INDIGO ARCHITECTS

Heritage Statement

Proposed Change of Use of an Existing Office Building to Cafe at

The Hollies, Bridge Street, Belper, DE56 1BA

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared in support of an application to Amber Valley Borough Council for the change of use of an existing ancillary office building at The Hollies, 105 Bridge Street, Belper, to provide a small café within Use Class E(b), together with associated outdoor seating.

1.2 The purpose of this statement is to identify the heritage significance of the application site and surrounding historic environment, assess the potential effects of the development upon that significance, and demonstrate how the proposal responds to relevant statutory duties, development plan policies and national planning guidance.

1.3 The application site lies within the Belper and Milford Conservation Area and within the wider historic environment associated with the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site.

1.4 The assessment considers the significance of the former library premises, the character and appearance of the conservation area, the contribution made by the setting of nearby listed buildings, and the potential implications for the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site.

1.5 The proposal principally involves the beneficial reuse of an existing building, with limited external alterations and no substantial extensions or changes to its established scale and massing.

1.6 The assessment has been informed by the submitted drawings, the previous planning permission, published historic environment information, local planning guidance and relevant Historic England advice.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION & HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

The Hollies

2.1 The application site forms part of The Hollies, a substantial historic property fronting Bridge Street, Belper, formerly occupied as the town's public library.

2.2 The property originally formed a large private house set within extensive grounds. Its subsequent adaptation for public library use involved changes to the building and its surroundings, although the historic domestic character of the principal building and its relationship with Bridge Street remained appreciable.

2.3 The Belper Neighbourhood Plan identifies the former library site and refers to the 2012 Supplementary Planning Document for land between the A6 and River Derwent.

2.4 That document identifies The Hollies as an example of a substantial historic dwelling whose conversion to a library and associated parking retained an identifiable domestic character.

2.5 The same guidance refers to the 1844 tithe map, which illustrates the former presence of several substantial detached houses with extensive gardens along this part of Bridge Street.

2.6 The subsequent development of these historic plots has altered the original pattern of land use. Nevertheless, the principal buildings, historic street frontage, boundary treatments and relationship between buildings and open spaces continue to contribute to the character of the locality.

2.7 The Hollies is therefore of local architectural and historical interest as a surviving component of this earlier pattern of development and as a building subsequently adapted for public and commercial purposes.

The ancillary building

2.8 This application relates to the smaller ancillary building identified as Block 2 under planning permission AVA/2021/0921.

2.9 The building is subordinate to the principal former library and forms part of the established group of structures within the wider site.

2.10 Its architectural character is relatively modest when compared with the principal building. Nevertheless, its scale, materials, traditional form and relationship with the surrounding development contribute to the historic character of the premises.

2.11 The proposal would retain the existing building envelope, including its roof form, external walls and principal architectural features.

2.12 The proposed change of use would therefore preserve the building's contribution to the historic group while securing its continued beneficial occupation.

3.0 HERITAGE DESIGNATIONS & SIGNIFICANCE

Belper and Milford Conservation Area

3.1 The site lies within the Belper and Milford Conservation Area, which recognises the special architectural and historic interest of the settlement and its relationship with the industrial development of the Derwent Valley.

3.2 Belper's historic significance is closely associated with the development of the textile industry, particularly the influence of the Strutt family and the establishment of industrial buildings, workers' housing and associated commercial and community infrastructure.

3.3 The conservation area's significance is expressed through its historic street patterns, traditional buildings, locally distinctive materials, architectural detailing, boundary treatments and the relationships between buildings and open spaces.

3.4 Bridge Street forms an important component of this historic townscape, incorporating a varied collection of residential, commercial and institutional buildings.

3.5 The Hollies contributes to this character through its historic origins as a substantial dwelling, its architectural appearance and its established relationship with the street frontage.

3.6 The ancillary building makes a more modest contribution, principally through its traditional form, subordinate scale and relationship with the wider group of buildings.

3.7 The proposed development would retain these characteristics and would not introduce substantial new built development affecting the established townscape.

Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site

3.8 The Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site was inscribed by UNESCO in 2001 in recognition of its outstanding international significance in the development of the modern factory system.

3.9 The World Heritage Site encompasses an exceptional industrial landscape associated with early mechanised textile production, including mills, workers' housing, transport infrastructure and the settlements that developed around them.

3.10 Belper forms one of the principal historic industrial settlements contributing to the significance of the World Heritage Site.

3.11 Its Outstanding Universal Value is associated particularly with the development of industrial production, the relationship between manufacturing and settlement patterns, and the survival of the historic built environment.

3.12 The application site forms part of this wider historic urban context. Its contribution is primarily associated with the established townscape and the historical development of Belper rather than any direct industrial manufacturing function.

3.13 The proposal would not alter the historic street pattern, remove significant buildings, affect important industrial infrastructure or introduce substantial development capable of altering the established landscape character.

3.14 Accordingly, the proposed change of use is considered capable of being accommodated without adverse effects upon the attributes contributing to the Outstanding Universal Value, authenticity or integrity of the World Heritage Site.

Nearby listed buildings

3.15 The surrounding area contains listed buildings associated with Belper's historic development.

3.16 Of particular relevance is the Grade II listed terrace at 98–106 Bridge Street, recorded within the Derbyshire Historic Environment Record as MDR16070 and within the National Heritage List for England under entry 1099195.

3.17 The terrace dates from the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century and is characterised by traditional red brick construction, slate roofs, modest domestic proportions and historic window and door detailing.

3.18 The listing identifies a particular historical association with the Strutt family, including a former fireman's house.

3.19 The significance of these buildings derives from their surviving historic fabric, architectural character, group value and association with the development of Belper's industrial community.

3.20 Their setting includes the historic streetscape of Bridge Street and the relationship between surrounding buildings, historic routes and the wider settlement.

3.21 The proposed development would not involve works to the listed buildings or substantial changes to their surroundings.

3.22 The limited physical alterations and retention of the established building form would preserve the existing relationship between the application site and the surrounding historic townscape.

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 Planning permission AVA/2021/0921 was granted on 25 July 2022 for the conversion and subdivision of the former library into residential and commercial accommodation, together with the conversion of Block 2 to office use, retention of Block 3 as a garage and associated external works.

4.2 In determining that application, Amber Valley Borough Council considered the implications for the conservation area and the wider historic environment.

4.3 The permission included conditions relating to architectural details, windows, doors, rooflights, boundary treatments and landscaping, reflecting the importance of protecting the character and appearance of the historic premises.

4.4 The approval established that the adaptive reuse of the former library and its ancillary buildings was acceptable in heritage terms, subject to appropriate controls over physical alterations.

4.5 The present proposal is materially more limited in physical scope than the previously approved redevelopment.

4.6 It does not seek to alter the overall scale, massing or established architectural composition of the buildings.

4.7 The previous permission therefore provides a relevant material consideration supporting the principle of continued beneficial reuse, provided that the proposed café arrangements preserve the significance of the historic environment.

5.0 LEGISLATIVE & PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Statutory Duties

5.1 Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.

5.2 Section 66(1) requires special regard to be given to the desirability of preserving listed buildings, their settings and features of special architectural or historic interest when considering development affecting them.

5.3 These duties are important considerations in determining the present application.

5.4 The assessment therefore considers not simply the scale of physical change but whether the proposal would preserve the significance of the relevant heritage assets and the contribution made by their settings.

National Planning Policy Framework

5.5 Chapter 20 of the National Planning Policy Framework, published in September 2026, establishes national policy for conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

5.6 Policy HE4 supports the conservation of heritage assets through appropriate and sustainable uses and requires development to avoid or minimise harm to heritage significance.

5.7 Policy HE5 requires a proportionate assessment of heritage significance and the potential effects of development, informed by relevant historic environment records.

5.8 Policy HE6 requires substantial weight to be afforded to the conservation of designated heritage assets and supports development that would have a positive effect upon their significance.

5.9 Policy HE8 addresses World Heritage Sites, including the protection of their Outstanding Universal Value, authenticity, integrity and setting.

5.10 Policy HE9 supports development within conservation areas that retains and conserves buildings and features making a positive contribution to their character or appearance.

5.11 The proposed development responds positively to these requirements through the retention and continued use of the existing building, the avoidance of substantial physical alterations and the preservation of the established historic townscape.

Amber Valley Borough Local Plan

5.12 The Amber Valley Borough Local Plan 2022–2040 was adopted on 2 March 2026 and forms the principal local planning policy framework.

5.13 The Local Plan establishes objectives for protecting the Borough's historic environment, securing high-quality development and ensuring that proposals respond appropriately to local character and heritage significance.

5.14 These objectives are particularly important within Belper, given its conservation area designation and relationship with the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site.

5.15 The proposal would retain the existing built form and traditional architectural characteristics of the application building, while supporting its continued commercial occupation.

5.16 Accordingly, the development is considered consistent with the Local Plan's overarching objectives for the conservation and sustainable use of the historic environment.

Supplementary guidance and management documents

5.17 Relevant supplementary guidance includes Amber Valley Borough Council's *Listed Buildings and Buildings in Conservation Areas* Supplementary Planning Document, adopted in April 2007.

5.18 The 2012 Supplementary Planning Document relating to land between the A6 and River Derwent provides particularly useful site-specific historical context, including the former character of The Hollies and its contribution to Bridge Street.

5.19 The Belper Heritage and Character Assessment, prepared to inform neighbourhood planning, also provides contextual evidence concerning the distinctive architectural and historical characteristics of the settlement.

5.20 The objectives of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site Management Plan are relevant insofar as they seek to protect the site's Outstanding Universal Value while allowing appropriate and sustainable use of the historic environment.

5.21 The proposed development is consistent with these broad conservation principles because it retains existing buildings and avoids substantial alterations to the historic townscape.

6.0 HISTORIC ENGLAND GUIDANCE

6.1 Historic England's *Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment*, Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2, recommends that proposals be informed by an understanding of the significance of affected heritage assets.

6.2 The guidance recognises the importance of identifying the elements that contribute to significance and ensuring that development proposals respond appropriately to those characteristics.

6.3 Historic England's *The Setting of Heritage Assets*, Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3, establishes a structured approach to assessing the contribution made by setting and the effects of development upon heritage significance.

6.4 In the present case, the relevant heritage assets and their settings have been identified, their principal characteristics considered and the potential effects of the proposed development assessed.

6.5 The assessment recognises that the setting of a heritage asset may accommodate change without necessarily resulting in harm to its significance.

6.6 Given the limited physical alterations proposed, the established commercial character of the site and the retention of the existing building envelope, the development would not materially alter the way in which the relevant heritage assets are experienced or appreciated.

7.0 ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Change of use

7.1 The principal element of the application is the change of use of the existing ancillary office building to a small daytime café.

7.2 The building would remain in active commercial occupation, providing a sustainable use consistent with the character of the wider mixed-use premises.

7.3 The change of use would not itself require substantial alterations to the historic building envelope.

7.4 Continued occupation and maintenance would assist in securing the building's long-term conservation.

7.5 The proposed use is therefore considered compatible with the building's significance and its contribution to the historic environment.

External alterations

7.6 The submitted drawings indicate that external alterations would principally comprise replacement signage and removal of existing obscured glazing film.

7.7 The removal of the film would restore greater transparency to the existing windows, allowing the original fenestration and internal occupation to be more readily appreciated.

7.8 This would not alter the size, arrangement or architectural detailing of the window openings.

7.9 Replacement signage would identify the new commercial use and would be designed to remain proportionate to the scale and character of the building.

7.10 No substantial extensions, alterations to the roof form or changes to the principal external materials are proposed.

7.11 The external alterations are therefore considered capable of preserving the architectural character of the building and its contribution to the conservation area.

Outdoor seating

7.12 The proposed café includes a modest area of seasonal outdoor seating within the existing commercial grounds.

7.13 The seating would comprise freestanding furniture and would not involve substantial permanent structures.

7.14 Its limited scale would ensure that the established relationship between buildings and open space remains readily appreciable.

7.15 The outdoor seating would provide an appropriate ancillary facility without materially altering the historic character of the site.

7.16 It is therefore considered that the seating arrangements would preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Setting of listed buildings

7.17 The existing scale, massing and arrangement of buildings within the application site would remain substantially unchanged.

7.18 The proposal would not interrupt important views, introduce visually dominant structures or materially alter the historic streetscape.

7.19 The existing relationship between the listed buildings, Bridge Street and the surrounding townscape would therefore be preserved.

7.20 Accordingly, the proposal is not considered to result in harm to the significance of nearby listed buildings through changes within their settings.

World Heritage Site

7.21 The proposal would not involve the removal of historic buildings, significant changes to the established street pattern or substantial new development.

7.22 The historic urban form and relationship between buildings, routes and open spaces would remain substantially unchanged.

7.23 The development would therefore preserve the characteristics of the surrounding historic settlement that contribute to the wider significance of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site.

7.24 Given the modest scale of the works, no material adverse effects upon the site's Outstanding Universal Value, authenticity or integrity are anticipated.

Archaeological interest

7.25 The site forms part of an established historic urban area and may have archaeological interest associated with its earlier development.

7.26 However, the proposal principally concerns the change of use of an existing building and does not identify substantial new foundations or other significant ground disturbance.

7.27 Accordingly, the potential for the development to disturb archaeological remains is considered very limited.

7.28 On the basis of the currently proposed works, a separate archaeological investigation is not considered proportionate.

8.0 HERITAGE ASSESSMENT & PLANNING BALANCE

8.1 The proposed development has been considered having regard to the statutory duties established by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the heritage policies of the adopted Amber Valley Borough Local Plan, the National Planning Policy Framework and relevant Historic England guidance.

8.2 Consideration has been given to the location of the application site within the Belper and Milford Conservation Area, its relationship with the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site and the potential implications for the significance and setting of nearby listed buildings.

8.3 The Hollies is an established historic property which has undergone changes in use and adaptation over time, including its former use as a library and subsequent conversion to mixed residential and commercial accommodation. The building and its associated outbuildings contribute to the historic character of Bridge Street and the wider townscape.

8.4 The proposed development would retain the existing ancillary building and its established architectural form, scale, massing and principal external materials. No substantial extensions, demolition or alterations to the building's historic character are proposed.

8.5 The physical alterations principally comprise internal adaptation, removal of existing obscured glazing film and replacement signage. These changes are limited in extent and would not fundamentally alter the architectural composition or historic appearance of the building.

8.6 The removal of obscured glazing film has the potential to improve the appearance of the existing windows, restoring greater transparency and a more traditional relationship between the building and its surroundings.

8.7 The proposed outdoor seating would comprise modest freestanding furniture within the established commercial grounds. Its limited scale and seasonal character would ensure that it remained subordinate to the existing buildings and would not introduce substantial new built features into the historic environment.

8.8 The proposed café would support the continued beneficial use and maintenance of the historic premises. The provision of a daytime community facility would contribute positively to the activity and vitality of this part of Belper, consistent with the historic mixed residential and commercial character of Bridge Street.

8.9 In considering the setting of nearby listed buildings and the wider World Heritage Site, the proposal would not introduce any material increase in building height, scale or massing, nor would it substantially alter the established spatial relationships between buildings, open spaces and the surrounding streetscape.

8.10 Accordingly, the development is not considered likely to adversely affect those elements of setting which contribute to the significance of nearby designated heritage assets or the Outstanding Universal Value of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site.

8.11 The proposal is therefore considered capable of preserving the character and appearance of the Belper and Milford Conservation Area, consistent with the statutory duty under Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

8.12 The assessment has also been informed by the conservation principles advocated by Historic England, particularly the importance of understanding heritage significance, retaining historic fabric and ensuring that alterations remain proportionate to the significance of the affected assets.

8.13 The proposal adopts an appropriately restrained approach to physical intervention. The continued use of the existing building, avoidance of substantial external alterations and retention of its established relationship with the surrounding historic environment are consistent with these principles.

8.14 Having regard to the scale and nature of the proposed works, no harm to the significance of the identified designated heritage assets is anticipated, subject to appropriate control of detailed signage and any external servicing alterations.

8.15 Consequently, the proposal does not require the application of the NPPF's balancing exercise for less than substantial harm to designated heritage assets. Nevertheless, the development would deliver identifiable public benefits through the beneficial reuse of an existing historic building, the provision of a local community facility and the continued economic sustainability of the wider premises.

8.16 The recent loss of the former Dot-teas Emporium café immediately to the south of the application site provides additional context for the proposed use. The introduction of Shine Café would help restore a daytime refreshment facility in this part of Belper, supporting local activity and the continued vitality of the historic town centre.

8.17 These benefits reinforce the positive contribution of the proposal to the continued sustainable occupation and enjoyment of the historic environment.

9.0 CONCLUSION

9.1 This Heritage Statement has considered the potential effects of the proposed change of use of the existing ancillary office building at The Hollies, 105 Bridge Street, Belper, to a small café with associated outdoor seating.

9.2 The assessment has considered the historic development of the site, its architectural and townscape character, the Belper and Milford Conservation Area, the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site and the setting of nearby listed buildings.

9.3 The Hollies forms part of the historic built environment of Bridge Street, and its continued sensitive occupation and maintenance are important considerations in securing the long-term conservation of the property.

9.4 The proposed development represents a modest adaptation of an existing commercial building, involving limited physical alterations and no substantial changes to its architectural form or appearance.

9.5 The replacement of existing signage and removal of obscured glazing film would be sympathetic to the established character of the building, while the proposed seasonal outdoor seating would remain visually subordinate to the historic built environment.

9.6 The proposed use would not require substantial alterations to the surrounding townscape or introduce development of a scale or character that would compete with the historic buildings or adversely affect their appreciation.

9.7 The continued productive use of the building would support its ongoing maintenance and contribute to the vitality of this part of Belper.

9.8 Having regard to the nature and limited extent of the proposed development, it is concluded that the proposal would:

- Preserve the character and appearance of the Belper and Milford Conservation Area.
- Preserve the significance and setting of nearby listed buildings.
- Avoid adverse effects upon the Outstanding Universal Value of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site.
- Retain the established architectural form and character of the existing ancillary building.
- Support the continued beneficial use and maintenance of the historic premises.
- Introduce a compatible daytime commercial activity without substantial physical intervention.

9.9 The proposal is therefore considered consistent with the statutory requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the relevant heritage objectives of the adopted Amber Valley Borough Local Plan and the heritage conservation principles established by the National Planning Policy Framework.

9.10 It is concluded that the proposed development would preserve the significance of the historic environment and would not result in harm to the identified designated heritage assets.

9.11 Accordingly, there are no identified heritage grounds which should prevent planning permission being granted, subject to appropriate detailed control of any signage, external fixtures or alterations affecting historic fabric.

9.12 It is therefore respectfully requested that Amber Valley Borough Council support the proposed development in accordance with its statutory duties and relevant national and local heritage policies.

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