Historic England

Ms Jillian Rann
Kirklees Council

Direct Dial: 01904 601957

Our ref: L01592148
31 July 2025

Dear Ms Rann

Arrangements for Handling Heritage Applications Direction 2021
& T&CP (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015
& Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990

GEORGE HOTEL, ST GEORGE'S SQUARE, HUDDERSFIELD, HD1 1JA
Application Nos 2025/65/91148/W & 2025/91147

Thank you for your letters of 10 July 2025 regarding further information on the above applications for listed building consent and planning permission. On the basis of this information, we offer the following advice to assist your authority in determining the applications.

Summary

The proposals for The George Hotel have been amended in light of consultee comments, including those from Historic England. This includes clarification on the quality of materials, the reduction of the glazed extension height by 1.1m, justification for certain elements including works required to the main stair, glazed junction between Block A and new build elements, and finally justification for dismantling and rebuilding of the John William Street elevation.

Historic England Advice

Significance

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

The George itself utilises high quality, decorative detailing to its exterior to visually

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impress those travelling via rail to Huddersfield. It has an almost landmark character when entering St George's Square form the Railway Station and this detailing and massing contribute highly to its significance.

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

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

As well as The George's fine architectural appearance and association with the success of Huddersfield as a key point on the railway line between Manchester and Leeds, it is also the home of Rugby Football League. It was originally termed the Northern Rugby Football Union to distinguish it form middling-class southern clubs who wanted to keep the game at an amateur level. This was an important point in history for the game of Rugby which allowed players who worked to not miss pay in order to play for their rugby team. Whilst the exact room the paperwork was signed in 1895 has been speculated upon, it is considered that this important event happened in what is now called the Commercial Room.

Impact

Conservation of John William Street Elevation

We consider that the careful dismantling and rebuilding of the John William Street elevation would amount to less than substantial harm as per our previous advice.

Glazed Link

The glazed link in its current form is considered to cause a less than substantial amount of harm to the significance of the George Hotel due to its visual impact directly adjacent to Block A, the most significant part of the listed building, particularly its physical and visual relationship with the mansard roof.

Height

The revised height of the proposed rooftop extension is still considered to cause a less than substantial harm to the special character of the listed building due to the relative height and form of the extension compared to the form and height of the mansard of Block A.

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Position

Overall, Historic England remains supportive of the principle of the redevelopment of the George Hotel. We acknowledge the amendments that have been made and the justification for certain elements.

We discussed the reduction in height of the proposed glazed extension and it is acknowledged that the height has been reduced as far as possible regarding building regulations and viability. Therefore whilst we have identified harm we acknowledge there is no more scope for reduction without the loss of a storey. We therefore would advise that the local authority grants great weight to the conservation of the listed building and considers whether the identified harm is outweighed by any public benefits which are perceived to arise form the scheme.

The glazed link between Block A and the new build element still raises some concerns however it is acknowledged that this element was permitted under the previous, approved scheme. It has been suggested by the Applicant that the junction between the mansard roof and the new build element in particular can be fine-tuned as to lessen this impact. We would advise that the glazed link could be articulated in some manner as to lessen this visual impact which we have identified as causing a less than substantial amount of harm.

From information provided in the amendments, and through conversations with the Applicant, we consider that our comments around high quality materials has been partly justified. Whilst the visual mock ups are helpful to understand the scheme the quality of materials should be assessed on samples to be approved by the local planning authority. The updated supplementary documents states that the materials proposed to be used are of the highest quality and therefore this can only truly be tested via sampling which is set to be provided by the Applicant. Nonetheless we still reiterate that given the sensitive heritage context of the George Hotel, it is both the design and materiality which should be of the highest quality.

It has been clarified by the Applicant that the understanding of what is required to fix the main staircase has been complicated by previously unknown foundation issues. We have no concerns regarding a pre-commencement condition to manage the investigation required to understand how to resolve the stair issues.

The issue of John William Street has been provided and we understand that the need for dismantling and reconstruction largely relates to the unsafe sequence of processes which would be required and the inherent risk to workers being unacceptable, the potential risk to the John William Street fabric due to structural condition, potential risk

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to Block should the John William Street elevation collapse during works, preclusion of satisfactory underpinning works due to road levels, and the absence of alternative solutions provided by engineering specialists. We acknowledge that this justification has been provided and this is for the local authority to assess whether it is clear and convincing to outweigh the harm identified. Should there be further amendments to designs submitted we would ask to be reconsulted and this would also allow our engineering experts to review the provided documentation.

Overall, Historic England remains supportive of the principle of the proposal which is to provide a sustainable future for this nationally significant building. We consider that there are still elements of the proposed design which would cause a less than substantial amount of harm. Some of this has been further justified by the Applicant which is acknowledged however some elements we would ask are further considered such as the glazed link and junction with the mansard roof. We would also appreciate the opportunity, should there be further design amendments, to have our internal engineering team to more comprehensively assess the justification put forward by the Applicant relating to the John William Street elevation.

Recommendation

We consider that the issues and safeguards outlined in our advice need to be addressed in order for the applications to meet the requirements of paragraphs 212, 213 and 215 of the NPPF.

In determining these applications you should bear in mind the statutory duty of sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

And, section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.

Your authority should take these representations into account and seek amendments, safeguards or further information as set out in our advice. If there are any material changes to the proposals, or you would like further advice, please contact us.

Yours sincerely

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