Hewitt&CarrArchitects

Heritage Statement

20 Spencer Avenue, Leek
Mr and Mrs Dartford

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Heritage Statement in support of a rear extension and alterations to No. 20 Spencer Avenue

"Good design can help to create lively spaces with distinctive character, streets and public spaces that are safe, accessible, pleasant to use and human in scale; and places that inspire because of imagination and sensitivity of their designers."

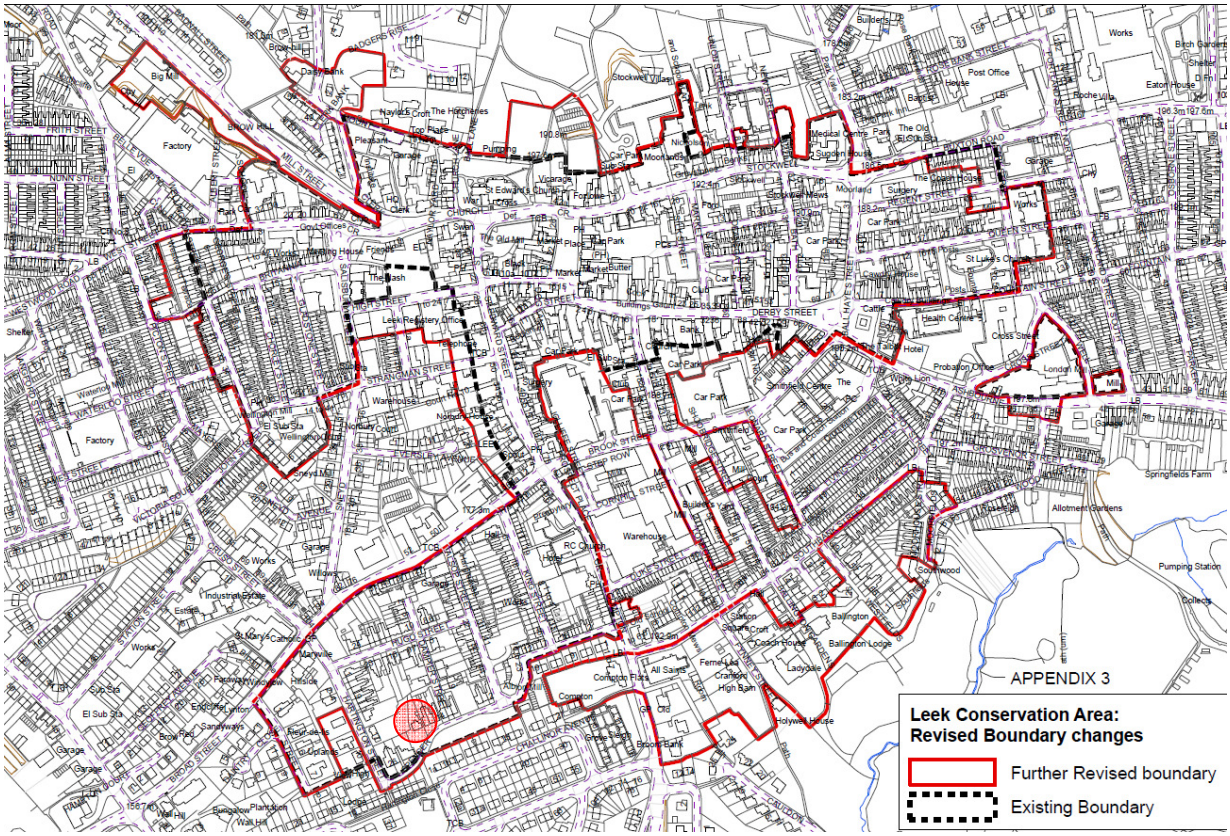
- By Design, Urban Design in the Planning System; Towards Better Practice (DETR & CABE, 2000).

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1.0 HERITAGE STATEMENT
Description of the Asset

1.1. 20 Spencer Avenue is situated on the edge of the Leek Conservation Area and next to one of Leek's existing Industrial Heritage sites, the Albion Mill.



1.2. The History of Leek

Leek's first market was established by Royal Charter in 1207 and the town is still a thriving market centre today. The town was mentioned in the Domesday Book as 'Lec' but there was a settlement here well before that due to the churchyard, which contains two crosses - one is in Mercian style but is damaged and can be dated to the 10th century, while the other is a magnificent 11th century Norse style cross.

Leek dates back to the early 13th century and grew to being a planned settlement from just an earlier church and road. The town retains its medieval street pattern and market place, and a wide range of buildings dating from

the 16th century onwards. In the 19th century, Leek was known for its silk industry, and the surrounding mills and terraces confirm this emergence. Within the town centre, the modest scale of the early housing contrasts with the more dramatic designs of the late 19th century buildings.

1.3. The Albion Mill is one of Leek's Industrial Heritage sites, having been a major part of the towns booming Silk industry. Its surrounding land was sold and developed privately, beginning in the 1820s and continuing until the late 1890s into a mix of terraces, semi-detached and detached houses varying between 2 and 3 storeys, to house the influx of workers. Most of these were based around a Victorian style, ranging in quality and detail. This development laid down new streets such as Alsop St, Hugo St, Dampier St and, what was then known as, Spencer Street (now Spencer Avenue).

1.4. There are over 140 listed buildings within Leek, with only two listed buildings in close proximity of 20 Spencer Avenue, including the Albion Mill which is Grade II listed. The ever growing demand and expansion of the silk industry in Leek saw the development of several silk mills and weavers cottages, the first phase of which saw the laying out of Albion and King Street alongside the construction of the Albion Mill by 1838.

1.5. Spencer Avenue sits opposite the Mill and became the more affluent street in the area, having only three large detached houses built by the end of the 19th Century, including number 20. The avenue was developed further with two more semi-detached properties being constructed in the same Victorian style.

2.0 HERITAGE STATEMENT
Assessment of its Significance

2.1. Leek is a significant market town situated in the heart of the Staffordshire Moorlands, and therefore its heritage needs maintaining.

2.2. Density is a major factor in the town due to the natural constraints of the site. As a result, few parts of the Conservation Area are without impact on others, and ill-considered developments can have a major impact.

2.3. It is also important that existing vernacular relationships are maintained. Each is the result of its historical development, and represents a key characteristic of the Conservation Area.

2.4. Currently no. 20 Spencer Avenue remains a part of the rich heritage of Leek's industrial history, and forms a part of the architectural story of the area at that point in time. It is important that the character of the property is retained within its development so as to maintain the vernacular of the surrounding area.

3.0 HERITAGE STATEMENT
The Design Concept

3.1. The proposal is for a two storey rear extension to the existing house along with internal alterations.

3.2. The design concept behind the extension and alterations is to create an open-plan kitchen diner with a separate utility room and WC at ground floor level, whilst creating a new ensuite as part of the master bedroom at first floor level.

3.3. The design will be in keeping with the existing Victorian style of the house, creating a new gable on the first floor alongside the existing gable, and a mono pitch lean-to roof on the ground floor that will mirror the existing lean-to roof on the rear elevation. The windows will follow the existing sash window design and the materials will be picked out to match the existing to ensure the extension is fully in-keeping with the current style of the property.



Existing Rear Elevation



Proposed Rear Elevation

4.0 HERITAGE STATEMENT
The Impact

4.1. The impact created by this proposal would be a positive one. Expanding the ground floor into a more accessible, multi-purpose kitchen/utility will enhance the quality and livability of the space, bringing the property up to a standard of modern living and future proofing for a family who are looking towards creating a long term home.

4.2. This proposal will also improve the aesthetic quality of the rear elevation with the addition of a new gable that will continue the existing aesthetic along the rear, whilst also filling in the negative space that currently exists there. This should create a more even and visually appealing façade in-keeping with the traditional style of the area.

4.3. The proposed extension will not impact upon the street-front as it is located at the rear of the property and the development will not be visible from the street.

4.4. The extension itself will be subservient to the house, with materials and details designed to match the existing, ensuring the impact of the development will be positive.