2024.00373.000

George Hotel

Refurbishment (Planning & LBC)

Response – VICSOC, SBH, CC and 20th C

10.07.25

Shaping places that have
a positive impact

July 2025

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Revision	Date	By
01	02.07.25	AHR Building Consultancy
02	10.07.25	AHR Building Consultancy (TO)

Introduction

APPLICATION REFERENCE AND DOCUMENTS:

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

Statutory Consultees:
- Twentieth Century Society
- Victorian Society

Neighbourhood Representations (Comments):
- Civic Society
- SAVE Britain's Heritage

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 ostensibly Authored by the appointed Conservation Architect Consultant Richard Storah (RIBA AABC SCA IHBC).

We have specifically chosen to respond to all of the 4 included parties as many of the matters raised oare of a similar or crossover nature and as such feel there is merit in keeping responses in a singular location in recognition of this.

Consultee Comment (Civic Society)

Ref: 2025-91147_+Neighbour+representations_1088332 - Civic Society.PDF
Date: 15.05.25
From: The Civic Society
Officer: Unnamed

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

On behalf of Huddersfield Civic Society :-
Huddersfield Civic Society strongly support the ongoing proposals to bring the George Hotel back into use. Its prime town centre location, as well as the urgent need for quality town centre hotel space makes these applications a necessity that should be welcomed. However we have some concerns regarding details contained in the submitted drawings:-
The building's redevelopment is necessary, but the new design could have been more sensitive to the original historical character of the building and historical urban context it sits within.

The alterations to the windows on the façade facing John William Street, though understandable for interior bedroom layouts, diverge from the original features.The large glazing strip replacing the historic roof feature does not seem to fit well with its surroundings. Its excessive height, assuming extended to the roof level to hide the plant compound inside, feels out of proportion comparing to windows and features on other levels.

We would appreciate if these comments were noted going forward..

Applicant Response (To Civic Society)

From: AHR Building Consultancy
Person: Richard Storah (RIBA AABC SCA IHBC), Conservation Architect

Materials have been chosen to reflect those of the conservation area. The design reflects the rhythm of the existing and seeks to provide identifiable elevations on the approach to the town centre and when viewed from the railway.

The alteration to a single window in the reconstructed John William Street elevation is not considered detrimental. The amended position reinforcing the mannered elevation and reflecting internal use.

Although accentuated by the elevation drawings, the height of the building is moderated by the set back and reflectance of the cladding. Its appearance from the street the is less pronounced as shown by the street views. Due to the reduction in rooftop plant the scale is less than that previously approved.

Consultee Comment (Twentieth Century Society)

The Society's Assessment **(Ctd)**

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.

Consultee Comment (Twentieth Century Society)

The Society's Assessment **(Ctd)**

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, Gus Wray.

Applicant Response (Twentieth Century Society)

From: AHR Building Consultancy
Person: Richard Storah (RIBA AABC SCA IHBC), Conservation Architect

During initial works carried out as part of the initial consent has become apparent that the lobby ceilings were renewed in the 1980's refurbishment. They are a mix of plasterboard and fibreboard and of no historic merit.

It is however intended to restore and retain the scagliola columns, skirtings and cornice in the lobby areas and to restore the ceilings to the height of the 1930's ceilings and pick up on their detailing to aid understanding.

There will be no significant loss of 1930's fabric to the ceilings. The tiled floors are considered to date from the 1980's refurbishment. Their provenance is being investigated as part of the archaeological survey.

The dining room has been extensively altered in the 1980's with modern plasterwork and plywood boxing used to replicate details. Circulation routes tot he ballroom and other internal features have been altered over time, reducing the evidential value of the space.

Investigations have revealed extensive late C20 alterations to both the lobby and dining room and this has impacted on their heritage value. There are structural and viability issues regarding the retention of the dining room and block C, the interiors of which have been compromise by past alterations.

However there is an aim to respect the 1930's interiors within the original building and seek to sympathetically enhance their understanding, ensuring that their significance is retained as much as possible.

It is considered that on balance the long term viability of the hotel is of significant public benefit and that this outweighs the harm through the loss of the altered interior space.

Consultee Comment (Victorian Society)

Ref: 2025-91148_+Consultee+Responses_1089857 - VICSOC.PDF
Date: 27.05.25
From: The Victorian Society
Officer: Thomas Ollivier

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

Thank you for consulting the Victorian Society on this application. Our Building Committee (a group of architects, historians and heritage professionals) considered the proposal carefully at their meeting on the 12th May 2025. We object to these revised plans in their current form but are willing to engage further on the redevelopment of this important building. The Society previously objected to similar applications for the Goerge Hotel in February and June, 2023.

Built in 1849 as a Railway Hotel by William Wallen, the George Hotel is a Grade II-listed building, meaning it is nationally recognised for its remarkable significance and special interest. It sits in the Huddersfield Town Centre Conservation Area and shares this iconic and important setting with: the Grade I Railway Station (James Prichett, 1846-50); the Grade II* Britannia Buildings (William Cocking, c.1858); Grade II* Lion Buildings (James Prichett, 1853). It is clear then that George Square holds phenomenal architectural, historical and national interest, as well as being a source of local pride for Huddersfield and the community.*

The application harms the setting of this Conservation Area and other listed buildings by demolishing a large amount of the Grade II-listed George Hotel to create a 96+ bed hotel in a jarring architectural language. This proposal will not only irreversibly harm the George Hotel, will also have a negative impact on the setting of no fewer than 8 listed buildings.*

Demolition of a Grade II*-Listed Building
The National Planning Policy Framework is very clear: 'assets of the highest significance, notably… grade I and II listed buildings… [demolition] should be wholly exceptional' (2024, para. 213). Any form of demolition or alteration to this building 'of the highest significance' also requires clear and convincing justification (NPPF 2024, para. 212-215). This application has not yet done this effectively. The justification for the demolition of 'Block C' at the rear of the building (built late C19th-C20th) is that questions were raised as to its structural integrity due to dry rot. However, a corresponding structural report could not be found with the application. This specific demolition has certainly not fulfilled the NPPF (2024) and can only be considered as unjustified. Clear and convincing evidence must be supplied as to the buildings structural condition if the justification for demolition is reliant on its lack of structural integrity. Repair works and conservation were carried out by Historic England and Kirklees Council as recently as 2023 as a part of the Huddersfield High Street Heritage Action Zone.*

Consultee Comment (Victorian Society)

Demolition of a Grade II*-Listed Building (ctd)

The Replacement Building
The proposed designs of the replacement building is inappropriate to both the character of the listed building itself, but also the wider Conservation Area. The architectural language of the proposed scheme is not in dialogue with the wider streetscape; it does not reflect the building it is to replace nor the surrounding buildings. The John William Street façade's replacement does not mirror what was there originally. This is not a like-for-like replacement and would further erode and harm the character of a Listed Building. It is not a sympathetic replacement. Huddersfield Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal highlights how the 'railway quarter' is dominated by Classical and Italianate architecture; any additions to this space must adhere to its current character, scale and form.

Further to this, the Society feel that the massing of the building is too great – the proposed roofline should not dominate that of the original building. The Conservation Area Appraisal details how important built form is to the Conservation Area, and how sensitive this area is to inappropriate alterations; the George Hotel is highlighted as a key landmark in Huddersfield Town Centre, meaning it is particularly recognised for its positive contribution.

In conclusion, the Society objects to any form of demolition at The George Hotel without clear and convincing justification for such irreversible change. Any demolition should be wholly exceptional and should not be on this scale. Secondly, even if your Authority accepts the principle of demolition on such a scale, the replacement building is inappropriate to this sensitive and characterful Conservation Area, surrounded by a considerable concentration of high-grade listed buildings. Finally, we also highlight the lack of a detailed and comprehensive
Structural Statement to help justify the proposed works, especially regarding 'Block C'.

The Society would like to engage further with the process of preserving and reusing The George Hotel. It is an important building for Huddersfield, but also the UK, detailing its expansion and adoption of industry and railways in the C19th and the tourism that came as a result. We object to the current plans, but welcome revisions to minimise harm and maximise reuse of historic fabric and character. We support the principle of reuse for this significant building. The Society strongly urges your Authority to refuse this application. I would be grateful if you could inform the Victorian Society of your decision in due course.

Applicant Response (To Victorian Society)

From: AHR Building Consultancy
Person: Richard Storah (RIBA AABC SCA IHBC), Conservation Architect

The objection by the Victorian Society is similar in content to their previous application to the previously listed building consent which was approved. It is considered that the issues and rational are similar but are addressed again below.

The Society consider the proposal harms the setting of the Conservation Area and the setting of other nearby listed buildings. The site and views including the original hotel building (block A) are identified are key views within the conservation area.

Although blocks B and C are within the Conservation Area, they are acknowledged within the listing description and previous planning considerations as of lesser importance, being subject to numerous incremental changes which has diminished their historic significance.

The proposal seeks to maintain the appearance and historic fabric of block A, a key building within the town with associative value alongside other listed buildings including the Railway Staton and Lion Chambers.

The redevelopment of blocks B and C maintains the massing and streetscape within the Conservation Area, whilst the stepped facade to John William Street retains the subservience of the John William Street elevation to that of the original hotel block.

It is acknowledged that there is an impact on the Conservation Area and the setting of nearby listed buildings, but this harm is offset by ensuring that the hotel after 10 years of disuse (with the resulting material harm and loss) being largely returned to its original and optimum viable use.

The Society object to the demolition of a grade II* listed building. The listing description identifies the significance of the hotel (block A) but notes that the attached wings are later and of lesser significance.

The previously approved scheme agreed to the removal and replacement of the later hotel wings (blocks B and C). The exception being the John William Street elevation of block C the facade of which was to be retained.

We note that the justification for demolition and redevelopment of blocks B and C has previously been exhaustively investigated and agreed within the previous application Officers report.

The massing of the building is altered within the proposal, but remains within the previous footprint, relative to and subservient to the original hotel building (block A) and broadly in line though slightly smaller than the previously approved application.

Applicant Response (To Victorian Society)

Applicant Response Continued:

Since the previous application it has become apparent that the John William Street Elevation has distorted and been subject to outward movement, which is demonstrated in the submitted information but it is noted we have supplied a more accessible demonstration of the construction issues around the Wall retention *(see document ref 2025_4891147_W - 05 - Response - JWS Wall).*

It has also been identified that the bearing capacity of the road is incapable of supporting the facade retention to John William Street. There is no apparent practicable nor safe solution for the facade retention initially proposed, and indeed no design options forthcoming from the consulting engineers rendering the scheme unviable if the wall were to be retained.

To address this it is proposed to dismantle and reinstate this elevation. The elevation will be recorded, dismantled and rebuilt retaining its appearance within the streetscape and its societal value. Minor alterations to fenestration make good the vertical rhythm of this mannered elevation reflecting the altered internal plan form, whilst reinforcing the mannered appearance of the elevation.

The Society considered the replacement building inappropriate to the character of the listed building and wider conservation area. The new building has been designed to fit into the mannered street facades of the Ramsden planned new town and it share a common materials pallet with the existing hotel and surrounding listed buildings.

We note in particular the natural stone “cladding” which is some 40mm in thickness natural stone proposed to be sourced from the same quarry as the original construction building was sourced.

The John Ramsden Street elevation is to be rebuilt in original form and materials, whilst the upper levels step back and are subservient to this and to the original hotel block.

The Society state that the John William Street elevation does not mirror what was there previously, this they consider eroding the character of the listed building in an area dominated by Classical and Italianate architecture.

The minor alterations to fenestration have been made to make good the vertical rhythm of this mannered elevation whilst reflecting the altered internal plan form, this reinforces, rather than detracts from the mannered appearance of the elevation.

Applicant Response (To Victorian Society)

Applicant Response Continued:

CONCLUSION

Part of the significance of the George as a heritage asset derives from the continual evolution of the building in its originally intended use.

It is apparent that some of the earlier alterations and additions are more significant than others, but this evolution and reinvention is a common thread throughout the history of the building and is something which the current proposals seek to emulate. As with many historic hotel buildings, changes and adaptations are not uncommon and have played a significant role in safeguarding their past economic stability.

For the past 10 years the building has been empty and at risk, demonstrating the need for action to return the hotel to a viable use and ensure its survival. It has become apparent that the previously approved scheme can not be safely delivered.

This places the listed hotel at risk of continuing redundancy, and without a long term viable use the George Hotel is at risk of loss.

Historic England's Conservation Principles (para 86) notes that *"keeping a significant place in use is likely to require continual adaptation and change; but, provided such interventions respect the values of the place, they will tend to benefit public (heritage) as well as private interests in it.*

Many places now valued as part of the historic environment exist because of past patronage and private investment, and the work of successive generations often contributes to their significance.

Owners and managers of significant places should not be discouraged from adding further layers of potential future interest and value, provided that recognised heritage values are not eroded or compromised in the process."

The George Hotel has evolved through constant change and phases of significant intervention. This has allowed it to gain and retain its historic significance and remain in its optimum viable use. The current proposals are a continuation of this process and also build upon pre-established decision making in the redevelopment of blocks B and C.

The proposals are considered to assist in the conservation of the George Hotel, to respect the materiality and the mannered architectural style of surrounding buildings and return the hotel to its original and optimum viable use.

Consultee Comment (SAVE Britain's Heritage)

Ref: 2025-91148_+Consultee+Responses_1089857 - VICSOC.PDF
Date: 03.06.25
From: SAVE Britain's Heritage
Officer: Unamed "Conservation Officer"

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

Thank you for consulting the Victorian Society on this application. Our Building Committee (a group of architects, historians and heritage professionals) considered the proposal carefully at their meeting on the 12th May 2025. We object to these revised plans in their current form but are willing to engage further on the redevelopment of this important building. The Society previously objected to similar applications for the Goerge Hotel in February and June, 2023.

Built in 1849 as a Railway Hotel by William Wallen, the George Hotel is a Grade II-listed building, meaning it is nationally recognised for its remarkable significance and special interest. It sits in the Huddersfield Town Centre Conservation Area and shares this iconic and important setting with: the Grade I Railway Station (James Prichett, 1846-50); the Grade II* Britannia Buildings (William Cocking, c.1858); Grade II* Lion Buildings (James Prichett, 1853). It is clear then that George Square holds phenomenal architectural, historical and national interest, as well as being a source of local pride for Huddersfield and the community.*

The application harms the setting of this Conservation Area and other listed buildings by demolishing a large amount of the Grade II-listed George Hotel to create a 96+ bed hotel in a jarring architectural language. This proposal will not only irreversibly harm the George Hotel, will also have a negative impact on the setting of no fewer than 8 listed buildings.*

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The National Planning Policy Framework is very clear: 'assets of the highest significance, notably… grade I and II listed buildings… [demolition] should be wholly exceptional' (2024, para. 213). Any form of demolition or alteration to this building 'of the highest significance' also requires clear and convincing justification (NPPF 2024, para. 212-215). This application has not yet done this effectively. The justification for the demolition of 'Block C' at the rear of the building (built late C19th-C20th) is that questions were raised as to its structural integrity due to dry rot. However, a corresponding structural report could not be found with the application. This specific demolition has certainly not fulfilled the NPPF (2024) and can only be considered as unjustified. Clear and convincing evidence must be supplied as to the buildings structural condition if the justification for demolition is reliant on its lack of structural integrity. Repair works and conservation were carried out by Historic England and Kirklees Council as recently as 2023 as a part of the Huddersfield High Street Heritage Action Zone.*

Applicant Response (To SAVE Britain's Heritage)

From: AHR Building Consultancy
Person: Richard Storah (RIBA AABC SCA IHBC), Conservation Architect

The objection by SAVE is similar to that of the Victorian Society and the Twentieth Century Society regarding the extent of demolition. The listing description identifies the significance of the hotel (block A) but notes that the attached wings are later and of lesser significance. The previously approved scheme agreed to the removal and replacement of the later hotel wings (blocks B and C).

SAVE consider the massing of the new build elements may erode the character of the listed building and wider conservation area. The new building has been designed to fit into the mannered street facades of the Ramsden planned new town and it share a common materials pallet with the existing hotel and surrounding listed buildings.

The principle of rebuilding has been established in the previous listed building consent. The current proposal seeks to rationalise the design, to reduce rooftop plant, environmental impact and massing from that previously approved.

SAVE consider there to be inadequate justification for removal of the wings to the rear of the hotel. For the past 10 years the building has been empty, whilst it has become apparent that the previously approved scheme can not be delivered. This places the listed hotel at risk of continuing redundancy, and without a long term viable use the George Hotel is at risk of loss.

Summary

Applicant Formal Response (Applicant Agent).

As outlined in the introduction, whilst the commenting parties in this report are both Statutory and Non Statutory in nature, many of the matters and questions raised in objection are similar in nature and it is sincerely hoped that our addressing these in a combined matter is of assistance to these commenting parties.

It is the applicants position as informed by their consultant engineers, architects, conservation architects and other appointed parties that the application as it stands represents a viable and proportional response in respect of significance and design consideration within the constraints that the current building presents.

We reiterate that the principle and justification around the general demolition proposals remains largely unchanged from the current approved scheme with the exception of the John William Street elevation where the matters of condition and constructability issues around retention (tested by 2nr contractors) have given clarity around the remaining option and subsequent proposal to deconstruct and reconstruct this element.

We would note that whilst many of the comments supplied have been helpful in ensuring thorough assessment, thought and recording of decisions is commensurate with the building's significance, the receipt of Objections to the scheme in principle have been neither helpful nor do they appear to reflect the sum of the evidence and information of justification supplied by the design team as part of the application.

The applicant is keen to ensure all parties are consulted and where applicable, conditions are agreed to ensure remaining matters of concern are addressed and are happy to write into these the need to involve the relevant commenting party in this discharge.

To this end we would respectfully request that the commenting parties consider this route of resolution of concern by condition rather than Objection particularly in relation to matters already robustly consulted, assessed and determined in the previous application.

Shaping places that have a positive impact