HERITAGE & PLANNING SUPPORTING STATEMENT

Retrospective Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent

External alterations, raised stone wall, ground level changes and timber veranda

SITE	The Talbot Hotel, Belper, DE56 2UA
CLIENT	Mr Alisom Allajbej The Talbot Hotel, Belper, DE56 2UA
AGENT	Spark Design and Planning Waterside Court, Third Avenue, Burton on Trent, DE14 2WQ
DATE	August 2026

PLANNING CONTEXT

The Talbot Hotel is a Grade II listed building (NHLE 1087396) within the historic environment of Belper and the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site. The statement assesses the significance of the heritage assets, the effect of the works, and the planning and public-benefit case for regularising the development.

1. Executive Summary

This statement supports retrospective applications for planning permission and Listed Building Consent for external works at The Talbot Hotel, Belper. The works comprise a timber veranda structure, the raising of part of the curved southern stone wall by approximately 0.6m, associated replacement/new stone walling, localised alteration and levelling of external ground levels, and associated improvements to the external customer area.

Amber Valley Borough Council has confirmed that the timber structure, the wall alterations and the raised/new walling require planning permission and Listed Building Consent. The applications therefore seek to regularise the works comprehensively.

The central heritage case is that the works are limited in scale, use a sympathetic material palette, retain the visual dominance of the listed building and support the long-term continuation of a historic hospitality use. The southern wall has been raised to a height that broadly corresponds with the established wall to the west. The external land was previously sloping towards the car park, and the completed level remains below the highest pre-existing ground level within the site. The change should therefore be understood as rationalisation of an already varied site rather than the creation of an elevated platform that competes with the historic building.

The timber veranda improves the commercial usefulness and customer experience of the external space. In the current hospitality environment, quality outdoor seating is an important part of a successful visitor offer, particularly in a popular tourist destination such as Belper. The applicant is also making substantial investment in the wider premises, including a full internal refurbishment, improved landscaping and installation of modern commercial kitchen and hospitality equipment.

OVERALL PLANNING BALANCE

The works preserve the essential architectural and historic significance of the Grade II listed building and do not undermine the Outstanding Universal Value of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site. If the Local Planning Authority identifies any less-than-substantial heritage harm, it is considered to be at the lower end of that spectrum and outweighed by the public benefits of continued investment, viable occupation, tourism, local economic activity and the long-term conservation of the heritage asset.

2. Site, Applicant and Proposal

Site: The Talbot Hotel, Belper, DE56 2UA.

Applicant: Mr Alisom Allajbej, The Talbot Hotel, Belper, DE56 2UA.

Agent: Spark Design and Planning, Waterside Court, Third Avenue, Burton on Trent, DE14 2WQ.

The Talbot Hotel occupies a prominent historic position at Bridge Foot, close to the centre of Belper. Historic England records the building as Grade II listed under National Heritage List for England entry 1087396. The statutory address is The Talbot Hotel, Bridge Foot.

The current owner acquired the property in 2026 with the intention of reopening and substantially improving the restaurant and hospitality offer. Contemporary marketing information published at the time of the sale described the property as a prominent 4,313 sq ft venue containing a 70-cover restaurant and seven-bedroom en-suite guest accommodation. It also recorded the applicant's intention to renovate the bar and seating areas and continue the long-established food and hospitality use.

3. Description of the Works

- a lightweight timber veranda/pergola-style structure providing sheltered external hospitality seating;
- raising part of the existing southern stone boundary wall by approximately 1 metre;
- replacement/new natural-stone walling and related boundary alterations;
- localised levelling and alteration of external ground levels within the customer amenity area; and
- associated landscaping and improvements to the external area.

The submitted proposed drawing specifies that the raised wall is to use matching or sympathetic stonework and traditional construction methods; that the timber structure is to use finishes and detailing sympathetic to the listed building and surrounding context; and that replacement/new walling is to be formed in natural stone to match or complement the existing stonework.

4. Heritage Significance

Historic England describes The Talbot Hotel as an L-shaped building built in several phases during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, constructed in coursed stone with steeply pitched tiled roofs and coped gable ends. The western part is identified as the oldest element and includes a rear wing with an external stone staircase. The listing also records the building's earlier use as a baiting place for coal higglers before the railway era.

The significance of the building derives principally from its surviving historic stone fabric, form, proportions and roofscape; its phased development; its prominent location at the junction of historic routes; and its longstanding association with travel, food, drink and hospitality.

That historic hospitality association is relevant to the present proposal. The application does not seek to introduce an unrelated use into the building. Instead, it supports the continued operation and improvement of a longstanding hospitality venue in a manner intended to keep the listed building occupied, maintained and economically sustainable.

The site also lies within the historic environment of Belper and the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site. The Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site is associated with the pioneering development of the factory system, the industrial settlements and infrastructure of the Derwent Valley, and the relationship between industry, settlement and landscape. The proposal is therefore considered not only against the significance of the listed building itself, but also against the wider historic townscape and World Heritage Site context.

5. Existing Site Levels and the Southern Wall

The existing site plan records a pronounced variation in ground levels across the external area. Before the works, the land sloped towards the car park. The applicant has locally levelled part of the garden/customer area so that it can function safely and effectively as an outdoor hospitality space.

The key point is that the highest part of the pre-existing land was already above the new finished level. The works have therefore not created a raised platform above the former high point of the site. They have rationalised an uneven and sloping part of the grounds into a more usable area.

Part of the southern stone wall was raised by approximately 0.6 metre. The resulting wall height broadly matches the established height of the wall to the west. This creates greater consistency in the enclosure of the site and avoids an abrupt difference in boundary height.

The use of matching or sympathetic natural stone and traditional construction methods is appropriate to the character of the listed building. The wall remains visually read as a traditional stone boundary feature and does not compete with the principal building.

6. Timber Veranda and External Customer Area

The veranda is constructed as a lightweight **oak timber garden structure**, rather than as a substantial or permanent masonry extension. The use of oak provides a natural material that sits comfortably alongside the traditional stonework and landscaped character of the site. The timber will be stained in a sympathetic finish to reduce its visual prominence and provide a more cohesive relationship with the surrounding historic fabric and garden setting.

The structure is deliberately open and lightweight in appearance, allowing the stone boundary walls and wider landscape setting to remain readily appreciable. Additional planting will be incorporated around the external area to further soften the structure and integrate it within the garden setting. As the planting establishes and matures, the veranda will become increasingly assimilated into the landscaped surroundings.

The proposal should therefore be understood as a **lightweight garden and hospitality structure**, subordinate to the listed building in both scale and appearance. Its natural oak construction, restrained finish and integration with new planting will allow it to blend progressively into the setting without competing with the architectural character of the Talbot Hotel.

The veranda also responds to a practical commercial requirement. Outdoor seating is now an important part of the hospitality offer, especially in visitor destinations where customers seek attractive places to sit, eat and drink outside. Providing a sheltered external area increases the usefulness of the site across a wider range of weather conditions and improves the overall customer experience.

The proposal should be viewed as part of a broader programme of substantial investment. The applicant is carrying out a full internal refurbishment, improvements to the landscaping and customer areas, and installation of modern commercial kitchen and hospitality equipment, including specialist refrigeration. This investment is intended to reopen and reposition the Talbot as a high-quality food and hospitality destination.

7. Effect on the Listed Building

The works do not materially alter the principal historic elevations, roof form, principal openings or the overall architectural composition of The Talbot Hotel. Their effect is concentrated within the external customer amenity area and boundary treatment.

The wall alterations use natural stone and the veranda is lightweight and subordinate. The historic building therefore remains the dominant element in the composition. Its architectural form and historic character remain readily legible.

The proposal is accordingly considered to preserve the principal significance of the Grade II listed building. If the Local Planning Authority identifies any heritage harm arising from the greater degree of enclosure, the ground level changes or the presence of the veranda, that harm would be limited and capable of being weighed against the public benefits of the scheme.

8. World Heritage Site and Wider Historic Setting

The Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site is an asset of the highest significance. The proposal is localised within the curtilage of an established historic hospitality building and does not alter the wider industrial settlement pattern, important historic routes, landmark mill complexes or the principal landscape relationships from which the World Heritage Site derives its Outstanding Universal Value.

The development does not introduce a building of a scale or massing that challenges the historic townscape. Instead, it retains traditional stone boundary treatment and provides a comparatively lightweight timber addition within an existing commercial curtilage.

A successful historic hotel and restaurant also contributes to the social and economic vitality of the World Heritage Site. Visitors require places to eat, drink and spend time while experiencing Belper's heritage. Investment in the quality of an established hospitality venue therefore supports the functioning of the World Heritage Site as a living historic environment as well as a protected heritage designation.

9. Commercial Viability, Tourism and Public Benefits

The hospitality sector is highly competitive and customer expectations continue to evolve. Historic commercial buildings often face additional maintenance and operating costs compared with modern purpose-built premises. Their long-term conservation is therefore closely linked to their ability to sustain viable and appropriate uses.

The applicant has committed substantial private investment to the Talbot Hotel with the intention of improving both the building and the visitor experience. The veranda and external works form part of that wider investment rather than a stand-alone intervention.

Belper is a popular visitor destination because of its historic townscape and World Heritage Site status. The provision of attractive external seating helps the premises respond to visitor demand and encourages customers to spend more time within the town. The proposal supports the local hospitality economy, visitor expenditure, employment, repeat visits and the continued active use of a prominent historic building.

These benefits are not limited to the private interests of the operator. Maintaining a successful business within a listed building helps fund continued upkeep and provides an active destination for residents and visitors. Planning Practice Guidance recognises that securing the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long-term conservation can constitute a public benefit.

10. National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework requires great weight to be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets and requires any harm to their significance to have clear and convincing justification. World Heritage Sites are assets of the highest significance.

Where a development would result in less than substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, paragraph 215 of the December 2024 NPPF requires that harm to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including, where appropriate, securing the asset's optimum viable use.

In this case, the works are modest in the context of the listed building and wider World Heritage Site. They retain the main historic fabric and architectural form of the hotel, use sympathetic materials, and support

continued investment in and occupation of the heritage asset. On that basis, the proposal accords with the heritage balance established by national policy.

11. Amber Valley Borough Local Plan 2022-2040

The Amber Valley Borough Local Plan 2022-2040 was adopted on 2 March 2026 and now carries full weight as part of the statutory development plan.

Policy EN4 - Heritage Assets

Policy EN4 supports proposals that conserve and enhance the significance of the Borough's heritage assets and their settings. It requires proposals affecting heritage significance to be accompanied by an assessment of significance and harm and to demonstrate measures taken through the design process to avoid or mitigate harm.

The current proposal responds positively to those requirements. The principal historic form of the Talbot Hotel remains unchanged; the external interventions are localised; stonework is specified to match or complement the existing boundary walls; and the veranda is lightweight and subordinate.

Policy EN5 - Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site

Policy EN5 seeks to protect the Outstanding Universal Value, authenticity and integrity of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site and requires development to respond appropriately in terms of scale, massing, siting and design. The proposal meets those objectives through its limited scale, use of natural stone, restrained timber structure and location within the established external commercial curtilage.

The proposal also contributes to the social and economic vitality of the World Heritage Site by supporting a visitor-focused hospitality use within a listed building. The development therefore assists both heritage conservation and the continuing economic life of the historic area.

12. Planning Balance and Conclusion

The applications seek to regularise a set of external works undertaken as part of a major reinvestment in The Talbot Hotel. The relevant works comprise a lightweight timber veranda, the raising of part of the southern stone boundary wall, new/replacement natural-stone walling, localised alteration of ground levels and associated landscaping.

The raised southern wall is approximately 0.6 metre higher than previously but broadly corresponds with the established wall height to the west. The customer area was already characterised by sloping and varied ground levels, and the highest pre-existing land was above the new finished level. The ground works therefore rationalise the site rather than create an elevated terrace above the former highest level.

The scheme retains the architectural primacy of the Grade II listed hotel and does not materially affect the principal historic elevations, roofscape or major historic openings. The use of natural stone and a lightweight timber structure provides an appropriate response to the immediate historic setting.

The development also supports substantial investment in the property, improves the visitor experience, helps the premises respond to demand for high-quality outdoor seating and strengthens the commercial basis for the continued occupation and maintenance of the listed building.

It is therefore considered that the proposal preserves the essential significance of The Talbot Hotel and does not undermine the Outstanding Universal Value of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site. If the Local Planning Authority identifies any less-than-substantial harm, it is considered to be limited and outweighed by the public benefits arising from continued viable use, heritage investment, tourism, local economic activity and long-term conservation.

The Local Planning Authority is accordingly respectfully requested to grant retrospective planning permission and Listed Building Consent for the works.

Sources and Reference Material

• Historic England - The Talbot Hotel, Bridge Foot, Belper. Grade II, List Entry 1087396. https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1087396

• Amber Valley Borough Council - Adopted Local Plan 2022-2040 (adopted 2 March 2026). https://www.ambervalley.gov.uk/localplan

• National Planning Policy Framework, December 2024 - heritage paragraphs including 213-215. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2

• Planning Practice Guidance - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment. https://www.gov.uk/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment

• OMEETO - 'End of an Era at The Talbot as Iconic Belper Venue Sold', 29 April 2026. https://www.omeeto.co.uk/commercial-property-news/The-Talbot-Belper

• Submitted drawing A100 - Existing Site Plan / Existing Wall Elevation, Spark Design and Planning, August 2026.

• Submitted drawing A101 - Proposed Site Plan / Proposed Wall Elevation / Section, Spark Design and Planning, August 2026.

• Correspondence with Amber Valley Borough Council Planning Officer Zoe Crockett, August 2026.