

PLANNING APPLICATION FOR PART- DEMOLITION OF EXISTING OUTBUILDING AND DEVELOPMENT OF NEW EXTERNAL DRINKING AREA

THE VALIANT, STANLEY STREET, LEEK

PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

ON BEHALF OF MARSTON'S PLC

**TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (AS AMENDED)
PLANNING AND COMPULSORY PURCHASE ACT 2004**

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Statement has been produced on behalf of Marston's Plc and supports a planning application at The Valiant public house on Stanley Street in Leek. The application seeks permission for the part-demolition of an existing outbuilding behind the pub, and refurbishment of both the existing external yard and remaining parts of the outbuilding, to create a new external drinking area. A new drinking patio is proposed within the footprint of the outbuilding, and from the demolition process, a number of features of historic interest will be salvaged from the derelict building. These include two wooden beams of special historical interest which feature carvings on them, and which currently support the first floor of the building.
- 1.2 The proposals are part of new investment in the pub by Marston's Plc to provide a new and improved external environment for patrons. This will be a substantial improvement from the current derelict and inaccessible condition of both the yard and the outbuilding, due to safety issues. The application recognises the Conservation Area status of the site and the surrounding area (the Leek Conservation Area) and the associated design sensitivities relating to the need to preserve or enhance the Conservation Area. Accordingly this Statement identifies the relevant issues pertinent to the consideration of the application submission and makes a full assessment of merits of the application against the duty to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area through new development.
- 1.3 This Statement is accompanied by a detailed Heritage Assessment, originally produced by Pegasus Group in December 2014, and now updated, which describes and analyses the buildings on site, setting out features of importance or significance, with further assessment against the criteria for statutory listing of buildings. The document was originally produced during the course of pre-application discussions with Officers at Staffordshire Moorlands District Council, in December 2014 and in early 2015, in order to document the character of the site and notable features of interest. The Draft documents was provided to Officers for review. Sections of the Assessment will be referred to throughout this report.
- 1.4 This Statement is also supported by a structural survey report produced by PCA Consulting Civil and Structural Engineers following a site visit and survey conducted on 30th September 2014. This Planning, Design and Heritage Statement should be read in conjunction with both of these supporting reports.

- 1.5 The concluding section at the end of this Statement confirms the suitability of the proposed development in light of the various policies and material considerations examined.

2. SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

- 2.1 A detailed architectural description of the application site is provided in Section 2 of the accompanying Heritage Assessment with the assistance from photos of the interior and exterior of the building. Photos are also provided in the accompanying Structural Survey Report. There is therefore no intention to reproduce additional details of the site and surrounding area in this Statement, however reference is made to both supporting reports in the following sections.

3. DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

- 3.1 The Valiant operates as an A4 use for drinking and dining on the premises and outside within a small external patio area located between the rear of the pub and the external yard (see accompanying site/block plan). Currently the yard is not open to access by pub patrons and the supporting information to this application clearly shows that the existing outbuilding is in a severe state of dereliction, it is extremely unsafe, it is beyond repair and of no use in this current state.
- 3.2 The access arrangements to the site are straightforward. There is pedestrian access from Stanley Street and through the pub itself into the rear yard, which would be opened up to use by patrons in the event that planning permission is granted for the proposals. There is no designated parking for the pub but vehicles can access the front of the pub on Stanley Street for deliveries. There is a public car park located to the south of the site serving the Moorland Shopping Centre, with pedestrian access available from the car park through to Stanley Street.
- 3.3 The proposed works comprise the demolition of substantial portions of the two storey outbuilding at the rear of the site. Shown clearly on the accompanying proposed floor plans and elevations drawing 02, the demolition would include the removal of the roof and first floor elements of the building, but with the rear and side gable walls stepped down towards what would remain of the front wall. This would retain the footprint of the building and create a sense of enclosure. The retained walls would feature stone copings and the small sections of the front wall facing the yard would be 900mm in height, as shown on drawing 02. The rear wall remaining at two storey height would be timber clad. The drawing also shows the outline of the original (existing) building, shown on the existing site/elevations drawing 01, set against the new proposals to create a comparison in the scale of the building pre and post demolition.
- 3.4 Importantly the demolition work would allow the recovery of the 'two beams of special interest' located within the building, which are currently inaccessible and hidden from view (see drawing 01 and the Heritage Assessment at pages 12 and 13). The removal of the first floor of the building would allow the beams to be salvaged and either incorporated in the design of the new drinks patio or relocated off-site. The applicant is open to discussion with the Local Planning Authority on either of these options.

- 3.5 The ground floor of the building would essentially form a new, open air drinking patio, with enclosure by the sections of the walls that are retained. New fixed bench seating is proposed next to the rear wall and further seating/tables may also be incorporated within the patio. It is also possible that new elements of cover could be provided in conjunction with seating, for example 'jumbrellas', parasols or retractable awnings.
- 3.6 The accompanying 3D visuals of the site shown on drawing 04 provide a sense of how the remnants of the building and the drinking patio would look following the development. The existing single storey lean-to building, shown in white on drawing 04, would be retained in its entirety and refurbished. The existing cobbled yard would also be made good. Together the proposals will provide improvements to the exterior environment at the pub and create a new and pleasant drinking and dining experience.

4. PLANNING POLICY ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 This section outlines the planning policies at the National and Local Level which are relevant to the development proposal. The policies focus on sustainable development principles, strategies for business, town centres and vitality, and regeneration. Specific Heritage related policies are contained in the following section of this Statement, which forms the Heritage Assessment in support for the application proposal.
- 4.2 Section 38(6) of the Town and Country Planning Act 2004 and Section 72(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 require that applications for planning permission must be made in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan for the site consists of the adopted Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy 2014 (with supporting supplementary documents). The National Planning Policy Framework is a material consideration and this is considered firstly below, in terms of high level policy. The relevant sections of the Core Strategy are then considered.

National Planning Policy

- 4.3 National planning guidance is set out within the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), which was published in March 2012. It sets out that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to achieving sustainable development and this core principle remains at the heart of the guidance, with the whole of the document representing what this means for the planning system.
- 4.4 The roles of the planning system in this respect include the following:
- An **economic role** – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation;
 - A **social role** – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of the present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and
 - An **environmental role** – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and as part of this, helping to improve

biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.

(NPPF paragraph 7)

- 4.5 The Ministerial foreword by the Rt. Hon. Greg Clark MP, the then Minister for Planning, is clear that development which is sustainable should go ahead without delay. He states that development means growth and that sustainable development is about change for the better. The application proposal should clearly be seen in this way.

The presumption in favour of sustainable development

- 4.6 At the heart of the Framework is the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. The proposal for The Valiant public house delivers sustainable development economically by supporting the ongoing function, vitality and viability of the public house. This in turn has benefits for the social role of sustainable development outline above. The retention of the outbuilding at the site in its current derelict state is not sustainable, and the exterior areas of the site now needs to be put to a beneficial new use.
- 4.7 Paragraph 14 of the Framework identifies that the presumption in favour of sustainable development should be seen as a golden thread running through plan making and decision taking. In respect of the latter, this means:

"Approving development proposals that accord with the Development Plan without delay"

- 4.8 In addition the paragraph states that:

"Where the Development Plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, granting permission unless:

- Any adverse impact of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole; or***

- ***Specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted***

- 4.9 Footnote 9 to paragraph 14 lists examples of such specific policies such as Site of Special Scientific Interest, Green Belt land, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks. No such designations apply in this case.
- 4.10 Paragraph 197 further states that in assessing and determining development proposals, local planning authorities should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Ensuring the vitality of town centres and building a strong, competitive economy

- 4.11 Section 2 of the Framework states that planning policies should be positive, promote competitive town centre environments and set out policies for the management and growth of centres over the plan period. The Core Strategy duly follows these aims and paragraph 23 of the Framework states that local planning authorities (LPAs) should *'promote competitive town centres that provide customer choice and a diverse retail and which reflect the individuality of town centres'*, and that they plan positively to encourage economic activity.
- 4.12 Paragraph 20 of the Framework outlines that to help achieve economic growth, LPAs should plan proactively to meet the development needs of business and support an economy fit for the 21st century. In order to do so, paragraph 21 goes on to set out that planning policies should recognise and seek to address potential barriers to investment, including a poor quality environment or a lack of infrastructure services or housing.

Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy

- 4.13 The Core Strategy was adopted in March 2014 and sets out a number of challenges to bring about sustainable improvement in the social, economic and environmental conditions of the District. Section 3 of the Core Strategy details these challenges, with the headings *"Fostering business growth and economic sustainability"*, *"creating thriving, distinctive market towns"* and *"protecting and enhancing the distinctive quality of the environment"* being of most relevance to the proposals at The Valiant public house. The proposals support the challenge to expand the District's leisure offer, especially in the centre of Leek, which should be a thriving market town.

- 4.14 There is a need to address qualitative deficiencies in the market towns and to regenerate underused or poor quality area and buildings, where this will help to achieve improvements to the local economy. The application is clearly a problem site in this respect and both the pub itself and evidently the exterior yard, are in need of regeneration to achieve the best use out of the property.
- 4.15 The challenges promote growth and regeneration as outlined above, but within the context of a need to protect and enhance the distinctive qualities of the environment. In this case heritage conservation is important given the Conservation Area status of the site, and there is a need to make better use of the District's conservation assets through quality new development. Within its Conservation Area context The Valiant public house can offer much more as a community facility and a traditional leisure destination in the town centre.
- 4.16 The above sections lead into Policy SS1 – *Development Principles* which states that the Council will expect the development and use of land to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the Staffordshire Moorlands. Within this includes quality local services, leisure and tourist facilities, development which maintains the distinctive character of towns, and which protects and enhances the historic environment. The policy is fundamental to the Core Strategy and provides criteria that will be applied to all development proposals.
- 4.17 Policy SS1a supports the overall approach to the Core Strategy and reflects the *Presumption in favour of sustainable development* which was set out previous in this section.
- 4.18 The Area Strategies section of the Core Strategy sets out the approach for each town, village and rural area in the District, setting out actions to achieve the vision for each area. Policy SS5a – the Leek Area Strategy – seeks to consolidate Leek's role as the principle service centre and to support its regeneration. Of particular relevance to the proposals are sections 3 and 4 which seeks to strengthen Leek's role, as mentioned above, and promote its special character and heritage. Section 4 states that the strategy will conserve and enhance buildings, site and areas of heritage and cultural importance, complemented by new distinctive, sensitively design and high quality, sustainable buildings.
- 4.19 In terms of town centre policies and retailing, section SO5 seeks to ensure the long term vitality and viability of the three market towns of Leek, Biddulph and Cheadle. The Core Strategy seeks to be pro-active in the development of Leek town centre

through measures to promote growth of leisure development, amongst others. In the context of sustainable development, this strategy which require the support for businesses such as The Valiant public house to develop their property and change the fabric of it, as proposed in this application. In this case the proposed development will contribute towards the local term sustainability of the business and the leisure facility.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 This Statement has set the Planning, Design and Access aspects of the proposed alterations to the rear area of The Valiant public house, which involves the part demolition of an existing out building and the refurbishment of the remaining sections of the building, as well as the courtyard, to create a new external drinking and dining area. This Statement has set out the planning context for the proposals and is supported by a full Heritage Assessment which provides justification for the development.
- 5.2 The proposals have been designed to enhance the quality of the pub environment and develop its function as a key community asset within Leek town centre. This is key in terms of the ongoing viability of the pub itself and the wider impacts for the vitality and viability of the town centre. The need to balance this with an appropriate response to the Conservation Area context has been recognised and, as justified in the Heritage Assessment, when considering the current condition of the site and the benefits that realised from the proposals, it is submitted that the alterations would both preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the wider Leek Conservation Area. At the same time the unique heritage assets within the building itself can be recovered in good condition, enabling them to be displayed for the interest of the community either as part of the new development or off-site in another location.
- 5.3 The proposals represent investment in the pub and to make improvements to its condition, safety, access and offer as a community and leisure facility, to the benefit of the town centre. As demonstrated within this Statement and the supporting Heritage Assessment, the proposals are in accordance with relevant policies of the adopted Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy and guidance in the NPPF and NPPG. In light of this justification it is respectfully requested that planning permission be granted.