase from John William Street into the building. This staircase was shown on the 1889 layouts with an indication that the entrance was to be transformed so it appears that this was implemented.

The architectural drawings show that significant changes were planned during the 1930s. Of the drawings dating from 1930, 1932, 1936 and 1938, some of the proposals indicated on each were certainly implemented, while others appear not to have been. For example, the bars (e.g. American and Tudor) on the 1930 plans do not seem to have been implemented, while the WC cubicle in the room next to the Commercial Room which is shown on the 1932 drawing is extant. The first-floor layout in 1936 shows an open plan ball room and dining room with a folding partition between, but the 1930 and 1938 drawings indicate a vertically sliding partition that is hydraulically operated and housed in the basement. It appears from the extant evidence (see later) that the sliding partition was constructed.

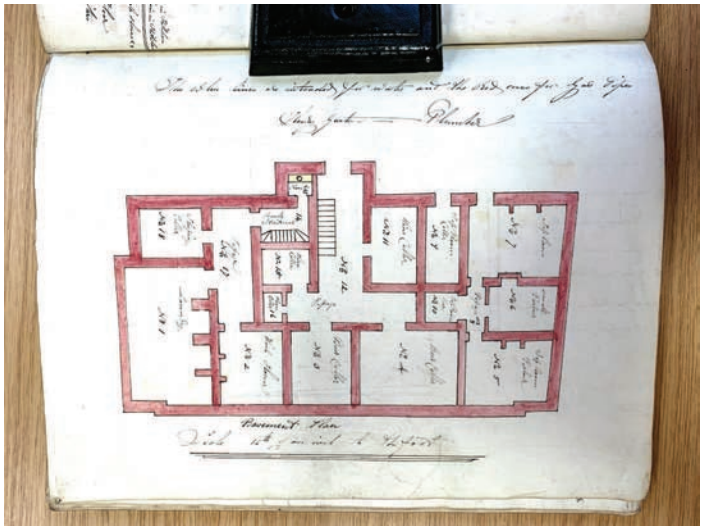
In the 1960s, the West Wing was extended to third floor level to form a final range of bedrooms - there is no archive information of the 1960s extension but a photo from the railway line facing Block B provides supporting evidence that it was completed during this time .

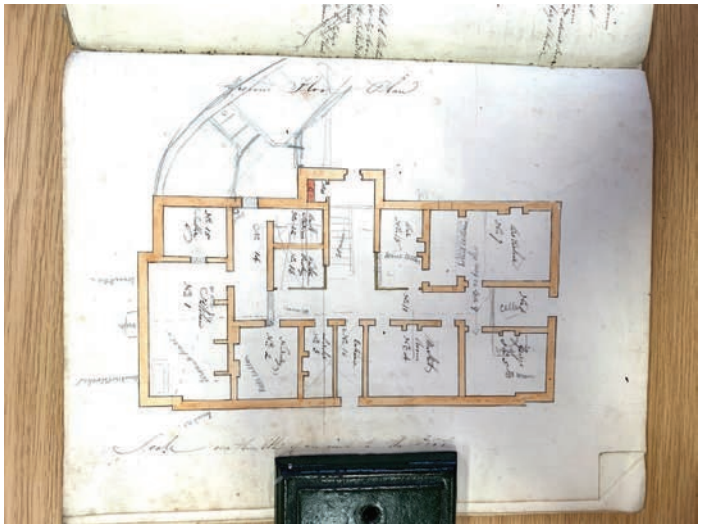
There is physical evidence of subsequent alterations to the main range (Block A) internally and East Wing (Block C) on the upper

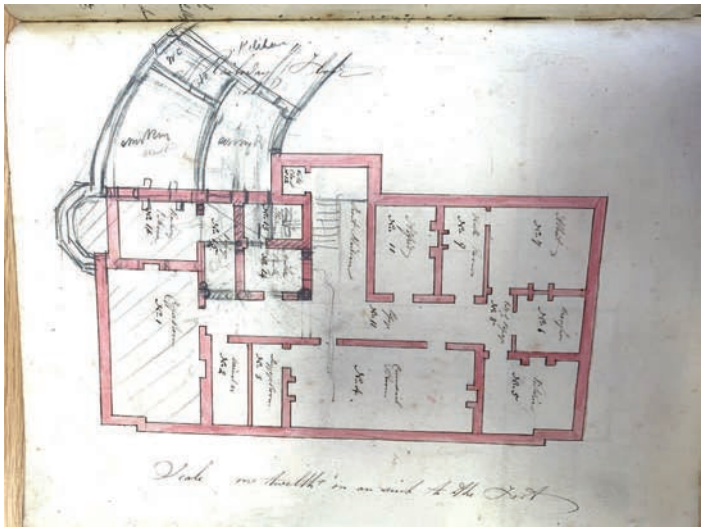


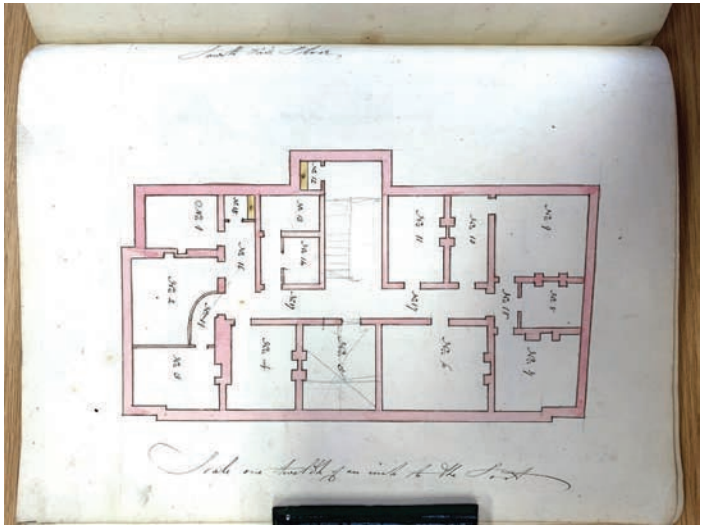
Photograph of The George Hotel in 1912 showing the former entrance from John William Street

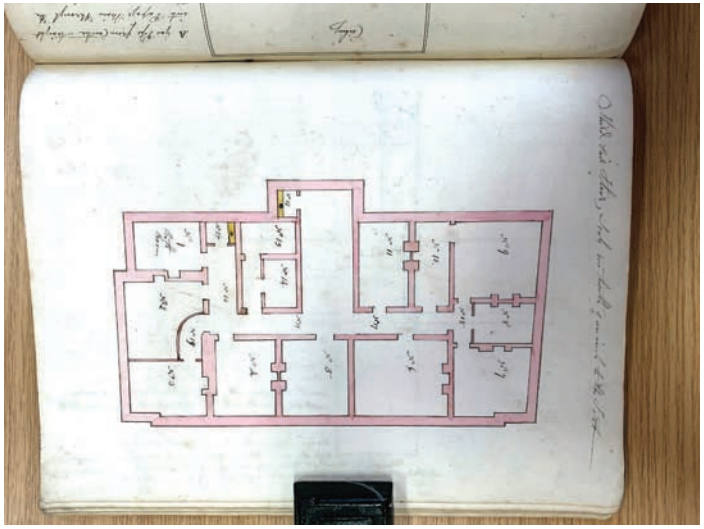
1851 Floor Plans

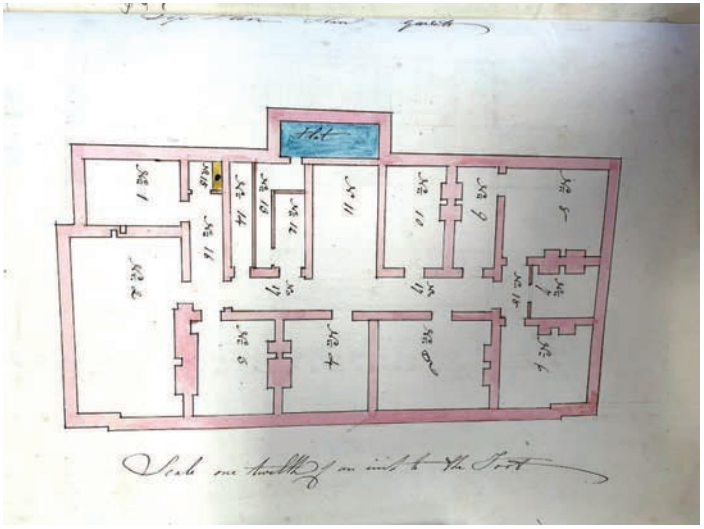




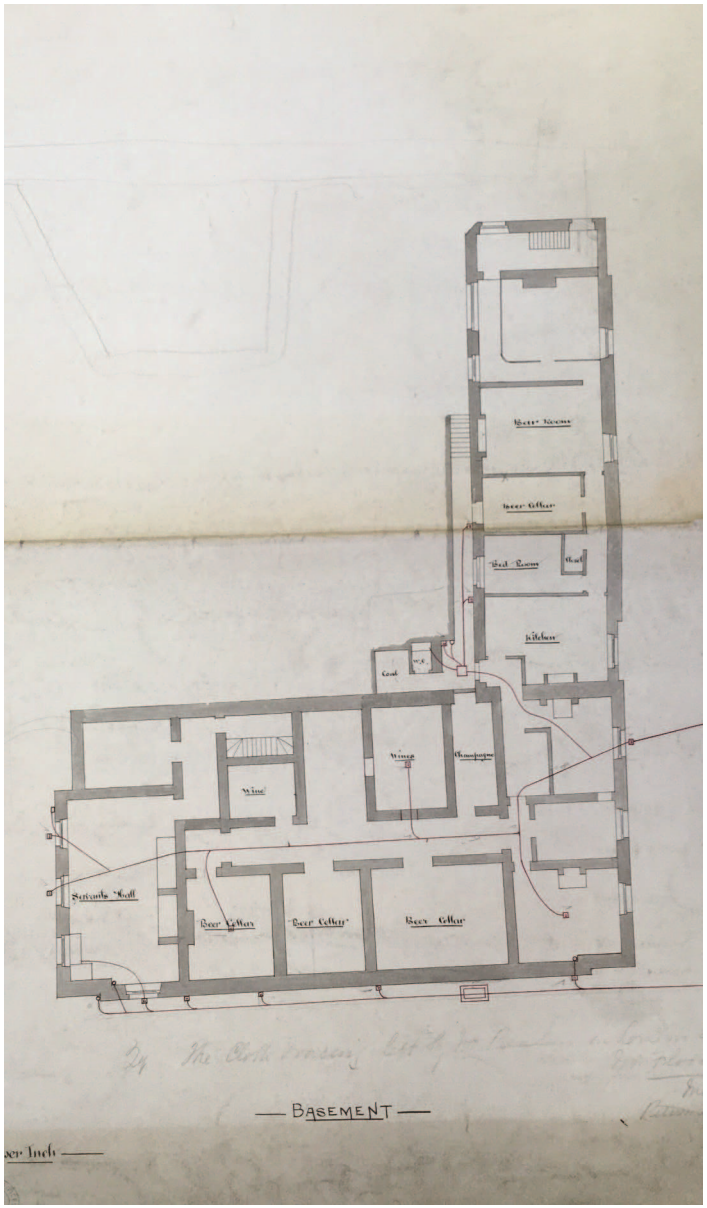


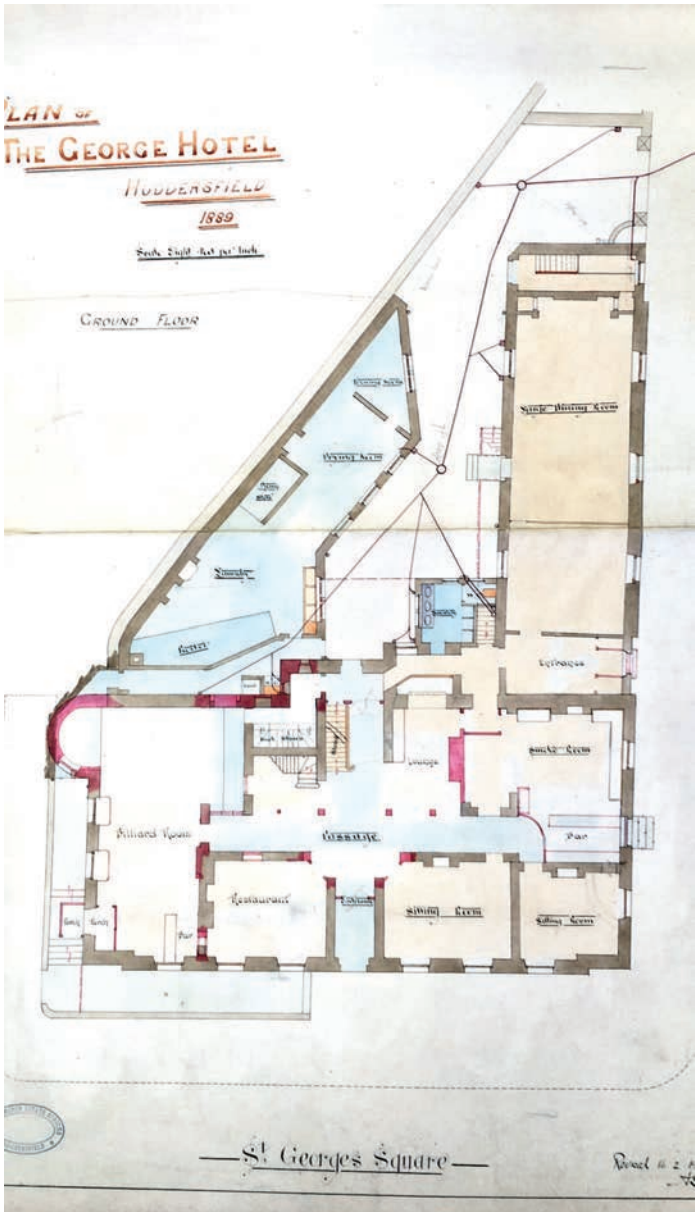


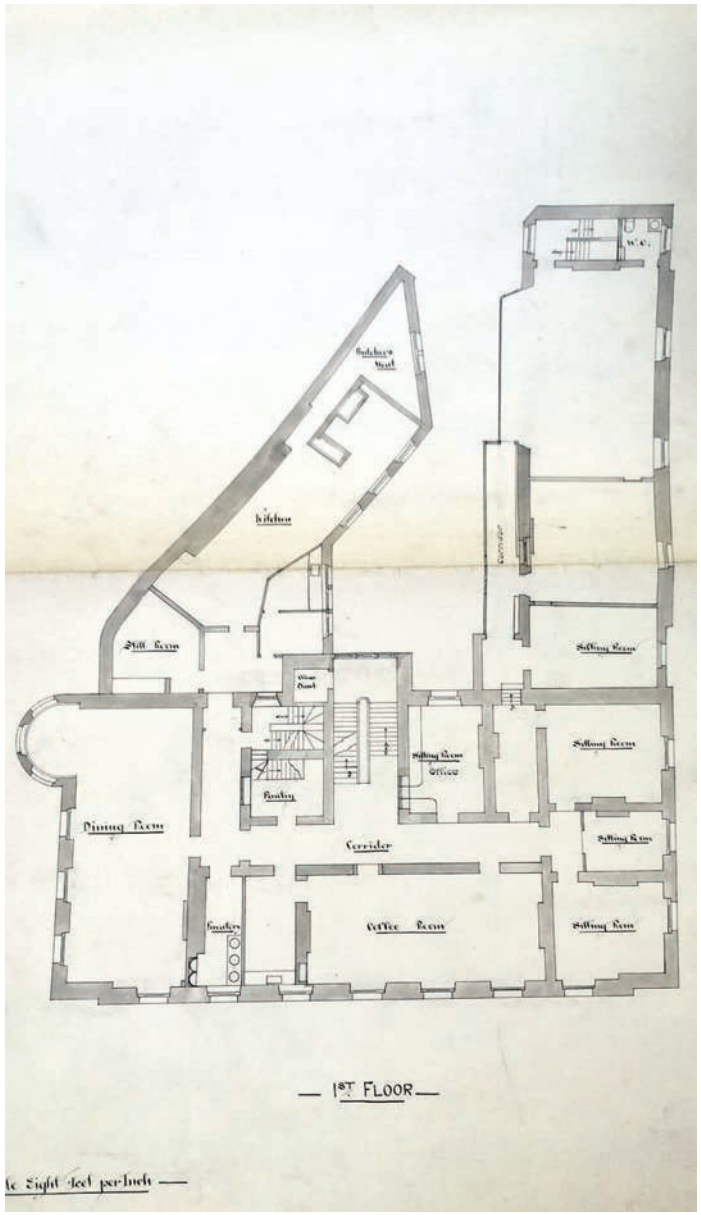




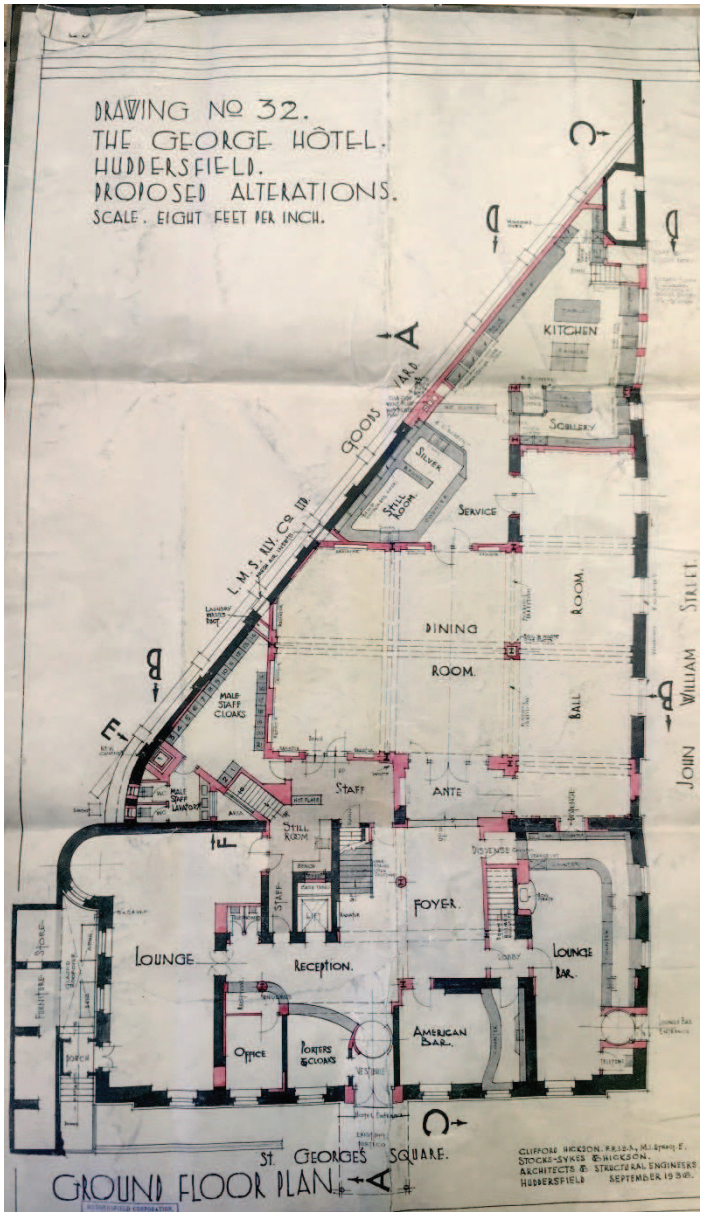
1886 Floor Plans

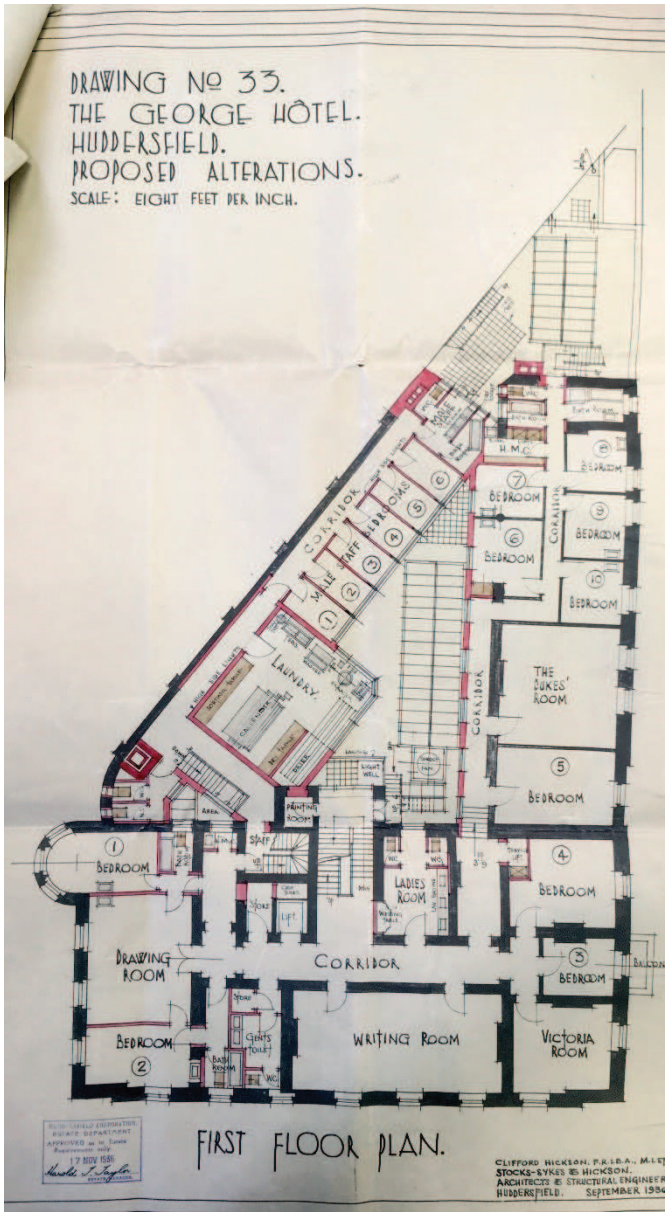


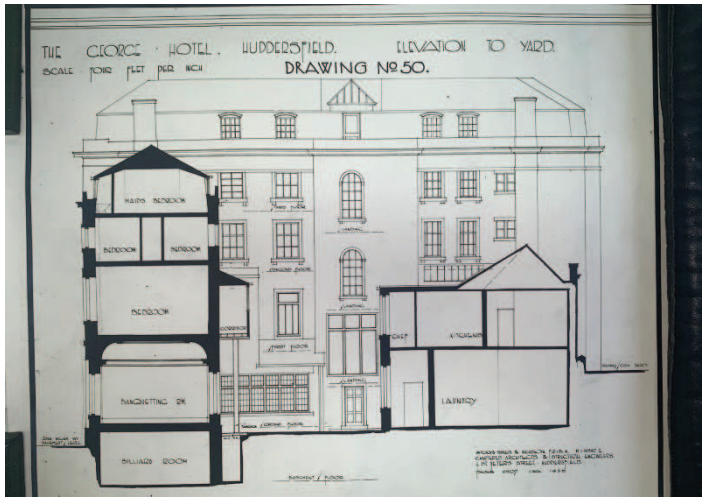


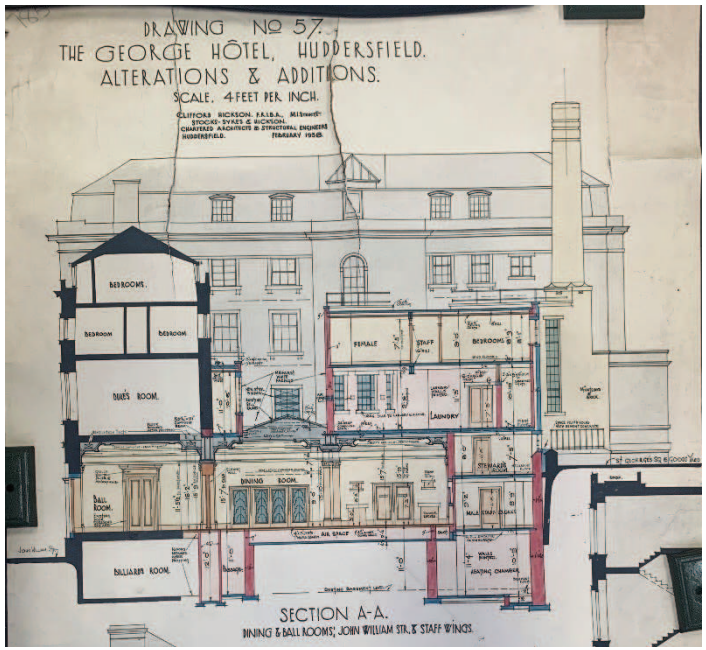


1930's proposed floor plans and existing and proposed section









4.3 Summary of Development Phases

Phase 1 (c.1851):

The original hotel building (Block A).

Phase 2 (c. 1852-1873):

The basement and ground floors of the East Wing (Block C) were constructed by 1853, and two further floors were added before 1874.

Phase 3 (c.1874-1930):

The Ground and First Floor of the West Wing (Block B) was constructed. Alterations to the main range (Block A).

Phase 5 (1930s):

A series of major works which involved the remodelling and extension of the West Wing (Block B) to form bedrooms at second floor level and the infill of the central courtyard to form the ballroom.

Phase 6 (1960s):

Third floor added to the West Wing (Block C).



5.0 Extant Site and Building

5.1 Context—Huddersfield Conservation Area

The George Hotel is positioned close to the centre of the Huddersfield Town Centre Conservation Area (Figure x). This is characterised by large, three-storey commercial and civic buildings, dating to the Victorian period, and constructed of stone, and includes a high number of listed buildings, at Grades I, II* and II. Many of the buildings have shallow roofs and / or parapets, and smaller numbers include mansards or gable dormers. Typical details include cornices, corbels, pediments, window hoods, voussoirs, projecting sills, pilasters, relief sculptures and statues.



Bird's eye views from The George Hotel, looking towards the Britannia Buildings

Huddersfield Train Station

The Grade I Huddersfield Train Station faces onto St George's Square. It has a classical, symmetrical form, with a two-storey central section, and single storey platform wings either side. The large columns and pediment indicate its importance.





7 St George's Square / 19 Railway Street

This building is Grade II* listed. And also faces into St Georges Square There is a hierarchy to the elevations, with the most decorative facing Railway Street, then a simpler version facing the George Hotel, and the simplest facing Station Street. There is also a reducing hierarchy to its three floors. The building features include entablature, moulded sill bands, ionic columns and quoins.



5.1 Context (cont.)

Britannia Buildings

This Grade II* listed building is on the opposite side of St. George's Square to the George Hotel. As with the Lion Buildings, it has a strong symmetry, and demonstrates a hierarchy of space through its reducing floor heights. Here however, the style of fenestration suggests it had a more formal historical use than retail. The tall ground floor windows with sills above head heigh, have voussoirs, while the upper floor windows are square-headed with pediments to the first floor and low arches at second floor. At the top, there is a decorative frieze, cornice and balustrade.







The Former Empire Cinema

This former cinema is located on John William Street is not typical of the architecture in the conservation area, having a later construction date (1915). It is Grade II listed.



5.1 Context (cont.)

Lion Buildings on John William Street

This Grade II* building faces St. George's Square, The George Hotel and Huddersfield Train Station. This building is designed in a near symmetrical way, with a large curved façade to the primary road network. Its central entrance bay projects forward and features a large lion statue at the top. There is a hierarchy in the architecture, with a taller ground floor retail offering, and two further floors with reducing heights and window proportions. The double, triple and quadruple mullioned windows with projecting arches are a distinctive feature.







The Railway Bridge

This is a transition between the historic, commercial core of Huddersfield, and its later development, delineated in part by the railway line, but also the increasing openness and reduction in active frontages to the street.



5.2 The George Hotel

The building is primarily sandstone, some of which may have come from the left-over stone following the construction of the train station in 1846-1850 round the same time as the George Hotel .

Exterior

The Main Range of the hotel (c.1851), which overlooks St George's Square, is four-storeys in height and constructed of rusticated stonework with vermiculated detailing and quoins at ground floor.

The upper floors comprise of ashlar stonework from first to third floor with rusticated quoins (without vermiculation) and decorative stone surrounds to the windows. The stone has vertical batted tooling with borders of horizontal batted tooling at corner details. The elevation then steps back at fourth floor level to a slate mansard roof. The coursing of the ashlar blocks has a regular pattern with two courses per quoin.

The Main Range has a projecting string course between ground and first and a projecting cornice mounted on carved stone corbels with alternating carved reliefs between each corbel. These reliefs alternate between a circle motif and a simpler pyramidal projection.

The East Wing, which was constructed shortly after the Main Range uses similar design styles to the upper floor of the Main Range with ashlar stonework, decorative stone surrounds and rusticated quoins. In contrast to the Main Range, the building is lower in height and has less regularity in terms of the design and arrangement of the windows. In addition, the dimensions of the quoins are slightly smaller resulting in a smaller coursing height. The East Wing is separated from the Main Range by a small link section which is full height ashlar blocks, the coursing of which matches the smaller quoins of the East Wing.

The West Wing is also constructed from stonework, but this is a split faced coursed stone with plain stone surrounds to the metal casement windows.

The internal triangular courtyard is formed by the Main Range, East Wing, and the West Wing. The elevations overlooking this area are comprised of painted brickwork with stone sill and head details to the rear of the West Wing. The rear of the Main Range is coursed split faced sandstone as is the rear of the East Wing. The external corridor which was constructed in the 1930s along the rear elevation to the East Wing at first floor level is also constructed of painted brickwork similar to the West Wing.





5.2 The George Hotel (cont.)

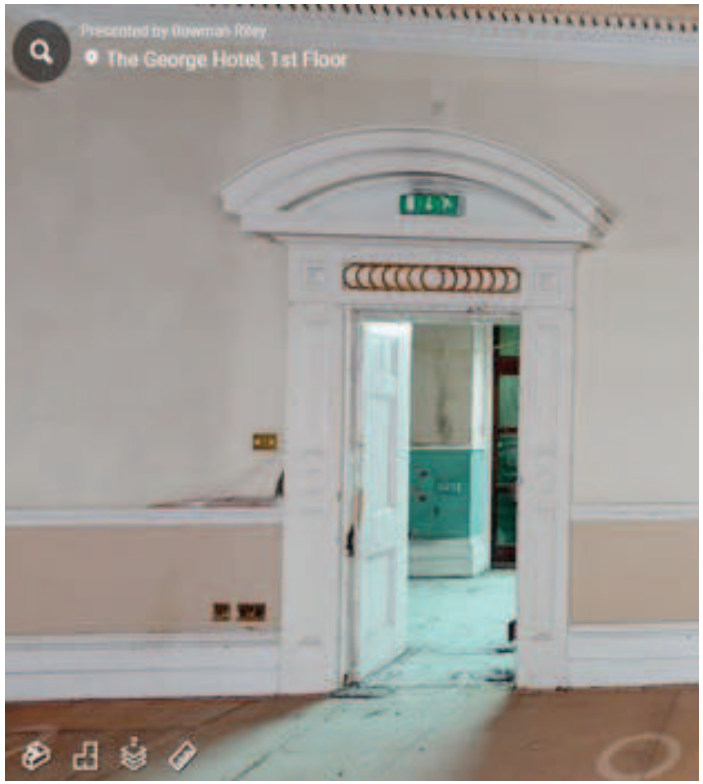
Interior

The interior of the hotel is a mix of fabric and styles from its original construction to the present. With regards to the later alterations, there is no clear evidence of a co-ordinated approach to its architecture or design / conservation philosophy.

The earliest phase of work retains detailing that is typical of the Victorian period, such as cornices (generally one design per floor), panelled door linings, profiled joinery, panel doors, and in the case of the Commercial Room, highly decorative pedimented architraves.











5.2 The George Hotel (cont.)

The second and some of the third phase of work, generally uses the same Victorian detailing, so for example, in room x (next to the Commercial Room), a new door from the corridor has the same panelled lining as the earlier doors .



The later Victorian doorset to the right has the same design as the original to the left.

Major work was undertaken in the 1930s however, and in addition to the new build construction of Blocks B and C, the interior of Block A was modified. The ground floor provides a good example, and its opening up to provide a large entrance area and circulation included modification of the architectural features (Figure x). The most prominent of these features is the marble-effect columns with capitals, but the coffered ceiling and Art Deco joinery contribute to its different aesthetic. With the sweeping stair and porthole window, the space has a nautical feel, and perhaps also typifies the grandeur of inter-war Britain for the middle-classes. There remains a black and white tiled floor in this area which appears to correspond to the original floor plan, and a large fireplace is also extant.





The open plan ground floor area

The dining room and ballroom are two other key 1930s spaces. The dining room features pilasters and columns with capitals, a coffered ceiling and decorative joinery.



The ballroom is architecturally similar, although it has no floor (Figure x). The two rooms are currently divided by a partition with pilasters on it and columns offset by a short distance into the dining room. It is thought that the line of the partition is close to the position of a vertical sliding partition that was shown on the 1930s drawings.



The ball room has similar features to the dining room.

The basement 'pocket' and hydraulic room appear to have been built, but if so, this means that the vertical sliding partition was either not installed, or that it was removed and the fixed wall was constructed as a later replacement. This raises questions about the intended purpose of features such as the columns, and the phasing of attached features such as joinery.

Subsequent modification in the 1960s and beyond has made little positive contribution to the building. It now feels dated and is in an overall poor condition, with some spaces, such as the kitchens, having no architectural merit at all.

5.2 The George Hotel (cont.)

The upper floors of Block C have been the subject of structural works so there are large steel frames from which the first and second floors of the building are hung.



The main kitchen area.



Steel frame to the third floor of Block C.

While many of the modifications have been particularly unsympathetic to some historic fabric, it has been retained in some areas, such as above or behind new insertions, and the form of some openings previous can still be seen. For example, on the ground and upper floors, there are numerous examples of false ceilings being inserted below the original. In some cases, it has been possible to see the original ceiling and cornice above.





False ceilings below the original.

In the basement, where walls are painted brickwork, doors inserted into pointed arch openings (formed by vaulted ceilings) can be clearly identified, as can the edges of steps .





Evidence of former openings (top) and stairs (bottom).

Unfortunately, previous adaptations involving new fabric have also tended to use a philosophy that does not align with current thinking in relation to being able to distinguish different phases of the building, so Victorian cornice details have been applied to new walls within existing rooms for example.



The Victorian cornice design has been recreated on new walls, such as the built-in cupboards.

6.0 Heritage Values and Significance

6.1 Assessment of Significance

Internal room significance

The significance of each room and its bounding walls was determined using a pre-defined set of criteria that takes into account evidential, historical and architectural values. This was done collaboratively in a series of workshops, and involved detailed exploration of the Matterport model alongside the historical archive drawings. The significance of each space and element was debated, and as decisions were taken, these were cross-referenced to spaces and fabric that had already been determined to ensure that the levels were consistent across the whole building. The following principles were used:

Evidential value:

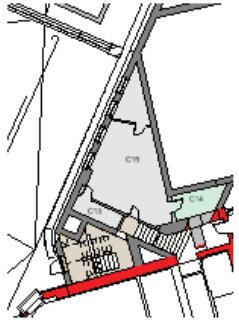
Fabric or features that do not necessarily have architectural value, but which provide information about the building's past and how it was used.

Historical value:

Fabric or features that have associative links (e.g. Rugby League) or illustrative links (e.g. an early example of a particular technology).

Architectural value:

Mainly features that originate from an early phase of the building's development, and are good examples of the design of their period. These can also include features relating to later phases of development where these are particularly good or innovative for their period.



Significance Plan - Level 01 Mezzanine
1 : 200



Significance Plan - Level 01
1 : 200



Significance Plan - Level 03
1 : 200

6.2 Significance—Room

Typical examples of how these were determined from the heritage values are provided below.

Considerable

A room with its original floor plan and form, and all or nearly all of its original interior architectural features extant, such as skirting boards, architraves, windows, doors, wall and ceiling plaster, cornices, fireplaces, and any other features.

Example: Room 051

Original floor plan, plastered walls, highly decorative plastered ceiling with cornice and rose, sash windows with panelled linings and architraves, skirting boards, decorative doorcases with pediments and panelling, dado rail (some if not all is a later addition), no fireplaces. A connecting doorway has been blocked up.

This room has a very low capacity for change and every effort should be made to retain the architectural features. The plan of the room should not be changed.



6.1 Heritage Values (cont.)

High

A room with its original floor plan and form and many of its original interior architectural features extant, including at least two categories from those listed previously.

Example: Room 091

Original floor plan, but connected to adjoining room at a later date. Retains plastered walls and ceiling, skirting boards, architraves, sash window, fireplace hearth. While some of the cornice is original, new matching sections have been introduced around a built-in wardrobe, making it difficult to distinguish the phasing.

This room has a low capacity for change and every effort should be made to retain the architectural features. The plan of the room should not be changed, and consideration should be given to enhancing it by removing any inserted features. There is capacity to distinguish between work from different periods.

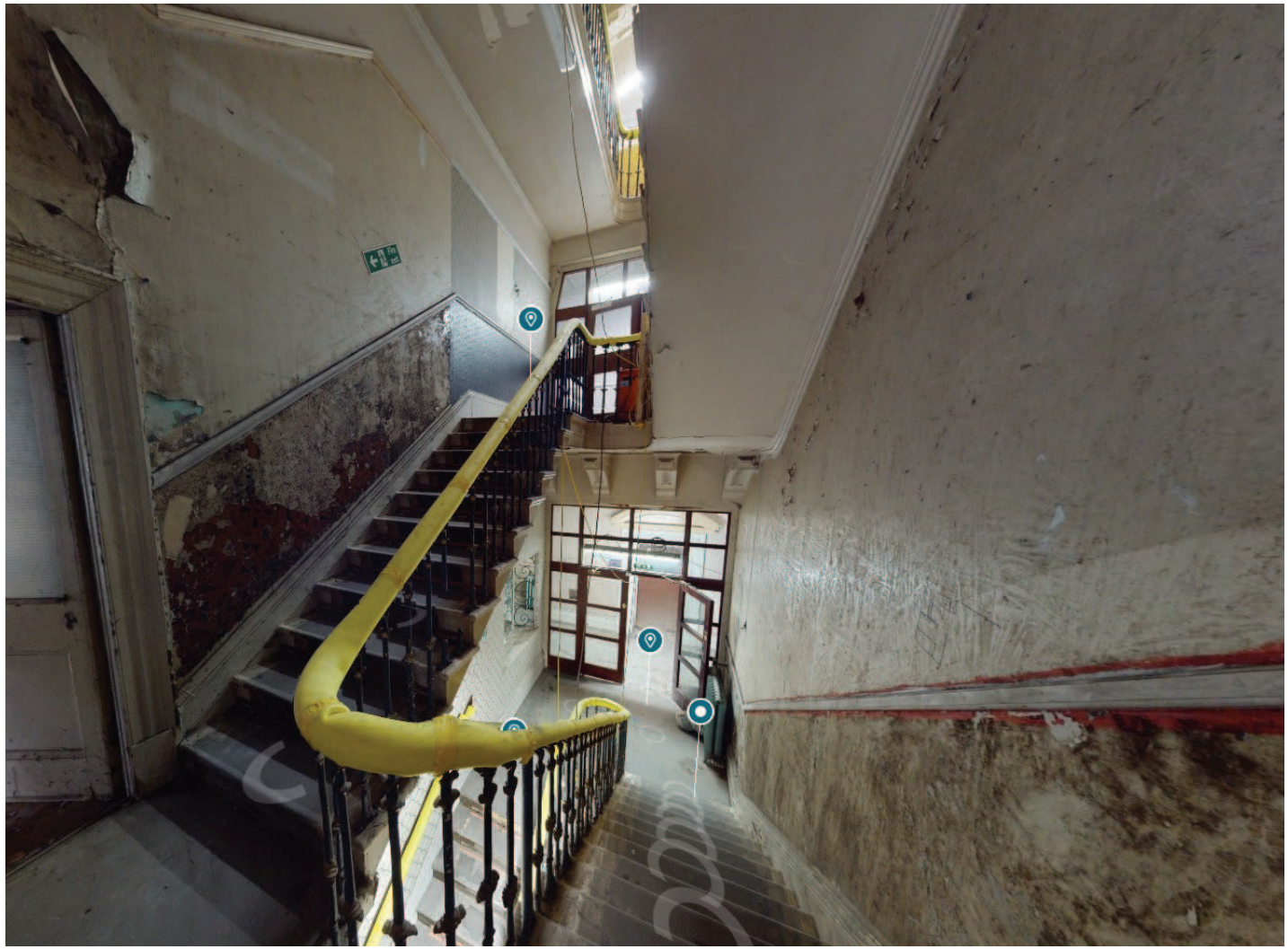


6.1 Heritage Values (cont.)

Example: Rooms X23, X40, X56, X70

Original floor plan. Retains plastered walls and ceilings, skirting boards, architraves, windows, corbels, staircase and balustrades. Later additions include a handrail, dado rail and replacement doors.

This room has a low capacity for change and every effort should be made to retain the architectural features.



6.1 Heritage Values (cont.)

Moderate

A room with its original floor plan and form mostly intact, and at least one original interior architectural feature extant. Alternatively, a room that does not have its original floor plan or form, but which contains at least two original architectural feature categories.

Example: Room 141

The original floor plan is still readable, but an en-suite room has been inserted into the corner of the room (Room 142). The room retains its original skirting boards, architrave and panelling to door case, sash windows and hearth, but there is no ceiling. While some of the cornice is original, new matching sections have been introduced around service boxing, making it difficult to distinguish the phasing.

There is some capacity for change, for example to distinguish between work from different periods.



6.1 Heritage Values (cont.)

Example: Room 045

The original finishes and fixtures have been lost and the room was re-designed in the 1930s. The 1930's floor plan is still readable, but there have been changes to the inner wall, which probably includes the removal of a vertical sliding partition, and the fixing of a wall and columns to the rear of the partition area.

The room retains the 1930's decorative ceiling with cornice and columns. The majority of the skirting boards appear to also date to the 1930's, but where later changes have been made to walls, reproduction skirting boards have been installed, making it difficult to distinguish the phasing. Window fittings are also later replacements.



6.1 Heritage Values (cont.)

Low

A room with its original floor plan and form mostly intact but no original interior architectural features. Alternatively, a room that does not have its original floor plan or form, but which contains at least one original architectural feature.

Example: Room 086

The original floor plan is still readable, but an en-suite room has been inserted into the corner of the room (Room 087). The room retains its original sash window and one section of skirting board but the ceiling has been lowered obscuring any original cornice and there is a service bulkhead over the room entrance and en-suite area.

The room has a high capacity for change.



6.1 Heritage Values (cont.)

Example: Room 127

The original floor plan is still readable in part, but the wall dividing the room from the next bedroom has been removed. The room is now open combined with the original adjacent room, which itself has an en-suite inserted (Room 128). The room retains its window and door architraves, and at least some of the skirting appears to be original. There is no ceiling and it is not possible to know if there was a cornice on construction as the evidence of one having been removed almost certainly relates to a later insertion.

The room has a high capacity for change.



6.1 Heritage Values (cont.)

Neutral

A room within blocks A or C which does not have its original floor plan or form, or any of its original interior architectural features intact. A bedroom within the 1930s block B.

Example: Room 022

The room retains has been divided to create a small room in the corner. its original plan form, but a doorway has been blocked up and another has been created. No original features are retained.

The room has a high capacity for change.



6.1 Heritage Values (cont.)

Detrimental

A room that does not have its original floor plan or form, or any of its original interior architectural features intact, and which also causes harm to immediate fabric and our overall understanding of the building.

Example: Room 059

This part of the building was originally a single, large space, and has been subdivided into six smaller spaces. There are lowered ceilings and bulkheads and reproduction skirting boards, all of which make it difficult to understand the original design intent and use. Other than the windows, no original features remain.

The room has a very high capacity for change.



6.1 Heritage Values (cont.)

Example: Room 071

The 1930's floor plan is still readable, but an en-suite room has been inserted into the corner of the room, and there is a built-in wardrobe, both of which have a significantly negative impact on the original space. There are no architectural features worthy of note.

The room has a high capacity for change.



6.2 Significance

Statement of Significance

The George Hotel has high heritage significance, based on its evidential, aesthetic, historic and communal values.

Evidential value is low as there is a low likelihood of finding buried archaeological evidence of significant value on the site , but the building itself evidences the ways in which it has been used through time, and the changes that have occurred in architectural and interior design, not only in the key building elements, but also in decoration such as wallpaper and floor tiling.

The Hotel has high historical value because of its importance in the town and its relationship with the train station which signalled a key transition in the development of Huddersfield. Its high associative value comes in part from the connections with the notable Ramsden family who owned much of the land and property in Huddersfield from the 16th to early 20th centuries, and who initiated the development of the new town and relocation of the former George Inn to its new site next to the station. The fact that the building has retained it's original use as a hotel is a strong contributing factor to its historic and communal values.

The Hotel has high associative historic value because of the hotel's connection with Rugby League. Rugby League is an important game in Huddersfield and the West Yorkshire area, but as the location where the League was established, it cements the hotel's place in not just local, but national history.

This association also contributes to the high communal value, The hotel previously housed a small museum 'The Rugby League Heritage Centre' dedicated to the history of Rugby League and so its long-standing association with the sport is still widely known by the local communities, and valued, hence the establishment of new National Rugby League Museum elsewhere in the town centre. Due to the continued use of the building as a hotel, The George has high communal value to the people of Huddersfield. The majority of people in Huddersfield have attended a significant life event such as a christening, marriage, birthday or funeral in this Hotel and has been a constant source of collective memory.

The hotel also has high aesthetic value, primarily associated with Block A, the original part of the building. In common with much of the architecture in this area of Huddersfield town centre, the Italianate design and stone construction of the exterior provide a good example of architecture of the period. The significance of the hotel and the other individual buildings in the conservation area is enhanced by their additional group value. Internally, the retention of Victorian features adds to the hotel's aesthetic value (including where these are extant but hidden by later modifications). Some rooms, such as the commercial room, have very high aesthetic value and considerable significance, but modification to many of the other spaces from the 1930s onwards, has reduced their individual significance and that of the hotel overall.

SUMMARY:

BLOCK A has high significance and as such a limited capacity for change. The majority of this significance is held in the early 1851 built fabric with the decorative elements of the later interventions contributing moderate significance.

BLOCK B has neutral significance with the majority of the internal spaces being low quality and detrimental to the overall experience of the building.

BLOCK C has moderate significance with the majority of internal spaces having low/neutral significance due to the extent of alteration both historically and more recently. The ground floor dining room has moderate significance due to the extent of decoration in the internal finishes.

COURTYARD BALLROOM has moderate significance due to the extent of the decoration in the internal finishes.

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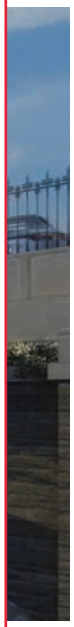

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9.0 Conclusion

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