27/05/2025

Dear Jillian Rann,

George Hotel, St George's Square, Huddersfield, HD1 1JA

Ref: 2023/65/90112/E

The Twentieth Century Society is the National Amenity Society charged with the protection and appreciation of post-1914 heritage. We have been notified of a Listed Building Consent application for *refurbishment and redevelopment of the George Hotel (including partial demolition, partial reconstruction, extension and internal and external works and alterations) to provide a 108-bedroom hotel with bar, restaurant, gym, conference facilities and ancillary facilities* for the Grade II* listed George Hotel in Huddersfield. The Society objects to this application, as we hold strong concerns about the demolition and removal of listed twentieth century fabric.

Background

The George Hotel, first listed in 1977, is an Italianate Victorian railway hotel located in the centre of Huddersfield, in close proximity to the Grade I railway station. The list entry for the hotel emphasises the importance of various 1930s alterations, including alterations to the lobby and former dining room.

Policy

The **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF**; 2024**)** states at **Paragraph 202:**

202. *Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value. These assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.*

At **Paragraph 212:**

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

The Society's Assessment

We are concerned by the loss of high-quality twentieth century fabric proposed in this application. It is our assessment that the **Heritage Impact Assessment** (L054-AHR-XX-XX-RP-A-08805 P1) does not appropriately evaluate significant twentieth century fabric throughout the hotel building.

The provided **Heritage Impact Assessment** states at **Paragraph 4.0** that 'the 20th century low quality alterations including the coffered ceiling at the base of the stair will be removed to allow better understanding of the interior spaces'. The **Assessment of Significance** (L054-AHR-XX-XX-RP-A-08804 P1) indicates at **Part 5** (page 26) that the coffered lobby ceiling dates from the 1930s major work. The Historic England List entry for the lobby indicates that it 'survives well, with scagliola columns, decorative skirtings and cornice in Art Deco-influenced Classical style'. If this coffered lobby ceiling is part of the 1930s work, we strongly support its retention as part of a coherent and well-retained whole. The heritage significance of this ceiling does not appear to be recognised within this application. Similarly, the **Interior Design Report – Concept** (L054-AHR-ZZ-01-ZZ-T-I-08901) indicates that 'there are a mixture of floor tiles all believed to be a later addition' in the lobby; the **Assessment of Significance** states that 'there remains a black and while tiled floor in this area which appears to correspond to the original floor plan'. This tile flooring ought to be explored further. If it is a surviving feature of the 1930s work, it ought to be retained, rather than replaced with new tiling as indicated on page 47 of the **Interior Design Report**.

The **Heritage Impact Statement** states at **Paragraph 2.2.3** that 'block C is much altered and considered of neutral or no significance'. Given that the Historic England List entry explicitly states that the 'ground-floor dining room of the north-east wing retains its 1930s decorative scheme which matches that of the lobby, including Art Deco glazed doors', we refute the claim that Block C has neutral or no significance. While Historic England have decided to exclude the ballroom and the north-west wing ('Block B') from the listing, this is not the case for the dining room, and the rest of the north-east wing ('Block C'). Justification for the demolition of Block C is given in the **Heritage Impact Statement** at **Paragraph 4.3** as due to 'the extent of alterations that have been undertaken both internally and externally and the resulting structural condition'. There does not appear to be a structural report attached to justify the demolition of this GII* listed wing of the hotel. There is also an implication that the 1930s alterations are not of significance, when this is not the case.

As per **NPPF 212,** *when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be).* Given the Grade II* listed nature of the building, strong justification must be provided for the demolition of the north-east wing of the hotel, including the demolition of the dining room. The photographs of the dining room in **Part 5.2** of the

Assessment of Significance appears to show it in good condition, with what appears to be original flooring. The glazed doors to both the dining room and the ballroom appear to be in-situ.

The **Design + Access Statement** (L054-AHR-XX-XX-RP-A-08700-P1) states in **Part 6.3_ Demolitions & Alterations** that 'Any significant demolition of historic fabric has been avoided wherever possible and is undertaken as a last resort once all other options have been discounted'. Given the high value and significance of the ground-floor dining room, this must be evidenced. While structural issues may be present, it is unclear if options such as retaining the dining room on the ground level, and demolishing unsound structure above, has been considered. This must be evidenced in order to justify this demolition. This section of the statement claims that 'both blocks [B&C] contain a mixture of neutral & detrimental 20th century interventions and mid to late 19th century-built fabric deemed to be of medium significance', without taking into account significant twentieth century fabric, such as the dining room. It is imperative that this high-quality, high significance twentieth century fabric is appropriately recognised as such.

Part 6.3 also states that 'demolition of unlisted structures that abut listed elements will be taken down with a view to the unlisted material being sacrificial and the historic fabric to be retained and repaired'. It must be made explicit that the only fabric in the site that is not listed is 'the north-west wing, including the associated chimney, east return onto John William Street, and ballroom'. All other fabric – including the entirety of the north-east wing – is listed fabric.

We defer to the Victorian Society to comment on the suitability of the proposed new-build element in the context of Huddersfield Town Centre Conservation Area and the other listed buildings of St George's Square.

Assessment of Significance

Given the GII* nature of this building, and the high quality of the 1930s fabric, it must not be undermined. It is an integral part of the building, rather than insignificant later work. The list entry for the George Hotel states that:

'it retains much of its early plan form and C19 decorative joinery and plasterwork, as well as good quality 1930s alterations in the lobby and former dining room; the decorative detailing demonstrating a hierarchy of status throughout the building.'

These 1930s alterations are currently regarded as having no or negative significance. They ought to be reassessed to ensure that their heritage significance is retained as much as possible. We regard the 1930s lobby and dining room to be of great importance. As per **NPPF 212**, 'great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be)'.

Yours sincerely,

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Remit: The Twentieth Century Society was founded in 1979 and is the national amenity society concerned with the protection, appreciation, and study of post-1914 architecture, townscape and design. The Society is acknowledged in national planning guidance as the key organisation concerned with the modern period and is a constituent member of the Joint Committee of the National Amenity Societies. Under the procedures set out in the *Arrangements for Handling Heritage Applications – Notification to Historic England and National Amenity Societies and the Secretary of State (England) Direction 2021*, all English local planning authorities must inform the Twentieth Century Society when an application for listed building consent involving partial or total demolition is received, and they must notify us of the decisions taken on these applications.