

## Heritage Statement

### The Subject of the Application, Property - Co-op, West Street, Leek, ST13 8AF Part of National, External, Corporate Re-signing Programme



**Leek** is a market town and civil parish in the county of Staffordshire, England, on the River Churnet. It is situated about 10 miles (16 km) north east of Stoke-on-Trent. It is an ancient borough and was granted its royal charter in 1214.

It is the administrative centre for the Staffordshire Moorlands District Council. King John granted Ranulph de Blondville, 6th Earl of Chester, the right to hold a weekly Wednesday market and an annual seven-day fair in Leek in 1207.

Leek's coat of arms is made up of a Saltire Shield. On the top is the Stafford Knot, either side is the Leek "Double Sunset" and below a gold garb. The crest is a mural crown with three Mulberry leaves on a Mount of Heather on top of which a Moorcock is resting his claw on a small-weave Shuttle. The motto 'ARTE FAVENTE NIL DESPERANDUM' translates to: Our skill assisting us, we have no cause for despair.

Many Victorian period, and older, buildings still stand in the town, many built by the family architectural practice of the Sugdens. In 1849 William Sugden (b. 1821 in Keighley) came to Leek. He was an architect and his work on the design of the railway stations for the Churnet Valley Railway brought him to the area. In the following year William's son, Larner Sugden, was born. After schooling in Yorkshire, Larner returned to Leek in 1866 to be apprenticed to his father as an architect, and thus was formed the famous Sugden & Son (Architects), whose influence on the town was to be profound. The firm had offices in Derby Street. The building still survives, the ground floor now being occupied by Boots the Chemist. Larner was a great supporter of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, and so Leek's development was in sympathetic hands.

The architectural output from Sugden & Son was both prolific and varied. Some of the buildings designed by the Sugdens are as follows: the Congregational Church with its 130' spire, (now Trinity Church), built in the Victorian Gothic Revival style (1863), Myatt's Mill in Earl Street (1864), Mill Street Methodist Chapel and Ragged School (1870), the Cottage Hospital, in memory of silk manufacturer James Allsop (1871), their own houses in Queen Street, complete with monograms for William, Larner and for Larner's French wife (1877), West Street School (extended in 1881), the District Bank, which exhibits a strong Richard Norman Shaw influence (1882) and the Leonard Street Police Station in Scottish Baronial style (1891). This last was probably the last joint venture of the father-and-son team because William Sugden died in 1892.

The Sugden masterpiece was, perhaps, the Nicholson Institute, built in the Queen Anne style, in 1882. The fact that this building is tucked away behind the 17th century 'Greystones' is a further indication of Larner's regard for old buildings. Larner would not countenance demolition of the old building, and so, as the Nicholsons owned the land to the rear, that is where the Institute was built. Larner cleverly incorporated the busts of Shakespeare, Newton, Reynolds and Tennyson into the building representing 400 years of artistic and scientific achievement from the 16th to the 19th century and embracing literature, science, art and poetry. In 1899 came the Technical Schools and the Co-operative Society Hall. Although the original town centre cattle market was demolished and replaced with a bus station and shopping centre in the 1960s, the new cattle market was built on the edge of town



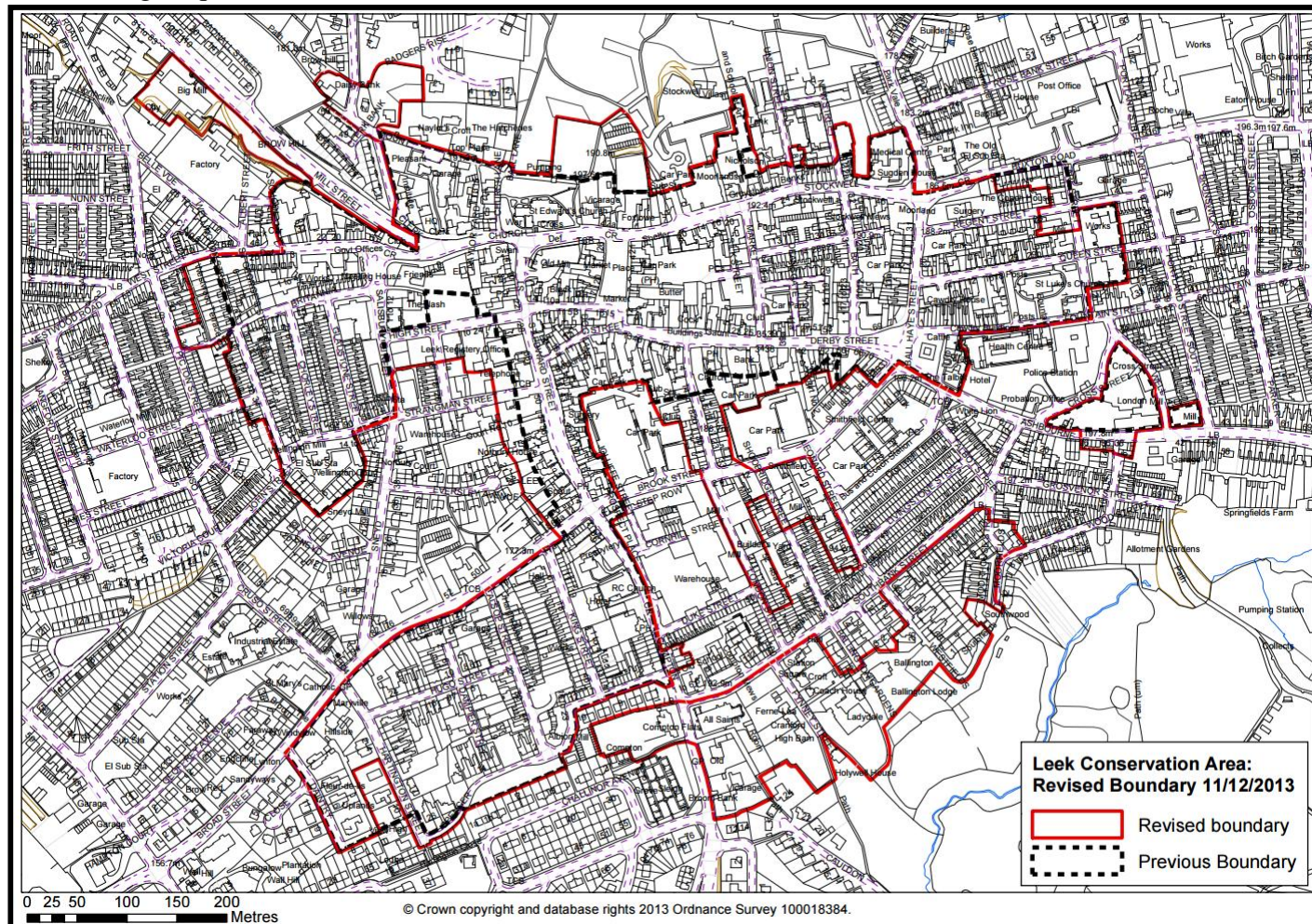
adjacent to the railway station. Later, this was one of the stations closed following Dr. Beeching's recommendations, and a supermarket (Morrisons) now stands on the site.

The Nicholson War Memorial was dedicated in 1925.

Leek offers some contemporary architecture, most notably the alterations and refurbishment to Trinity Church on Derby Street (2011) and new teaching building on Horton Street for Leek College (2013).

The building in question is the West Street Co-op. It is a part of Re-signing Programme for the Co-operative Food Group.

The building in question is in Conservation Area.



The core of the Conservation Area is the medieval market town with its church, market place and medieval street pattern formed by Church Street, St. Edward's Street, Derby Street and Stockwell Street. By the 16th century the market place had been reduced to its present size and Sheep Market and Costard Street<sup>11</sup> had been created. Church Lane was in existence by the 17th century, and Overton Bank and Clerk Bank had become separate entities by the late 18th century when the toll road was created. Later roads include Russell Street and High Street. As a result each street has its own distinctive character and quality, depending on its date of development, proximity to the town centre, and desirability as place of residence.

West of the early town, a later industrial area centres on Chorley Street, running between Wellington Mill (1853) and Brunswick Mill, both now converted to housing. The 1838 map shows most of this area under pasture, although a 'silk shade' occupied a site to the south of Strangman's Walk, and the area north of West Street had already been developed. By 1879 the pasture was gone, although the Wellington and Brunswick mills still faced each other across open ground. In contrast to the simplicity of the earlier mills, these mid-19th century mills are architecturally selfconscious, a positive statement about their owners' wealth and pride, a feature emphasized by Chorley Street, which is laid out to frame the centre of each façade. Elsewhere in Leek most of the housing stock developed piecemeal, but here each side of each street (Chorley Street, Gladstone Street and Wellington Street) was designed and built as a whole, with shops, public houses, and a few larger houses occupying strategic positions, providing evidence for overall planning. As a result the long red-brick terraces have a unity of design that is lacking elsewhere, the desired effect now substantially eroded by the absence of original doors and windows. Further two storey terraces flank Brunswick Mill on Britannia Street and West Street. North of West Street a more diverse range of buildings include the former West Street Wesleyan School, rebuilt in 1854 with the brick chimney tops characteristic of Sugden's work. A modest pair of semi-detached houses linked to the main building read as part of the same design. Westwood terrace, set at right angles to West Street with gardens accessed from a leafy footpath, and the decorative bulk of the Picton Street Co-op (Sugden, 1895) complete the scene to the west.



### **Existing signs:**



### **Proposed Signs:**



### **The Proposal:**

To install new signage as part of a national re-signing programme following the Applicants Corporate Re-Branding. The requirement for the change is the new trading style of the Applicant.

The building in question is currently trading as a Co-operative Food store and has done so for a number of years.

It brings a sympathetic but fresh new look to the Store.

### **What is the significance of the Asset?**

The Co-operative Store is a local store there to serve the community of Leek which it has done so for quite a few years.

### **How has the scheme proposed taken account the significance of the Asset?**

The new design for the stores new branding across the board should sit well in the Leek Conservation Area. There will be minimal impact on the asset or the surrounding area with the design having a more subdued look.

### **Access:**

Access to the entrance to the store will not be affected by any of the new signage once installed. There may be some minor disruption during the installation but this will be kept to a minimum.

The new signage will not hinder any passing pedestrian or effect passing vehicles. It will not affect any current movement to and from the site.

### **Community Safety:**

The Co-operative log will be fixed at a height of 3.664m and does not affect any pedestrian walkways, ramps or roads as required by current building regulations. The proposed signage will not obscure the view of West Street past the store, nor will it obscure any entrances or exits allowing the public to access the building safely during operating hours.

During the installation, the elevation will be cordoned off using barriers while safely leaving pedestrian access. All work being carried out will be carried out to a high standard and the areas where signage is not being replaced will be made good.

### **Environmental Sustainability:**

The construction of the signs where possible is done by hand decreasing the carbon foot print of the signage. The Replacement signage will likely aid the local economy by increasing the brands presence on the West Street allowing the opportunity for more jobs to be created.

The proposed new signage will be installed with the minimum of fixings using non ferrous fixings in order to respect the fabric of the building by minimizing the stains that result from corrosion from conventional steel fixings.

### **What will be the impact of the proposals on the Heritage Assets?**

There will be minimal impact on the asset or the surrounding area.

Great care will be taken when any work is done on the building.

The access to the building is not affected.

During the installation, the elevation will be cordoned off by barriers whilst safely leaving pedestrian access.

Text in *Italics* have been taken from Wikipedia and Conservation Area Appraisal Leek.