

Buxton Crescent Hotel and Thermal Spa

Winner of Conservation & Regeneration Award







Project Details

Location	Buxton, Derbyshire
Contract value	£70m
Type of work	Regeneration- refurbishment and new build
Construction type	5 star hotel and thermal spa
Client	Developer
Start date	2000
End date	June 2021

Project Background

Sitting in the centre of the historic town of Buxton, the Crescent was built between 1780-89 as the centrepiece of the Fifth Duke of Devonshire's plans to establish a Georgian spa town in Buxton. The Crescent was last used in part as a private hotel and by Derbyshire County Council as a library and offices. However, due to its deteriorating physical fabric, the hotel closed and the Council were forced to vacate in the 1990s, leaving the Crescent completely empty.

Project Outcomes

-  promotion of health and well-being through the development of a genuine thermal spa
-  development of a Visitor Interpretation Centre to tell the story of Buxton's spa heritage
-  support of the regeneration of Buxton and surrounding area, through increased visitor numbers, increased visitor spend and positive impact on local businesses
-  creation of 160 FTE construction jobs and 140 FTE hotel jobs as well as training / apprentice opportunities

Project Benefits

- use of innovative repair techniques and materials
- collaboration and partnership between public and private sector
- sustainable future for the building through use of renewable energy from the thermal springs
- extensive consultation with local community



The Solution

In order to bring the Crescent, along with the adjoining Natural Baths and Pump Room, back into use, Derbyshire County Council and High Peak Borough Council launched the Buxton Crescent Hotel and Thermal Spa project with the backing of the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Historic England. The project was then much delayed by work to protect the thermal water and to obtain enough grant funding for the regeneration to proceed.

The strategy for delivering the project focussed on retaining as much of the historic fabric as possible whilst converting the building for modern use. This, therefore, meant a careful balancing act and blend of the use of modern and historic techniques. Alongside this, modern M&E systems had to be installed to service the building and significant time was spent routing services to minimise their impact whilst ensuring that a 5 star experience could be achieved for guests. Regular design reviews helped to consider these issues.

The challenges within the building were numerous but each brought about a unique solution. For example, works to the Art Nouveau style "Blue Room" with its fully restored early Lincrusta type embossed ceiling wallpaper. Less than a quarter of the original ceiling and paper remained, and it had to be painstakingly copied and re-cast by Lincoln Conservation using 3D printing technology in a never been tried process, then hand re-decorated by specialists, which was specifically funded by Historic England. The new sections of the ceiling paper now blend seamlessly with the old.

The project was procured on a two stage basis with a main contractor, Vinci UK, who then worked alongside the design team and developer to create a series of work packages which were put out to tender to a selection of subcontractors. Each package was refined to be finalised into an agreed set of designs and scope. These packages were put together to generate the final contract sum, based on a traditional JCT Contract with some element of contractor's design (principally M and E). At each stage of this process there was a discussion on risk and a development of a risk register, jointly between the contractor and developer, which stated which party owned the risk on various issues. This proved a very useful tool.