JSA Architects

Design & Access Statement

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01 INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This Design & Access Statement has been prepared by JSA Architects in support of a full planning application for the erection of a detached garden room structure on the existing front terrace of the Hurt Arms, Derby Road, Belper, DE56 2EJ. JSA Architects is a Derby-based practice specialising in the design of buildings within sensitive and heritage-constrained contexts across Derbyshire and the wider East Midlands, and has acted as architect for the Hurt Arms throughout its recent programme of consented works.

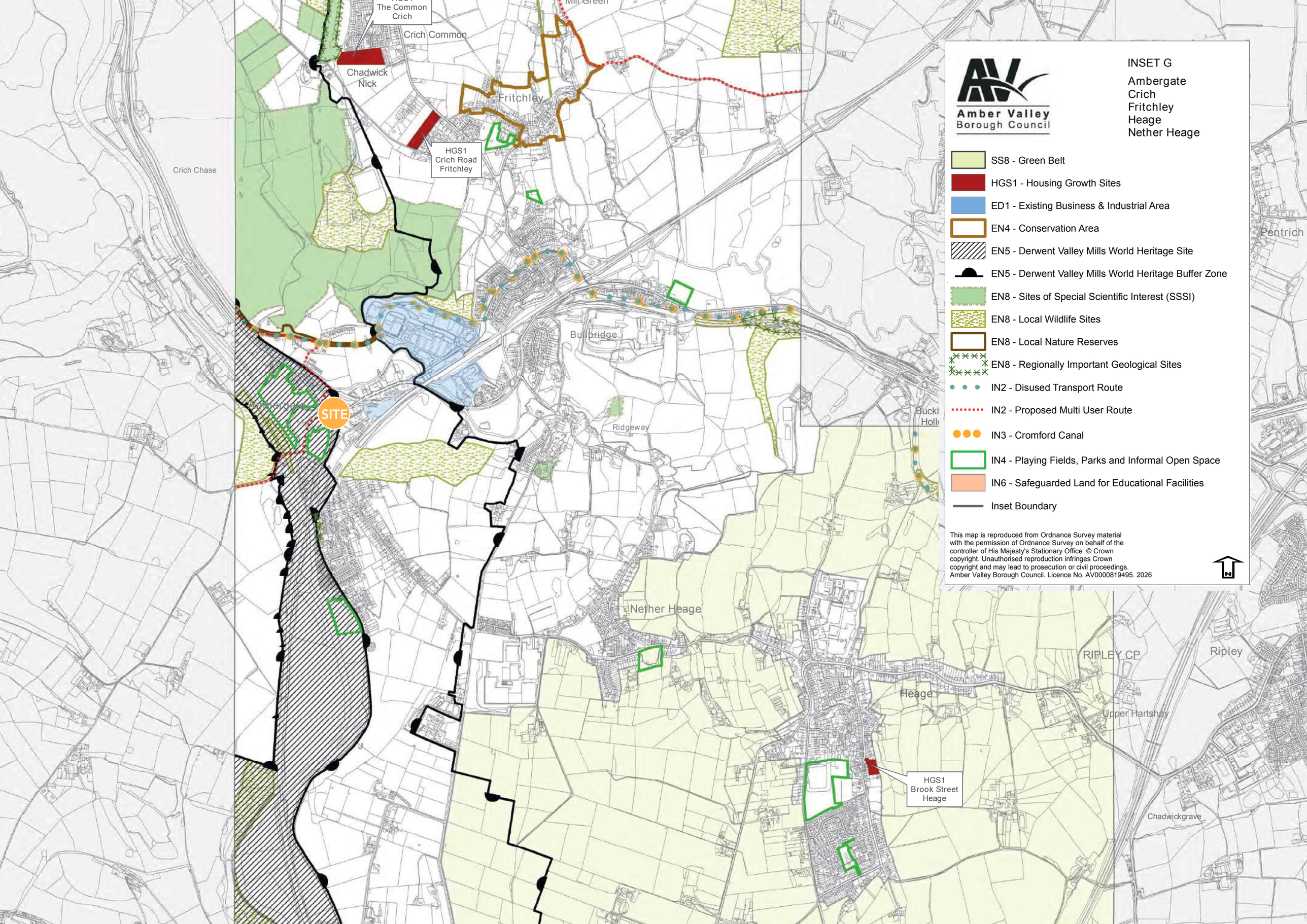
The application is made on behalf of the applicant, David Ashley Developments, the owner and operator of the Hurt Arms. The applicant has a long-standing commitment to the sensitive restoration and continued operation of this landmark building as a viable hospitality business at the heart of the Ambergate community.



The Hurt Arms is a former Victorian coaching inn operating as a public house, restaurant and hotel with an ancillary function suite. Following repeated and severe flooding, culminating in Storm Babet in October 2023, the premises have been closed and the business is now working to re-establish itself. This application seeks to provide additional covered dining capacity on the existing front terrace, enabling the business to trade resiliently in variable weather and to broaden its offer as it recovers from a prolonged period of closure. The proposed structure is a lightweight, fully glazed, demountable garden room, designed from the outset to sit gently within the setting of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site and to respond appropriately to the site's location within Flood Zone 3. This Statement demonstrates that the proposal is well designed, causes no harm to the significance of the World Heritage Site, and accords with the development plan.

1.2 APPLICATION SUMMARY

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Amber Valley Borough Council
SITE ADDRESS:	The Hurt Arms, Derby Road, Belper, DE56 2EJ
APPLICATION TYPE:	Full Planning
CONSERVATION AREA:	No
POLICY DESIGNATIONS:	Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site (DVMWHS)
GREEN BELT:	No
TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS:	Yes
LISTED BUILDINGS:	No
FLOOD RISK:	Flood Zone 3 - High probability of flooding



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SITE & CONTEXT ANALYSIS

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2.1 STRATEGIC LOCATION

The Hurt Arms occupies a prominent position on the A6 (Derby Road) in Ambergate, a village in the Amber Valley within Derbyshire. The site sits close to the confluence of the River Amber and the River Derwent, at a point where the A6 corridor connects Belper to the south with Matlock to the north. Ambergate railway station lies a short walk from the site, offering services toward Derby, Matlock and Nottingham, and the A6 provides direct vehicular connectivity along the valley. The site is therefore highly accessible by road, rail and bus, and is well related to the surrounding settlement pattern.

2.2 SITE DESCRIPTION

The site comprises the Hurt Arms public house and its curtilage, including car parking, servicing areas and a hard-surfaced terrace to the front of the building addressing Derby Road. The host building is a substantial three-storey former coaching inn of 1874–76, constructed in millstone grit sandstone ashlar in a Jacobean vernacular revival style, with a contemporary single-storey extension of 2017–18 to the rear. The application area is confined to a defined portion of the existing paved front terrace, which is bounded to the highway edge by an established stone boundary wall. The terrace is at reduced ground floor level and is currently open to the elements. The wider site lies within Flood Zone 3 and has a documented history of flooding from the adjacent watercourses.

2.3 SURROUNDING CONTEXT

The building addresses the A6 directly, with the front terrace and boundary wall forming the principal public-facing edge of the site. To the rear and sides the curtilage falls away toward the river corridor and associated tree cover, some of which is subject to Tree Preservation Orders. The surrounding built context is a mix of residential, commercial and former industrial development characteristic of the Derwent Valley, with the wooded valley sides and river corridor forming the dominant natural backdrop. The immediate setting of the front terrace is defined by the sandstone host building behind, the stone boundary wall in front, and the highway beyond.

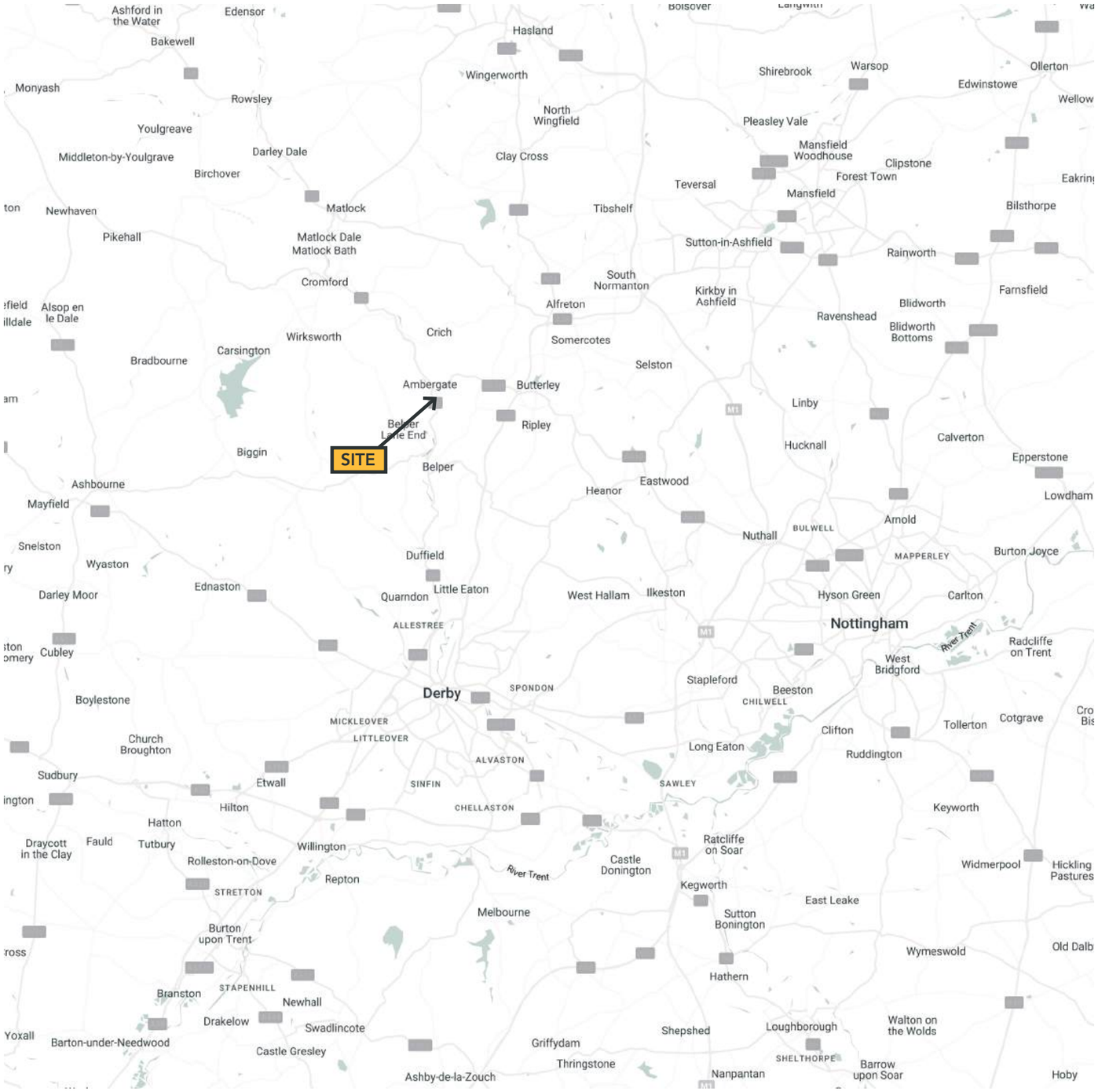

Fig. 2: Urban Location Map



Fig. 3. 3D Arial view of the site

SITE & CONTEXT ANALYSIS

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2.4 TOWNSCAPE & LOCAL CHARACTER

The Hurt Arms is a locally prominent landmark whose robust sandstone elevations, steep gables and tall chimneys give it a strong presence on the approach along the A6. The prevailing material palette of the locality is stone and red brick with slate roofs, reflecting the area's Victorian industrial development. The building's own recent history establishes a clear and accepted local design logic: a traditional, conservative treatment to the sensitive public-facing elevations, and a lighter, frankly contemporary architectural language to interventions set away from the principal frontage, as demonstrated by the 2017–18 rear extension. The front terrace reads as a subordinate external space in front of the dominant historic mass of the inn, with the boundary wall providing enclosure and separation from the highway.



Fig. 4: View of the Hurt Arms from the South



Fig. 5: View of the modern extension

2.5 VISUAL ANALYSIS

The front terrace is visible in views from the A6 (Derby Road) and its footway, principally on the approach from the south. In these views the historic sandstone frontage of the inn is, and will remain, the focal point. The existing stone boundary wall screens the lower portion of the terrace from the public realm, and the terrace is read against the substantial backdrop of the three-storey host building and the wooded valley side behind. The proposed structure occupies a position within this framed foreground; its full transparency, slender framing and set-back location behind the wall mean that it does not interrupt the principal view of the historic elevation or of the wider valley. No long-distance or elevated views of significance to the World Heritage Site are obstructed by the proposal.



Fig. 6. Artistic impression of proposed structure

PLANNING POLICY

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3.1 PLANNING HISTORY

Application Reference: AVA-2017-0666
Description: Single storey extension to the existing Hurt Arms Public House and demolition of a bay window
Decision: Granted
Decision Date: September 2017

Application Reference: AVA-2020-0472
Description: Infill of existing basement below the Hurt Arms Public House and relocation of kitchen, plant and offices to new ground floor side extension
Decision: Granted
Decision Date: October 2020

Application Reference: AVA-2021-0577
Description: Variation of condition 2 of AVA-2020-0472 to amend approved design drawings
Decision: Granted
Decision Date: July 2021

There have been no refusals of planning permission or dismissed appeals on the application site. The planning history is uniformly positive and directly instructive for the present application. The 2017 consent for a frankly contemporary single-storey extension established that the Council accepts modern architectural interventions at this heritage site where they are subordinate, well detailed and sensitively located. The 2020 consent, addressing works closer to the public frontage, established the Council's expectation that publicly visible interventions adopt a restrained, sympathetic approach that respects the historic fabric. The present proposal is the logical synthesis of both principles: a contemporary structure that is nonetheless the most restrained intervention possible in a publicly visible location - fully transparent, minimally framed, demountable and reversible - and finished in a tone selected to defer to the sandstone host building.

3.2 LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

The following adopted development plan policies (Amber Valley Borough Local Plan, saved policies) are engaged

Policy LS3 – Design
Policy LS3 states: "The Borough Council will require development proposals to reflect the principles of good design, by:-
a) conserving or enhancing the quality and local distinctiveness of the natural and built environment
b) respecting the character of the locality in terms of the scale and nature of development, its layout, density, height, massing, architectural style, materials and landscaping
c) taking account of the relationship between the development proposals and neighbouring buildings, and the spaces between and around those buildings"

The proposal accords with Policy LS3. It conserves the local distinctiveness of the built environment by adopting a fully transparent, subordinate form and a frame finished in RAL 1019 selected specifically to defer to the sandstone host building. It respects the character of the locality in scale, height and massing, being a single-storey, visually lightweight structure well below the height of the host building, sited on existing hardstanding. And it takes proper account of the relationship to the host building and the spaces around it, being detached to preserve circulation and set back behind the retained boundary wall.

Policy EN15 – Development and Flood Risk
Policy EN15 states: "Planning permission will only be granted for development proposals which would have no adverse effect on the management of flood risk and which demonstrate that they can satisfactorily address the following criteria:
a) the impact of development on the capacity of any watercourse to discharge and/or store flood flows
b) the need to ensure that development can be adequately protected against flood risk
c) the need to prevent development from exacerbating existing or potential flood risk through the discharge of additional surface water
d) the potential for Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) to minimise the environmental impact of measures to address surface water discharge, especially in relation to areas of nature conservation interest
e) for development in higher-risk flood zones, the need to demonstrate that there is no reasonable option available in a lower-risk zone, compatible with other sustainable development objectives
f) the need to avoid culverting open watercourses unless it is essential for access or public safety reasons

Where it is considered that development would be likely to increase flood risk, the developer will need to carry out a Flood Risk Assessment and identify satisfactory compensating measures to be submitted and implemented in conjunction with development"

The proposal accords with Policy EN15. It has no adverse effect on the capacity of any watercourse to discharge or store flood flows: the structure requires no concrete slab or permanent foundation, displaces no floodplain storage and presents no material obstruction to flood flows. It creates no new impermeable surface and does not exacerbate surface water flood risk. The development is a minor non-residential structure ancillary to the established use on its existing terrace.. No open watercourse is culverted.

Policy EN29 – Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site
Policy EN29 states: "Within the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site as shown on the Proposals Map, the Borough Council will require all development proposals to preserve or enhance its character and appearance

PLANNING POLICY

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Within the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site Buffer Zone, as shown on the Proposals Map, the Borough Council will require all development proposals to preserve or enhance the setting of the World Heritage Site, including views into and out of the site

In considering proposals, the Borough Council will have regard to the aims and objectives of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site Management Plan"

The proposal accords with Policy EN29. It preserves the character and appearance of the World Heritage Site: the structure is fully transparent and minimally framed, is subordinate in scale to the host building, is set back behind the retained stone boundary wall and is finished to defer to the sandstone, so that the historic elevation and the wider valley continue to dominate public views. Views into and out of the World Heritage Site are preserved by the structure's transparency and set-back position. By enabling the continued viable operation of the Hurt Arms - an unlisted building that contributes positively to the significance of the World Heritage Site - the proposal is consistent with the objectives of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site Management Plan in sustaining the heritage asset through an appropriate viable use.

3.3 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

The National Planning Policy Framework (August 2026) is a material consideration of critical importance in the determination of this application. Published on 17 August 2026, it replaced the December 2024 Framework in full and applies to all decisions made from that date. The policies most relevant to this proposal are set out below.

Policy F5 – The sequential test

Policy F5 states: "1. The aim of the sequential test is to steer new development to areas with the lowest risk of flooding from any source. Where the test applies, development proposals should not be located in areas at risk of flooding where alternative sites, appropriate for the development, are reasonably available in areas with a lower risk of flooding. The area to which the test is applied should not be greater than the anticipated catchment of the development in terms of its likely occupiers or users.
2. The sequential test should be used in areas known to be at risk now or in the future from any form of flooding, other than for:
a. Sites allocated in the development plan which were subject to the sequential test during plan preparation;
b. Sites where a site-specific flood risk assessment demonstrates clearly that:
i. No built development within the site boundary, including access or escape routes, land raising or other potentially vulnerable elements, would be located on an area that would be at risk of flooding from any source, now and in the future (having regard to potential changes in flood risk); or
ii. Where the site would be at risk of surface water flooding only, the proposed layout, design, and mitigation measures would ensure that occupiers and users would remain safe from current and future surface water flood risk for the lifetime of the development without increasing flood risk elsewhere in accordance with policy F7.
c. For the following types of development:
i. Householder development;
ii. Small non-residential extensions (with a footprint of less than 250m2); and
iii. Changes of use, other than changes of use to a caravan, camping or chalet site, or to a mobile home or park home site.
3. The strategic flood risk assessment covering the area of the proposed development and the Flood Map for Planning should provide the evidential basis for applying the sequential test."

The proposal accords with Policy F5. The structure has a footprint well below 250m2. Treated as a small non-residential extension to the established public house use, it falls within the exemption from the sequential test at F5(2)(c)(ii). In any event, the sequential test is satisfied on its own terms: under F5(1) the area to which the test applies is no greater than the anticipated catchment of the development in terms of its likely users, which here is the existing Hurt Arms and its terrace; there is no reasonably available, sequentially preferable alternative site capable of providing covered dining ancillary to this established business on its own front terrace.

Policy F7 – Ensuring development is safe from flooding

Policy F7 states: "1. Development proposals should not present a risk from flooding to potential occupiers, users, or visitors, and should not increase flood risk elsewhere.
2. Where development is proposed in a location known to be at risk from any form of flooding, now or in the future, it should be refused unless:
a. Within the site, the most vulnerable development is located in areas of lowest flood risk, unless there are overriding reasons which justify a different arrangement;
b. The development will be safe throughout its lifetime taking account of the vulnerability of its users;
c. Any residual risk can be safely managed, and safe access and escape routes are included where appropriate, as part of an agreed emergency plan;
d. The development is appropriately flood resistant and resilient such that, in the event of a flood, it could be quickly brought back into use without significant refurbishment; and

e. It can be demonstrated that flood risk will not be increased elsewhere."

The proposal accords with Policy F7. The structure provides covered dining - a restaurant use, classified as "less vulnerable" (Annex F, Table 2) - and so is compatible with Flood Zone 3a without the exception test (Annex F, Table 3); the terrace falls within Zone 3a rather than the functional floodplain (Zone 3b). The development is safe throughout its lifetime taking account of its users: it contains no sleeping accommodation, is single storey and at grade with level access and egress to the existing terrace and highway, and the operator maintains flood awareness given the site's history (F7(2)(a)–(c)). It is inherently flood resistant and resilient - an aluminium frame with toughened glass and a paved floor, with no plaster, no slab and no absorbent finishes — such that after a flood it can be quickly cleaned and returned to use without significant refurbishment (F7(2)(d)). And because it has no concrete slab or permanent foundation, it displaces no floodplain storage and does not increase flood risk elsewhere (F7(2)(e)).

Policy DP3 – Key principles for well-designed places

Policy DP3 states: "1. Development proposals should respond to their context (the history, character and features of their site and its setting), so that they integrate with and enhance their surroundings; such as through the arrangement of development plots and buildings, the use of materials and architectural features, and the restoration, reuse and integration of heritage assets. This should not preclude innovation or change where appropriate, especially where an increased scale or density of development is justified in accordance with policies L2 and L3." It requires proposals to reflect relevant aspects of seven principles, including: "Identity: create visually attractive, distinctive and characterful development to establish or maintain a strong sense of place and pride, including through the use of a coherent palette of materials, design features and planting." It further states: "3. Development proposals should be refused if, without clear justification, they conflict with paragraph 1 of this policy or relevant aspects of the principles in paragraph 2, or with any explicit design standards set out in the development plan (including those in locally-specific policies, guides, codes or masterplans). Substantial weight should be given to compliance with relevant development plan policies when assessing the design quality of proposals."

The proposal accords with Policy DP3. It responds directly to its context (DP3(1)): a transparent, minimally framed, subordinate form that integrates with and does not compete with the sandstone host building or the wider valley, with a frame powder-coated in RAL 1019 chosen specifically to defer to the millstone grit sandstone. It satisfies the Identity principle (DP3(2)(g)) through a coherent, restrained palette of aluminium, glass and new frontage planting, and reflects the Climate principle (DP3(2)(b)) through a demountable, flood-resilient form appropriate to its Flood Zone 3 location. There is no conflict with paragraph 1 or with the local design policy (LS3), so the refusal test at DP3(3) is not engaged and substantial weight attaches to the proposal's compliance with development plan design policy.

Policy HE6 – Proposals affecting designated heritage assets

Policy HE6 states: "1. When considering the potential effect of a development proposal on the significance of a designated heritage asset, substantial 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 effect amounts to a positive effect, harm, substantial harm, or total loss of its significance.

2. Development proposals which would have a positive effect on a designated heritage asset should be supported.

3. Any harm to a designated heritage asset will be a matter of considerable importance and weight, which should be dealt with in accordance with paragraphs 4 to 6 of this policy.

4. Where a development proposal would harm the significance of a designated heritage asset the effect on the asset and its significance should be weighed against any public benefits resulting from the proposal. Important public benefits can include securing the long-term reuse of a vacant or underused listed building, and enabling energy efficiency and low carbon heating measures to be employed."

The proposal accords with Policy HE6. Substantial weight is given to the conservation of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site, a designated heritage asset of the highest significance (HE6(1)). The assessment of effect under Policy HE5 concludes that the proposal would not harm the significance of the World Heritage Site: the transparent, minimally framed and subordinate structure, set back behind the retained stone boundary wall and finished to defer to the sandstone, is fully reversible and preserves views into and out of the Site. No harm arises, so the balance at HE6(3)-(4) is not engaged; and in enabling the continued viable operation of the Hurt Arms - a building that contributes positively to the significance of the World Heritage Site — the proposal delivers public benefits of the kind to which HE6 attaches weight.

Policy HE8 – World Heritage Sites

Policy HE8 states: "1. To secure the long-term future of World Heritage Sites and support the conservation of their significance and Outstanding Universal Value, development proposals that affect a World Heritage Site should:

a. Be designed in a way which pays particular regard to the significance and Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site (including any contribution made by its setting including any buffer zone);

b. Retain and conserve buildings and other features which make a positive contribution to the significance and Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site where possible;

c. Have regard to the World Heritage Site management plan; and

d. Be supported by an assessment of the impact, including any

potential cumulative impact, on the significance and attributes of Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site. This should be informed by appropriate information such as visual impact assessments and natural environment, archaeological or historical data." It further states: "3. Proposals that conserve those elements of a World Heritage Site or its setting, including any buffer zone, that make a positive contribution to it or which better reveal its significance, should be supported."

The proposal accords with Policy HE8. It is designed to pay particular regard to the significance and Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site (HE8(1)(a)): its transparency, subordinate scale and set-back siting ensure the historic inn and valley setting remain dominant. It retains and conserves the features that make a positive contribution to the Site — the sandstone host building and the stone boundary wall are both retained in full (HE8(1)(b)). It has regard to the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site Management Plan by sustaining the asset through a viable use (HE8(1)(c)), and it is supported by a proportionate assessment of impact on the significance and Outstanding Universal Value of the Site (HE8(1)(d); Section 2.5). As a reversible proposal that conserves the setting and better sustains a positively-contributing building, it attracts the support of HE8(3).

DESIGN

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4.1 USE

The proposed structure provides covered external dining and seating ancillary to the established and continuing use of the Hurt Arms as a public house, restaurant and hotel. It introduces no new or independent use and does not alter the planning use of the site; it enables the existing terrace to be used for the service of meals in a wider range of weather conditions. As covered dining, its use falls within the “less vulnerable” flood risk vulnerability classification. The additional covered capacity supports the commercial recovery of a business closed since October 2023.

4.2 AMOUNT

The structure has a rectangular footprint of approximately 9 x 7 m, giving a floor area of approximately 63 m2 - a small non-residential structure well below the 250m2 threshold - and provides approximately 52 covers. It is modest relative to the substantial mass of the host building and occupies only a defined portion of the existing terrace, with generous circulation retained around it.

4.3 LAYOUT

The structure is positioned on the existing paved terrace and is deliberately detached from the host building, maintaining clear separation that preserves pedestrian circulation and servicing routes and avoids any physical connection to the historic fabric. It is set back from the highway edge behind the existing stone boundary wall, which provides screening and separation from the A6. Its rectangular form sits parallel to the terrace edge, reading as a clearly subordinate object in front of the dominant historic building. No trees are affected by its position.

4.4 SCALE

The structure is single storey, with an overall height of approximately 3 m. It is substantially lower than the three-storey host building and subordinate to it in every dimension. Slender aluminium framing and a fully glazed envelope give it a visually lightweight, near-transparent character, so that its apparent bulk in public views is minimal and the historic elevation behind remains dominant.

4.5 APPEARANCE

The structure is a proprietary aluminium-framed glazed structure comprising a slender powder-coated aluminium frame with toughened glass infill to all four elevations and a louvred roof. Full-height glazing on all sides reinforces the sense of transparency, allowing views of the host building and the valley beyond to read through the structure.

The aluminium frame is powder-coated in RAL 1019 (grey-beige), a non-standard finish selected to be sympathetic to the grey-beige tones of the millstone grit sandstone host building, rather than a standard grey or black that would read as an alien element. The design is contemporary and honest in its materials - consistent with the accepted 2017–18 approach to non-original interventions at this site - while being as visually recessive as it is possible for a covered structure to be. Critically, the structure is demountable: fixed to the ground using removeable anchors rather than permanent foundations, with its internal floor formed by the existing external paving continued through the structure rather than a new concrete slab. It is therefore wholly reversible and makes no permanent alteration to the terrace or its setting.



Fig. 7: View of the proposal looking North towards the Hurt Arms



Fig. 8. Artistic impression of proposed structure

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ACCESS, MOVEMENT & PARKING

5.1 VEHICULAR ACCESS

The existing vehicular access from the A6 is unaltered. No change to the access point, geometry or visibility is proposed.

5.2 TRAFFIC GENERATION

The structure provides weather-resilient covered capacity to an existing, established business on its existing terrace. It introduces no new use and is not expected to generate a material increase in vehicular trips over the premises' established trading pattern; it supports the recovery of trade lost to closure.

5.3 CAR PARKING

The existing on-site car parking is retained in full and is unaffected. The structure occupies terrace space only and displaces no parking provision.

5.4 CYCLE PARKING & MOBILITY

Existing arrangements are unaffected. The terrace and structure are at ground floor level, providing level, step-free access consistent with the existing terrace.

5.5 SERVICING

Existing servicing and refuse arrangements are retained. The detached position of the structure preserves clear servicing and circulation routes, and its demountable nature allows unobstructed emergency access to be maintained.



Fig. 9: Artistic impression of the proposal

CONCLUSION

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The Hurt Arms is a landmark building within the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site whose continued viable operation is of clear community and economic value, and which is recovering from a prolonged closure caused by repeated flooding. The proposal enables that recovery by providing weather-resilient covered dining capacity on the building's existing front terrace.

The proposal has been designed as the most restrained intervention possible in a publicly visible location: a single-storey, fully transparent, minimally framed structure, subordinate to the host building, set back behind the retained stone boundary wall and finished in a tone chosen to defer to the sandstone. It is detached from the historic fabric and, being fixed by removeable anchors with no slab and no permanent foundation, is wholly demountable and reversible.

The site's position within Flood Zone 3 has driven the form of the proposal. It'S slab-free, demountable, flood-resilient design ensures the development is safe and has no adverse effect on the management of flood risk on the site or elsewhere.

The proposal preserves the character, appearance and setting of the World Heritage Site, represents high-quality and context-responsive design, and accords with the development plan and with national planning policy. It is respectfully recommended that planning permission be granted.

JSA Architects