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Appendix 2: The Draft Leek Conservation Area Character Appraisal

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CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

LEEK

[COVER - THREE PHOTOGRAPHS – AS EXISTING]

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SOURCES

Printed sources

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Maps and original sources

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Line drawings of building details are after R.W.Brunskill and R. Harris
Extracts from Yates' Map of Staffordshire reproduced by permission of Staffordshire Record Society.

1.0 INTRODUCTION MAP 1

Summary of special interest

1.1 Leek is a planned settlement dating to the early 13th century that grew up beside an earlier church and road. The town retains its medieval street pattern and market place, and a wide range of historic buildings dating from the 16th century onwards. The surrounding mills and terraces mark the emergence of a fully-fledged silk industry in the 19th century. In the town centre the modest scale of the early housing contrasts with the more dramatic designs of the late 19th century buildings. Elsewhere changing needs and aspirations are reflected in the style of the mill buildings, and in a range of approaches to workers terraces and more affluent housing.

1.2 As designated in July 1970 the Conservation Area contained the medieval town, and the earliest surviving silk mill with related housing. Boundaries were revised in June 1989, December 1994, and November 2004, to place greater emphasis on Leek's industrial heritage, to acknowledge the importance of specific buildings. Further revisions in 2012 were proposed to rationalize the boundaries and include other areas of high townscape significance, including an exceptionally fine area of late Victorian and Edwardian housing to the south.

[1.1 The Wednesday Market **FULL WIDTH]**

The purpose of this document

1.3 This document seeks to analyze the characteristics that make Leek Conservation Area worthy of preservation, and aims to:

- evaluate and record the historical significance of the area,
- identify features of townscape and landscape importance,
- communicate information about what requires to be protected,
- serve as a basis for future policies of preservation and enhancement.

1.4 The appraisal is intended to help those living and working in the area to appreciate and value its special qualities, and to assist in the preparation of development proposals that complement its heritage. It will be used by the Local Authority to assess planning applications and to prepare a management plan for the area, which may include proposals for enhancement schemes. The Local Authority and other statutory undertakers are required to have regard for the need to preserve and enhance conservation areas and this document should assist in formulating proposals for Leek.

Planning policy framework

1.5. Under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990 Local Planning Authorities are required to determine which parts of their area are 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance' and to designate them as Conservation Areas. From time to time they are required to review these areas and publish proposals for their preservation and enhancement. This document forms part of that review.

1.6 Staffordshire Moorlands District Council currently has 14 Conservation Areas, with a further 20 within the overlapping area of the Peak District National Park Authority. Government guidance requires each Conservation Area to have a character appraisal and management plan to provide a basis for making suitable decisions.

1.7 This appraisal aims to interpret and expand policies in the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan, County Structure Plan and Emerging Local Development Framework. It has also been prepared with regard to current government guidelines, policy and legislation and English Heritage advice.

The implications of designation

1.8 Designation seeks to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of Conservation Areas by imposing additional controls over:

- the location and design of new development
- the size of extensions for which Planning Permission is needed
- certain minor works (e.g. roof alterations, cladding, and satellite dishes)
- demolition of buildings, gates, walls, fences and railings
- work to trees
- advertisements

1.9 Planning Permission will only be granted for development that preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the Conservation Area in accordance with the policies in the Local Plan. It is advisable to contact the Council's Development Control Section for advice on any particular proposal you may have. More detailed design guidance notes and technical publications are available to assist in specifying work affecting historic buildings.

1.10 Where the Council considers that the appearance of a Conservation Area is being harmed by unsympathetic alterations to dwellings it may serve an Article 4(2) Direction. This requires that certain external alterations to a building will need Planning Permission, such as new doors, windows, painting or rendering of the exterior and the demolition of boundaries. This level of control already exists for commercial buildings, buildings in multiple-occupancy, and those that have received grants for restoration work.

1.11 The Council now proposes to rationalize the position by extending the same controls to all buildings in the Conservation Area to protect the character of the area.

1.12 Conservation Area status also means that the Council can offer grant aid for the repair and enhancement of buildings or areas. As funds become available it will prepare enhancement schemes for those areas where this is considered necessary.

Community involvement

1.12 Public consultation will be undertaken for any enhancement schemes, to alter boundaries or to introduce additional planning controls.

1.13 In preparing this document the Conservation Area was surveyed in November 2012. It will be the subject of public consultation in 2013 and adopted later that year.

1.14 The appraisal document will be periodically reviewed and updated.

2.0 LOCATION AND SETTING

Location and landscape setting

2.1 Leek lies in the northern uplands of Staffordshire where roads from Macclesfield, Ashbourne, Buxton, Stone, and the Potteries intersect. To the north of the town Brough Park provides a visual link with open countryside that includes the western fringes of the Peak District National Park. Elsewhere the early town is embedded in 19th century industrial housing and mills, or 20th century housing estates.

2.2 Leek has been described as 'on a hill, in a valley' for the ancient town occupies a low hill at around 200 metres in a loop of the River Churnet (**2.1**). The surrounding area is characterized by north south trending ridges reaching 300 metres and above. These are at their most dramatic in the scenery of the Roaches, Lask Edge and the Cloud, and at their bleakest in the winter scenery of the smooth windswept tops of Morridge, Ipstones Edge and Gun.

2.3 Millstone Grit is the predominant rock type in the area, but a band of soft, friable Sherwood Sandstone runs down the centre of the former parish, and is the bedrock below Leek town and the gentler landscape to the south.

2.1 'On a hill in valley': the view from Ladderedge FULL WIDTH

Key views and vistas **2.1-2.6**

2.4 Given their height sweeping views of the town are available from the surrounding hills, and the countryside is clearly visible from the town centre. Towers, steeples, and mill buildings rise above the largest of the town-centre buildings. Here the pinnacled tower of St. Edward's, the copper-domed tower of the Nicholson Institute, the spires of St. Mary's and Trinity churches, or the irregular stone tower of St. Luke's; there the compact bulk of the mill buildings and the few surviving mill chimneys..

From St. Edward's churchyard there are fine views out over Brough Park to the outskirts of the ancient parish, including the Cloud and the Roches (**2.2**), and from Brow Hill out to Big Mill and the western hills (**2.3**). Footpaths (**Map 7**) provide further links to the countryside, allowing both visual and physical access to the Special Landscape Area beyond. Views over the town are at their best from Ladderedge Country Park, Buxton Road, and the Mount.

2.5 Major views occur at entry points. The churches of St. Mary and St. Edward dominate the southern approach with St. Edward Street between them. From the east there is an eye-catching view of York Mill with London Mill behind it (**4.20**), while the western approach offers distant views of St. Edward's Church and finally emerges right under the church.

2.6 Such views are important, and can be compromised by overlarge or poorly sited developments. A three-storey terrace by Waterloo Mill is clearly visible from Ladderedge, and reads as an addition to the mill complex, while housing developments on the Mount can be seen from Stockwell Street. The former blends well with the Listed Buildings, the latter is acceptable from the town but has taken its toll on views from the Mount, a much used area for walking.

[FIGURES 2.2-2.6]

3.0 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT, AND ARCHAEOLOGY

Origins and development Map 2

The medieval town

3.1 Medieval Leek was the principal settlement in a vast moorland parish of 53,000 acres. This contained 19 townships, Leek and Lowe, Bagnall, Basford, Bradnop, Cheddleton, Consall, Endon, part of Foxt, Heaton, Horton, Ipstones, Longsdon, Leekfrith, Onecote, Rownall, Rudyard, Rushton Spencer, Rushton James, Stanley, Tittesworth. The townships were the smallest unit of civil administration and were grouped to form a series of manors each with its own complex history.

3.2 The 'fee of Leek', including the area of the present town, was held by King William in 1086.[1] It formerly belonged to the Earls of Mercia, and subsequently to the Earls of Chester. At Domesday the tiny settlement probably stood by the church of St. Edward on an ancient route running north-west/south-east through the town and known as the Earl's Way (**3.1**)

3.1 Leek as mapped by Yates in 1775. Moorland is shown stippled [FULL WIDTH]

The market charter granted by King John to Earl Ranulph of Chester in 1207, and the town charter granted to the townsfolk by the Earl paved the way for a new town alongside the older settlement. Space was plentiful, and a vast new market place was created on level ground to the south of the church, and surrounded by burgage plots. Further burgage plots flanked the roads out of the market place (Stockwell Street, Derby Street, and St. Edward Street). Primarily a cattle market, specialized areas are reflected in the 19th century street names, Sheep Market and Costard Street[2] (now Stanley Street) and Bread Lane (now Dog Lane) the result of encroachment on the western side of the original market place.

The town charter gave each burgess 'half an acre of land at his house, and one acre in the fields, … timber for his buildings … and common of pasture for all kinds of cattle'. The town's arable land lay south and west of the new settlement. By the 17th century it was being enclosed with field boundaries reflecting the medieval patterns of land management.

In 1214 Earl Ranulph founded the Cistercian abbey of Dieulacres a mile north of the town. At his death in 1232, the abbey gained the manor of Leek, retaining it until the monastery was dissolved in 1538.

Nineteenth century maps coupled to surviving boundaries allow the limits of the medieval town to be established. The Friends Meeting House (**4.4**) and the Old Grammar School **(5.2**) mark the limit of 17th and early 18th century development to the north west; Greystones (**5.9**), Ford House (**2.6**) and the Ash Alms Houses (**3.5**)[3] mark the limits to the east and south (**Map 2**).

[3.3-3.5 AS BLOCK]

Population growth PARAGRAPH NUMBERS TO ADJUST

3.3 In 1500 Leek was a small market town serving a large area of pastoral farming. By 1900 it had seen the hey-day of a prosperous silk industry whose legacy of mill buildings and workers housing still dominates the town. Between these dates the town and its surrounding parish saw huge changes, as new forms of employment attracted a large new workforce, all of which required housing.

[1] The most valuable of the holdings in 1086, but including land well beyond the parish boundaries.
[2] A type of apple.
[3] BLUE = BUILDINGS TO MARK ON THE HISTORIC MAP

Prior to the census returns population totals are elusive and generally apply to the parish as a whole rather than the town. In 1563 Leek's vast parish still had less than a 1,000 inhabitants and huge areas of unenclosed moorland. In the succeeding century pastoral farming expanded onto the moorland and the population reached three to four thousand. Despite this, in 1666, only a hundred or so households occupied the town centre. With the development of the silk industry the balance changed, and the town drew heavily on the countryside for its new labour force. By 1811 the town alone had nearly 4,000 inhabitants, a total which spiraled steadily throughout the 19th century reaching 14,224 in 1901 and 19,880 by 2001.

The development of the silk industry

3.4 Specialization came slowly. Silk was first recorded in Leek in 1672, and in the 18th century button and mohair[4] merchants were central figures, supported by dyers. The twisting of thread took place in sheds, known locally as 'shades', while for button making out workers were employed, not only in the town, but also in the cottages and farmhouses of the wider parish. When button making went into decline in the second half of the 18th century, ribbon making came to the fore. By 1784 there were five ribbon manufacturers in Leek, and by 1795 Leek's considerable silk industry was producing sewing silks, twist, buttons, silk ferrets, shawls and silk handkerchiefs.

The industry remained predominantly domestic or quasi-domestic until well into the 19th century, with manufacturers giving out raw materials to 'undertakers' and receiving back into their warehouses the finished goods. In architectural terms this left a legacy of three storey houses with attics lit by a long series of 'weavers windows' indicating the presence of a long communal work room (also known as 'shades') on the upper floor (**4.12**). As the century progressed first spinning, and then weaving became industrialized although hand-loom weavers continued to operate side by side with the mechanized process.

Key figures in the later silk industry included Sir Thomas Wardle who was closely associated with William Morris in the 1870s and 80s, using vegetable dyes to achieve the natural colours that Morris required for his fabrics, and reviving indigo dyeing. Morris was instrumental in saving Greystones from demolition when another of the major mill owners, Sir Arthur Nicholson, donated its site for the Nicholson Institute (**5.9**). Morris and Co. stained glass graces many of the local churches, and his ideas influenced both building design and the work of the Leek School of Embroidery.

Plan form and general character. **Map 2**

3.5 Leek has seen both change and development but the underlying structure of the town is medieval, with the medieval church (**3.3**) occupying the highest point to the north. Southeast of the church the Market Place occupies only as small part of the original market square, with encroachment in three congested islands to the west of the present Market Place. By the 18th century this had narrowed Church Street and the top of St. Edward Street to the extent that house clearance and road widening was regarded as essential, and in the mid-20th century the present open space / car park to the south of St. Edward 's church came into being.

Leading from the corners of the market square were the principal streets of the planned settlement flanked by their burgage plots, still recognizable in the general layout of the streets, crowded frontages, and fragmentary evidence for early boundaries.

With the growth of its silk industry the town spilled out over its former arable land, whose pattern of enclosure influenced the shape and form of each new area of

[4] A corruption of 'moire', a type of cloth, probably meaning a specialized silk fabric.

development, creating a patchwork of alignments for the newly laid out streets, their factories and their housing (**Map 4**).

3.6 The end product is a series of contrasts, deliberately reflected in the specific areas delineated by the Conservation Area boundary. The medieval town with its 13th century street plan, its medieval church, and a fine and varied mixture of historic buildings spanning five centuries. The 19th and early 20th century developments serving a variety of purposes ranging from the mills with their long terraces of workers' housing, to the spacious and tree-lined areas built for the more affluent members of society, and supported by new churches, schools, and other public buildings.

3.7 In the 20th century silk gave way to synthetic fabrics. With rising costs and global competition a decline set in accompanied by loss of employment, and mill buildings became redundant. While many were demolished, fine examples survived to be converted to new uses, or await regeneration. Loss of employment, reduction in town centre living, and the advent of the supermarkets have all affected the character of the town centre, putting retail business at risk, and leaving upper floors empty or underused.

3.8 Grant schemes have injected much needed capital, helping to restore historic features, and encourage the re-occupation of upper floors. The traditional Wednesday market survives (**1.1**), supplemented by a Saturday antiques market and a farmer's market. Places to eat and drink are on the increase, and with small specialist shops, stand a reasonable chance of success alongside a range of antique shops and businesses specializing in the production/sale of furniture. Outside the Conservation Area Britannia Building Society provides a major source of employment.

The archaeology

3.9 Scheduled Ancient Monuments in the parish of Leek are as follows:

*Two Saxon cross shafts in churchyard S and SE of parish church	SJ 983567
Dieulacres Abbey (remains of)	SJ 983579
*Market cross	SJ 984558
Brindley's mill	SJ 977569

* within the Conservation Area

<u>The medieval period</u>

3.10 Two fine pre-Norman cross shafts (**3.5**) and four fragments survive in or around the church of St. Edward (SJ 983567). They are important both as fine artifacts and as the earliest evidence for Christianity in Leek. Recent research suggests that they date to the 10th century, and are of Viking origin.[5] Certainly the more elaborate of the two crosses carries Danish runes. The two standing crosses are scheduled, but neither is in its original position.

3.6 *Ninth century crosses in St. Edward's churchyard*

The parish church was originally dedicated to St. Edward the Martyr, which suggests a 10th century origin. Fragments of the Norman church survived until the 19th century when the arcades were rebuilt. A crease mark on the east wall of the church indicates it had a steeper roof extending down over narrow processional aisles. A trench[6] confirmed the position of the south wall of the original south aisle.

[5] Sidebotham, P.C. 'Stone Crosses in the Peak. *Derbyshire Archaeological Journal,* 119:206-219.
[6] Watching brief when cables were laid for millenium floodlights (F. Cleverdon).

The underlying pattern of the Market Place and road system, and fragmentary remains of burgage plot boundaries are also medieval, but no medieval houses survive. This makes the16th century timber-framing inside 2-4 Church Street the earliest surviving structure other than St. Edward's church.

3.11 A mile north of the town was Dieulacres Abbey, founded by Earl Ranulph in 1214 and dissolved in 1538 (**3.1**). Little survives in situ apart from a timber-framed gateway built into the present Abbey Farmhouse, and fragments of the tower crossing. Carved fragments are built into the 18th century farm buildings, and 19th century excavations indicate that a large part of the foundations survive. By the late 16th century the Rudyards of Rudyard Hall owned the site, and were removing stone including carved fragments built into walls around Rudyard Hall, or buried behind the house.

The rose windows set into the 16th century aisles of the church of St. Edward may also originate from the Abbey, as they normally feature high up in a major abbey or cathedral (**3.3** and **3.6**). A carved screen in a local farmhouse may also be from this source, as may decorative fragments at other local farms.

Later developments

3.12 In 1671 a member of the Jolliffe family erected a market cross in the Market Place (**1.1**). After several moves it was returned to the Market Place in 1986.

3.13 The Brindley Mill is at the bottom of Mill Street, outside the Conservation Area. The mill documented there in the mid-16th century may have succeeded the medieval corn mill. The present building dates to the mid-18th century and is associated with James Brindley, the canal engineer,

Subsequent developments relate mainly to 19th industry, its mills and industrial housing. These belong substantially to the built environment and enter the realms of archaeology principally when conversion is an issue. An exception are the 'shades', workshops on either the top floor of an otherwise domestic building (Maps 2 and 4), or separate workshops, such as those between Alsop Street and King Street, and that on Silk Street. Identification is important as they are becoming rare.

The Historical Environment Record maintained by Staffordshire County Council contains the up-to-date archaeological records.

The map evidence **Appendix 2, Historic maps**

3.14 Yates' map of Staffordshire (**3.1**) shows the town in the 18th century after the original market square had been much reduced. The Churnet defines the northern and western side of the township of Leek and Lowe,[7] the hamlet of Mill Street is already linked to Leek, and the tiny hamlet of Lowe is represented by Lowe Hall. Moorland still occupies large areas to the east of the town, the 'high field' to the north west of Leek, and high ground in Longsdon.

The 1838 *Plan of Leek* is the earliest detailed map (Appendix 2.1) and shows 19th century expansion in its early stages. Mapped at a similar period, the 1st edition 1 inch map Ordnance Survey map has less detail but covers the immediate topography (Appendix 2.2). A map of 1811 shows the position of 'Leek town lands', uncultivable areas associated with the town's arable land such as the north facing slope backing Mill Street (the strip of holdings shown below Nab Hill) and Woodcroft which was to become the cemetery (**3.7**). In doing so it outlines the area covered by the 'town fields', Leek's former arable lands, the principle area of 19th century development.

Figure 3.7 *Map of the Leek Town Lands in 1811.*

[7] A township was the smallest unit of civil administration in the Middle Ages. The medieval parish of Leek contained 19 townships and stretched from Froghall to Dane Bridge.

A series of Sales Catalogues[8] illustrate 19th century development as individual fields are laid out as house plots prior to sale. There are no Tithe maps for this area, so maps accompanying individual sets of deeds are the only remaining source for detailed surveys. Those held by the Local Authority provide a primary source for some of the town's key sites.[9]

From 1825, when the first improvement commissioners were appointed, the town was defined as a circular area with a radius of 1,200 yards drawn from a fixed point in the Market Place. The area was mapped in 1864[10], and shown on the 2nd edition 6 inch map of 1900 (Appendix 2.3) which gives a good overview of the town in the late 19th century, confirming steady development out across the surrounding fields, a process which can be followed on their successors.

The 50 inch O.S. map of 1879 gives the most detailed coverage of the Conservation Area. A sample has been reproduced to illustrate the development of the land between the Brunswick Wellington mills in the western section of the Conservation Area (Appendix 2.4).

3.15 There is no single public source for these maps: Staffordshire County Record Office, Leek Library, Hanley Reference Library, and the Leek and District Historical Society are the most prolific sources. The internet provides further sources but of lesser quality to the originals. Samples have been illustrated either within the text or in the appendix, as most are too large too be reproduced in full.

[8] Held by Staffordshire County Record Office, and Leek Historical Society.
[9] With the introduction of the Land Registry deeds may become redundant when properties change hands. Their survival can be ensured by deposit at the County Record Office.
[10] Copy in Leek Library.

4.0 CHARACTER ANALYSIS

The character and interrelationship of spaces within the area **Map 3**

4.1 Leek Conservation Area consists of a series of contrasting areas

- The central section with the market town and St. Edward's Church
- The southwestern section with Albion Mill and St. Mary's Church
- The northwestern section with Wellington Mill and West Street.
- The eastern section with Getliffe's Yard and London Mill
- The southeastern section with London Street and All Saints Church

The central section with the market town and St. Edward's Church

Introduction

4.2 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[11] 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.

[COLUMN WIDTH]

4.1 The tower of the medieval church

Church Street, Stockwell Street and Church Lane

4.3 The road from Macclesfield to Buxton follows Church Street and Stockwell Street past the medieval church of St. Edward. With its massive tower and fine detailing, the church dominates the top of St. Edward Street (**3.2** and **4.1**), where its churchyards provide respite above a busy road junction, and give access to Brough Park.

To the east of the church the mellow stonework of the Vicarage lies back from the road, half-hidden by 2-4 Church Street, which in turn shoulders the tall, elegant 18th century brickwork of Foxlowe (**1.1, 4.2, 4.5**). Further east two storey houses revert to a more modest scale, as the road continues between the last of the early stone buildings (**2.4** and **5.9**) and on into an area of 19th century development. In Church Lane the cobbled surface follows the churchyard wall, where the rendered surfaces of the smaller and earlier houses contrast with their taller brick counterparts.

4.2 Church Street: (left to right) the Vicarage, 2-4 Church Street, and Foxlowe.

Overton Bank and Clerk Bank

4.4 West of the church a deep road cutting has left Clerk Bank and Overton Bank severed by traffic. Historic buildings on Clerk Bank are varied and picturesque (**4.3**). Here cruck cottages sit between the brick or render of former town houses, and the stone-mullioned facade of the Old Grammar School makes an uneasy companion for the harsh red brick of the former Maud Institute (**5.2**). Behind these the modest industrial buildings of Naylor's Yard have become housing, and Mount Pleasant Chapel has given way to a Beth Johnson home with gardens to the south and a graveyard to the west.

Between St. Edward Street and Overton Bank the black and white façade of the Swan flanked with the 18th century Assembly Room marks the extent of the former

[11] Now Stanley Street.

market square (**3.3**). Further west are the modest row of late 18th century cottages built for poor Quakers, and the high stone wall that encloses the Friends Meeting House and its tree covered grounds **(4.4**).

4.3. Clerk Bank 4.4 The Friends Meeting House

The Market Place **Figures 1.1 and 4.5-4.7**

4.5 The Market Place is the hub of the town, and is a sizeable open space. The cobbled surface with a fine Victorian lamp standard, and a 17th century market-cross, is surrounded by close-packed houses and shops. Over time modest two-storey buildings gave way to taller buildings, creating a patchwork of unpretentious early buildings interspersed with the larger and more conspicuous buildings of Leek's industrial hey-day in the mid-late 19th century.

Each side of the Market Place acquired important buildings. The 17th century Hall House (now the Red Lion) to the east, and the18th century Foxlowe to the north. Major 19th century buildings include the Black's Head dating to the 1850s (now a shop), the Market Hall (1897) and the Bird In Hand (1889). All make their presence felt through their size and elaborate detailing.

The majority began life as houses, and the addition of shop fronts has substantially altered their appearance. Demolition has damaged the north-eastern corner of the Market Place, where the effect of poor quality 20th century buildings has recently been ameliorated by the well designed shop fronts of the Tourist Information Centre and the Engine House.

Given its scale, encroachment on the original market square was inevitable, resulting in a crowded area to the west of the Market Place broken only by the Sheep Market and Stanley Street.[12] By the 19th century Church Street and the upper part of St. Edward's Street had became narrow and congested, leading to 20th century clearance in the area due south of the church. This allowed wider streets and car parking, but left the back of several properties exposed. The construction of a walled car park fringed by trees has done much to improve this unfortunate scar.

From the Market Place, Sheep Market and Stanley Street slope down to St. Edward Street, and are linked by Dog Lane. Buildings here are generally smaller in scale than those on the Market Place, but still include major 17th and 18th century houses, and fine Victorian and Edwardian shop fronts

THE MARKET PLACE [SET AS A SINGLE PAGE]

4.5 The *Bird In Hand* (left) at entrance to Sheep Market, and the 17th century market cross
4.6 The 'hub of Leek' circa 1870, with Foxlowe (centre) and the Red Lion
4.7 The Red Lion (left of centre) next to the Market Hall, with Sugden's *Blacks Head* (right)

[12] Custard is a corruption of Costard, a type of apple suggesting the type of produce sold in this area.

St. Edward Street

4.6 The sinuous shape of St. Edward's Street and the fine quality of its buildings are enhanced by views of two major churches. To the north is medieval church of St. Edward, and to the south the Roman Catholic church of St. Mary, the latter towering over the diminutive form of the Ash Alms Houses (**4.8**).

4.8 *The church of St. Mary seen above the Ash Almshouses (centre) and Spout Hall (left)*

Formerly known as Spout Street, it was once a steep sided valley carved out by running water. Level house platforms cut into the valley sides left a cliff-face at the rear whose height increases as the street descends. This severed the houses from their crofts, and probably led to the sale of those on the eastern side where, by 1879, the majority of the back land ran with a single large-scale property. By contrast occupants on the western side retained their burgage plots well into the 20th century, and had substantial gardens and a view across the fields.

Consequently the scale and design of the houses varies from side to side, and along the length of the street. Buildings on the western side tend to be of above average scale and architectural quality, particularly at the southern end (**4.9**). Here prominent buildings include fine examples of late 19th century timbered-framing over lower storeys of stone such as Les Hetres**,** Spout Hall, and the Victoria Buildings. The earlier houses were smaller and include both a double fronted house of stone (No. 62) and houses of mellow handmade brick, of which the largest (no. 54) the later home of Sir Thomas Wardle (**5.4**).

The southern end of the street was spacious, increasing its desirability, while the northern end, affected by the encroachment onto the market square, was extremely narrow. As a result buildings to the north tended to be modest until, in the 1880s, the High Street was cut through. This created new corner plots soon to be occupied by Bank House (1885) and purpose built shops. Subsequently Strangman Street was widened with less happy results, as historic buildings gave way to the undistinguished blocks required by the Post Office.

4.7 With notable exceptions buildings on the eastern side tended to be smaller. This suggests their gardens had long been sold, certainly before the 1838 (**Appendix 2**) when the cliff line is evident behind the lower houses, and the bulk of the land ran with Nos. 45-47. Here as elsewhere in Leek corner plots attracted major buildings: the southeastern corner has the Unicorn, and the corner of Sheep Market has Sugden's Shirley Building (1873), whose relationship to the ragged brickwork of No. 19 indicates 19th century road widening of the narrowest part of the street.

Derby Street and Russell Street

4.8 Like Stockwell Street, Derby Street forms an integral part of the old town. In both cases the earliest buildings cluster towards the western end, while the eastern buildings belong mainly to the 19th century. Derby Street leaves the Market Place from its south-eastern corner as a broad, slightly winding street. From here there is a view past Trinity Church to 'the Monument', both 'landmark' buildings, the one with a massive church topped by a spire the other a dignified stone war memorial (**4.10** and **4.11**).

Apart from the 19th century side roads the present building line is virtually continuous, but the line of the historic facades is not. While smaller buildings flanked the pavements, larger houses retained front gardens well into the 19th century, to be targeted for flat-roofed extensions that are one of the least happy features. A major contribution is made by buildings that retain original, unaltered facades, have acquired good quality 19th or early 20th century shop fronts, or have been sympathetically restored.

To the eastern end of the street a scatter of small-scale buildings, some with tiny stone gables engulfed in later brickwork, mark the extent of the old town, and are surrounded by an increasing number of larger brick buildings.

Cut in the19th century to link Derby Street and Brook Street, Russell Street soon became a prime building site. Here major 19th century buildings include Trinity Church (1863), the Halifax (1853), the former Mechanics Institute (1862) all by William Sugden, and the former Overfield's furniture warehouse (1895) by his son, Larner. To the south of these is Russell House and terraces of smaller houses and shops, some with original shopfronts.

THE MARKET TOWN: CONTRASTING VIEWS [as a single page]

4.9 *St. Edward Street:(left to right) Les Hetres, No. 64, No. 62 'The Old House'.*
4.10 '*The Monument'*
4.11 *Trinity Church and the Roebuck*

The southwestern section with Albion Mill and the Church of St. Mary

4.9 On a gentle ridge south of Brook Street and Broad Street are three major elements:

- the Church of St. Mary with its present and former ancillary buildings
- Albion Mill and the related workers housing
- an area of more affluent housing

Dominating the northwest is the towering form of St. Mary's Roman Catholic church, the height of its spire enhanced by rising ground and the contrast with the Ash Almshouses in the valley below (**4.8**). Adjacent are the sizeable forms of the clergy house, and the former Lorretto Convent (now the Peak Weaver's Hotel), the one surrounded by hard surfaces, the other by the tree covered gardens.

4.12 The earliest part of Albion Mill with the adjacent weaver's houses

South and west of this is the earliest coherent area of industrial development. By 1838 the first phase of Albion Mill was in place, and King Street and Albion Street had been laid out and partially developed. Further east the site of Alsop Street was still a field, but plots on its eastern side were ready for sale (**Appendix 2**). Contrasting styles of housing on a single street indicate the purchase of single or small groups of plots by individual developers, and add variety and interest to the street scene.

The two phases of Albion Mill and the surrounding housing reflect the changing face of the silk industry and the changing attitudes of its owners. The earlier part of the mill, a plain rectangular structure, housed the spinning that providing the raw materials for the out workers occupying the three-storey housing on King Street, Albion Street and Canal Street (now Broad Street) where weavers occupied well-lit workshops on the upper floors (**4.12**). The second part of the building is more elaborate, and was built to house mechanized weaving with workers occupying two-storey terraces like those on Alsop Street.

While St. Mary's Church is highly prominent, the Congregational buildings are more restrained in their impact. The Hargreaves School (1873) lies between terraced houses on Alsop Street, while the Manse and garden occupied the raised corner between King Street and Broad Street. The former school is a fine Victorian Gothic building of brick and stone, while the Manse, a double fronted brick house, was converted into a masonic hall in 1926 gaining a substantial rear extension in 1933.

4.10 West of Alsop Street is a different world, built for the more affluent members of Leek's society in the late 19th or early 20th centuries. Here unbroken terraces give way

to tree-lined streets with substantial houses set in generous grounds. The setting, coupled to good quality craftsmanship and design, and the high survival rate of original windows and doors, ensures that it remains among Leek's most attractive places to live.

4.13 West of Alsop Street: 'substantial houses set in tree-lined streets'.

Domestic in character, its buildings range from late 19th century villas to relatively large-scale houses (**4.13**), some in short terraces. Styles vary from the striking 'half-timbered' facades of some of the late 19th century examples to the well-designed reticence of Longden's early 20th century houses (**5.14**). Substantial houses may be prominent sited on high ground, or make good use of changing land levels, with 'ground floor' rooms above street level, adding an element of drama. Many have the fine sash windows characteristic of the decades either side of 1900, with large plate glass panes in the lower sash with small panes above (**4.14**).

4.14 *Sash windows with glazing characteristic of the period around 1900.*

The north-western section with Wellington Mill and West Street.

4.11 West of the early town, a later industrial area centres on Chorley Street, running between Wellington Mill (1853) and Brunwick 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 (**Appendix 2**). In contrast to the simplicity of the earlier mills, these mid-19th century mills are architecturally self-conscious, 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 (**4.15**).

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 (**4.16**). 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.

NINTEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURY LANDMARKS

4.15 Wellington Mill and Chorley Street.

4.16 West Street School with its Italianate campanile and Sugden style chimneys

4.17 General shot of the area round the Monument.

The eastern section with Getliffe's Yard and London Mill

4.12 The part contains further areas of 19th century expansion, which can be subdivided into three major elements

- West of Ball Haye Street and adjacent to the market town
- East of Ball Haye Street with Queen Street and the Monument
- East of Earl Street with the Cross Street Mills

4.13 The area west of Ball Haye Street saw little development before the mid-19th century when Market Street and Bath Street were laid out together with Ford Street, York Street and Deansgate. Here the York Street cul-de-sac masks falling ground where, by 1838, the western range of Getliffes Yard had been terraced into the hillside (**Appendix 2.3**). Here three storey weavers' cottages and warehouses line as narrow passageway, recently covered to provide an attractive off-street haven (**4.18**).

4.18 Getliffes Yard

4.19 The Central Club

By the late 19th century Market Street was dominated by a number of major buildings. To the west there was the Central Club (a former silk mill) and the Town Hall, to the east the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel (Brunswick Chapel, with the Nicholson Institute forming the focal point to the north. Elsewhere the Public Baths (now gone) and the Cottage Hospital occupied the most prominent corners.

While the Central Club still towers above the surrounding terraces (**4.19**), the demolition of Brunswick Chapel and the Town Hall has left the area gap toothed. Space and the retention of landscaping across most of the former cemetery has been beneficial to the terraces and the fine corner house that once faced the Chapel. Elsewhere the results are less happy. The site of the Town Hall remains a hard-surfaced gash visually linked to the hard surfaces of the Silk Street car park, while the removal of a small corner house has left an ugly flat roofed extension as a prominent element in the view towards the Nicholson Institute.

In the north western corner the soft stonework of Greystones and Ford House (**2.4**) provide a welcome contrast to the brick of their neighbours, and detached houses retain sizeable gardens, much as they did in 1879 (**Appendix 2.5**). Towering above its neighbours, in the position demanded by the survival of Greystones, is a masterpiece by Larner Sugden, the Nicholson Institute, whose Renaissance style tower with its copper dome is one of the town's most dominant features **(5.9).** Further east three storey weavers housing mask later industrial buildings in the streets behind.

4.14 Elsewhere terraces predominate. These vary considerably in their design, resulting from the piecemeal sale of the building plots. Corner sites tended to be purchased by those with deeper pockets and more ambitious ideas, and house buildings of above average height and design, in contrast to the humbler two-storey terraces.

From the centre of the town Derby Street falls gently towards the Monument, one of England's largest war memorials (**4.10**). Where Derby Street widens out this is framed by the dramatic outline of the Talbot (**4.17**), and the simpler shape of the Cattle Market Inn, and flanked to the west by the Saunders Buildings, a fine corner building by Larner Sugden.

4.15 East of Ball Haye Street 19th century houses jostle for position on rising ground leading up towards former moorland. Parallel roads (Regent Street, Queen Street, and Fountain Street) were in place by 1838, with a substantial scatter of detached houses in the centre between Regent Street and Queen Street. Elsewhere large areas remained undeveloped, despite major industrial development south of Fountain Street.

In 1838 each of the islands created by the road system contained north-south property boundaries. Consequently, in the mid-late 19th century, the area developed piecemeal as individual holding were sold. In the north east corner the Church of St Luke (**5.15)** forms a major landmark, flanked by the gentler forms of its former schools. Detached houses and

modest terraces include a group on Queen Street built by Larner Sugden for himself (**5.11**) Near the Monument at the western end of Fountain Street are the Cawdry Buildings, a pleasant terrace of shops with housing above dating to 1889.

East of Earl Street, and unrelated to the rest of the development is Leek's largest concentration of mill buildings, survivors of what was once the most densely industrialized area. These include the four storey bulk of York Mill, London Mill (**4.20)** and Cross Street Mill (**5.7**), flanked to the south of the Ashbourne Road by a group of weavers' houses.

4.20 The Ashbourne Road with London Mill, York Mill and terraced housing.

The south-eastern section with London Street and All Saints Church

4.16 The southeastern area is one of sharp contrasts. Immediately south of Russell Street the streetscape changes from one of small three-storey shops with housing above, to one of industrial and public buildings, including the pre-Union workhouse and the former Police Station. Southbank Street marks the limits of this development, and the start of one of Leek's finest residential areas.

4.17 The northern limit is Brook Street which lies in the valley that once divided the old town from its arable fields. The area beyond was a major target for 19th century expansion, and is still dominated by mill buildings which tower over the smaller buildings built as housing for handloom weavers.

4.18 Brook Street (once a cul-de-sac known as Workhouse Street) and its later extension, Haywood Street, present contrasting styles of mill building. On Brook Street the large, plain, four- and five-storey blocks, part of the London Mills and the former workhouse, are characteristic of early 19th century, when function was more important than form. On Haywood Street the mills are later and reflect the hey-day of the silk industry, when owners has the money to lavish on more decorative schemes. Here the mixture of shapes for windows and taking-in doors, and more elaborate use of brickwork presents a livelier appearance.

4.19 The junction of Haywood Street and Russell Street is marked by a fine two-storey showroom and a related domestic building, with views beyond to the former Police Station. This presents a fine façade with splendid groups of the multiple chimneys which are so often the hallmark of the Sugden buildings. Gaps on Haywood Street allow glimpses through to the rear of Russell Street, where they add a decorative note to the skyline.

4.21-4.24 As shown

4.20 In 1838 large areas to the southeast of the town were still under pasture, the property of Mrs. Grosvenor of the Moorhouse. To the east was the farmhouse, accessed from what is now Moorhouse Street, and to the west was Compton House, on Southbank Street, both dating from 1800 or earlier.

4.25 Map of the area in 1900 FULL WIDTH OF PAGE

4.21 All that survives of the Moorhouse is a recently converted barn and some of the smaller outbuildings, standing out as solid grey stonework against a background of red-brick. Compton House has fared better and has recently seen good quality

restoration. While its back is to the street, its main facade faces southwest to a large garden that is still substantially complete (4.26).

4.26 Compton House

4.22 By the mid-late 19th century the area contained All Saints Church and its Vicarage, and Norton House, together with two large detached houses, Ladydale, and Ballington House with gardens stretching up to Southbank Street. Ballington House was particularly handsome making much use of decorative brickwork contrasted with stone. The terrace called Southfield, and a substantial terrace on Southbank Street had also been built in addition to service buildings for the main houses.

4.23 These, with a network of access roads, provided the background for further development either side of 1900, when some exceptionally fine terraces and semi-detached houses were built. These reflect the multiplicity of styles adopted by members of the Arts and Crafts movement, including the 'Queen Anne' style which relied on half timbering for its effect

4.24 Between Compton and Southbank, the broad, understated mass of the church of All Saints (1887) nestles into a terrace carved into the hillside (4.27). Above, on Fynney Street, Norton House (1888) and its south-facing neighbours were all in place by 1900. Opposite are three fine houses by Longden (1912). High Barn, built by the architect for himself, commands wide views, and can both see and be seen over a considerable distance (4.28). Here the deep sweeping eaves of the main brick range contrast with a more traditional pitch for its timber-framed gables, and with those of Fernlea and Cranford, a plainer pair of semi-detached houses.

ILLUSTRATIONS
4.27 All Saints Church

4.28 High Barn by Longden, 1912

4.29 No. 62 Westfields by Longden and Venables, 1915 (above) and one of its cast iron rain-water heads (below)

4.25 The triangle of land between Southbank, Westfields and Moorfields, developed either side of 1900 and has the storing feeling of a well-considered plan. Houses to the north of Westfields were built circa 1905 (information from an owner). Three together, and then three semis, they form an attractive and well-preserved row, each with a large bay under a forward gable, giving a strong sense of unity (4.30). Houses to the south are slightly later, including No. 62 designed by Longden and Venables in 1915 (4.29). Beyond and at right-angles is Southfields, a plain brick terrace of generous proportions in place by 1900 (4.31).

4.26 On Southbank Street a substantial terrace was in place by 1900. The bay-windowed fronts retains many original features, both in terms of fenestration and boundary walling, and an unusually large number of fine front doors which survive due to the protection provided by porches that are an integral part of the façade

4.27 Set at an angle that reflects the tapering form of the building plot is a further terrace called Moorfields (4.32), a fine example of the 'Queen Anne' style favoured by a number of the architects of the Arts and Crafts movement, including Norman Shaw, whose design for Spout Hall on St. Edward's Street may well have provided the inspiration for these.

ILLUSTRATIONS 4.30-4.32

5.0 THE BUILDINGS **Maps 4 and 6**

5.1 The buildings are discussed under the following headings

- The earliest buildings
- Brick houses of the 18th and early 19th century
- Mills and mill workers housing
- Mid-late 19th century buildings: the Sugdens, Longden, Shaw
- Other named architects
- Places of worship

KEY: Listed buildings are underlined.

The earliest buildings

Timber

5.2 Leek's earliest surviving buildings are of timber, and include both cruck and box-framed construction (see 6.1). Cruck buildings with steep pitched thatched roofs were once a common form of housing in Leek. The curving roof timbers that identify this form of construction survive at Old Timbers (Stockwell Street), the Black Swan (Sheep Market) and 2-4 Clerk Bank. The most complete example is 2-4 Clerk Bank, where three 16th century crucks survive under a raised roofline. Clad partly in Sherwood Sandstone, and partly in brick they form an attractive group between taller 18th and 19th century town houses (**4.3**).

Box-framed buildings allowed the more affluent headroom for an upper storey and attics. The present façade of the White Swan conceals a 16th century example (**3.4**) and 16th century framing hides behind the stone exterior of Nos. 2-4 Church Street (**4.2**). To its rear rendered gables mask a timber-framed stair turret, and a detached kitchen (now linked to the house). The 17th century Hall House (now the Red Lion) was the town's most prominent example, although little of the framing now survives. By contrast the Roebuck (Derby Street) is still clearly recognizable as a small timber-framed gentry house whose hallmarks are the mullion and transom windows of the projecting 2-storey porch which once housed the main entrance (**5.1** and **4.11**).

5.1 (above) The Roebuck (reproduced from Sleigh, 1883, 10).
(below) What remains unaltered on the main façade (Cleverdon).
[TOGETHER]

Stone

5.3 When timber became scarce stone replaced it as the main building material, until, in the opening decades of the 17th century, only the wealthy could afford to build timber-framed houses. The use of stone was short lived and by the 1720s brick had become fashionable and continued to be the main building material throughout the 18th and 19th centuries.

Little survives of Leek's smaller stone houses beyond the occasional gable, as their size and the use of the local, poorly cemented, Sherwood Sandstone renders them vulnerable. Its use for the large triple gabled house, now Nos 8-10 Sheep Market is unusual. Here render prevents erosion, as it did at the rear of 64 St. Edward Street, where a fashionable brick façade hides the use of cheaper materials to the rear.

A more durable stone was used for the main walling of Nos. 2-4 Church Street, at the northern end of the Market Place (**4.2**). Here, where the wealthy lawyer, Thomas Parker, remodeled earlier buildings into a single house in the mid-17th century, the upper floor retains most of its stone mullioned windows. The lower storey has been

cut into by shop fronts, but the front doorway, stable-yard and sections of the string course survive.[13]

Stone was used for the gables and plinth of the Hall House (now the Red Lion) built in the 1627 for a wealthy mercer, William Jolliffe as his major base in Leek. Towering above its neighbours, its flat roofed front probably served as a prospect tower from which to view the countryside (**4.6**).

The finest of Leek's early stone houses, Greystones (**5.9)**, was saved from demolition by William Morris and Thomas Wardle. Here a symmetrical façade retains leaded lights and metal casements to mullion and transom windows, and attic dormers are set well inside the building line, like those of the Vicarage which dates to 1714. Unlike Greystones the Vicarage **(4.2**) has seen considerable development. The present building replaced a timber-framed predecessor in 1714. Around 1830 it was given sashes with gothick detailing, a feature shared by rear windows at Greystones. The large forward extension was added in the second half of the 19th century.

5.2 The Old Grammar School (right) and the Maud Institute (left)

The Old House (No. 62 St. Edward Street) is a double pile house, dating to 1724. Its fine 18th century staircase occupies a stair turret to the rear. Built for Joshua Strangman, a Quaker button merchant, it was described by John Wesley as 'neither costly nor fine, but surprisingly neat and elegant', elegance evident in the twined initials and date above the doorway. Its mellow stone front retains 3-light mullioned dormers, but the lower windows were remodeled in the early 19th century (**4.9**). It was occupied by Thomas Wardle and his family during the years 1875-76 when William Morris stayed with them while studying the art of dyeing. Of similar date, the Old Grammar School on Clerk Bank, retains its full compliment of 3-light mullioned windows flanking a central doorway (**5.2**). A stone plaque commemorates its construction by the Earl of Macclesfield in 1723. Ford House (Bath Street) has earlier origins, but was remodeled into its present handsome form in the late 19th century with fine Arts and Crafts detailing to its interior (**2.6**).

Now rendered, the lower storey of the Ash Almhouses was also of stone. The present height was achieved some time in the 19th century by raising it in brick (**3.5**). The houses retained their single cell plan into the 20th century when they were given rear a extension to provide kitchens and bathrooms.

While stone houses are in a minority, three storey examples flank the market place. One to the west has a regular array of 3-light stone mullions indicating an early 18th century date. The Old Mill behind the western side of the Market Place is also of stone.

Brick houses of the 18th and early 19th century

5.4 The number and scale of Leek's 18th and early 19th century houses reflects the successful development of new trades by silk, mohair and button merchants whose wealth allowed considerable rebuilding. From the 1720s brick predominated. Although few houses remain complete, sufficient survives above the later shop fronts to identify contrasting styles of building, some more sophisticated than the others.

The most prominent buildings are the fashionable 'pattern book' houses. Where space allowed they had plain symmetrical facades, with a central entrance flanked by sash windows with a vertical emphasis. A classical pediment generally surmounted the entrance, and might also be used for a central forward bay as at No. 10 Derby Street (**8.1**).

[13] The birthplace of Thomas Parker, the Earl of Macclesfield and Lord Chancellor of England.

5.3 No 10 Stockwell Street 5.4 Les Hetres and No. 54 St. Edward St.

Few survive with both an unaltered façade and a historic ground plan. Of these No. 10 Stockwell Street is relatively small and has its kitchen in the basement (**5.3**). A detached house, its design is completely symmetrical, and the paired sashes flanking the entrance have exposed sash boxes suggesting an early 18th century date. No. 64 St. Edward Street is both larger and later **(4.9**). Built in a row of existing buildings it is less symmetrical, with an additional half bay for a side passage. Here the windows have concealed sashes, and the rainwater heads are dated 1747. Of similar date, 54 St. Edward Street, the later home of Sir Thomas Wardle in the later 19th century, is an imposing house with a substantial rear extension (**5.4**). No. 10 Derby Street, dates from 1760, has an early courtroom to the rear, and seems to have been built as a combined house and office for a solicitor (**8.1**). Occupying a key position at the top of the Market Place is Foxlowe, built for lawyer Thomas Mills in the 1770s: a tall and imposing double pile building which makes considerable impact on the Market Place (**4.2**) and (**4.5**).

Other examples survive from first floor upwards. Some like Nos. 21-22 Market Place, No. 13 and Nos. 2, 3 and 4 Gaunt Buildings (Derby Street) were imposing town houses, whose overall effect now depends on the design of their shops fronts. The shop-fronts for Nos. 21-22 Market Place are a fine 19th century set, but the Derby Street houses have flat roofed 20th century extensions covering their former gardens, one a successful blend of materials and style, the other a bald statement of corporate image.

5.5 No 56 St. Edward Street: the less fashionable end of the 18th century brick buildings.

Smaller and less polite in character are The Wilkes Head, and Nos. 23-25 Derby Street. These and comparable buildings lack the vertical emphasis of their larger cousins: their rooms are lower and their windows of different proportions. Where the windows have a horizontal emphasis they are likely to be casements. Where the main windows are square they generally had a central sash with narrow flankers as at 56 St. Edward Street (**5.5**), where Elizabeth Wardle ran the Leek school of Emboidery.

Where buildings were huddled together, a compromise solution might be reached, as at No. 5 Dog Lane, where high fashion is evident at ground floor level, but absent in the semi-basement and upper floors.

Mills and mill workers housing

5.5 Mill buildings and industrial housing play little part in the densely settled core of the Conservation Area, or the more spacious areas of housing, but are prominent elements elsewhere. The earliest mills were simple unpretentious buildings intended principally for mechanized spinning.. Side by side with these or scattered randomly across the town were 3-storey buildings with living quarters on the lower floors, and large workshops or 'shades' on the upper floors (**Map 5**). These can be identified by the rows of upper floor windows that provided light for the handloom weavers throughout the 19th century (**4.12**). The main concentration is in the south of the Conservation Area on Albion Street, King Street and Broad Street. Getliffe's Yard contains a well-preserved group lying opposite early warehouses, where completed goods would have been stored. Those on Stockwell Street and Union Street have weavers' windows to the rear, with fronts presenting the characteristic Flemish bond used for the earlier brick houses in Leek, and well-detailed rainwater goods.

Individual terraces vary in their state of preservation. The Albion Street group retain the characteristic windows, as does the eastern side of King Street. Houses on Broad Street have long rows of windows that are largely complete at both front and rear. On the western side of King Street their preservation is variable. Once industrialized weaving was established 2-

storey houses became the norm. The Albion Mill area provides the classic example. Here the first phase of the mill, a plain 3-storey building housed spinning, and is associated with 3-storey composite house and 'shades'. The second phase is an elaborate late 19th century building, as architectural self-conscious as any of its rivals, designed purely for weaving, and related to the 2-storey housing on Alsop Street.

Wellington Mill dates to 1853 when mill owners were beginning to expect style as well as capacity. Here the main four-storey range has a slightly advanced central pediment, whose effect is enhanced by its relationship to Chorley Street (**4.15**). In place by 1879 **(Appendix 2.00**) was Brunswick Mill whose projecting staircase/water tower is centrally placed at the far end of the street. Originally of four storeys, this is topped by an additional floor with a hipped roof (**5.6).**

5.6 Brunswick Mill

The late 19th century houses between them were laid out to an overall plan, with regular terraces of one build and design occupying each side of each street, and corner shops and a public house in key positions. Like their earlier counterparts, these are well built, well detailed houses and in many cases surprisingly capacious, although the design of the rear is variable, as is their depth. Both design and scale of the houses opposite Brunswick Mill sets them apart. More generously proportioned it seems likely that they were designed for key workers at management level.

In the eastern area the relationship between house and mill is less obvious. Of the buildings in place by 1838 those on Getliffe's Yard housed out-workers with workshops ('shades') above (**4.18**), as did a house in Union Street, part of a fine 3-storey terrace on the north side of Stockwell Street. A pair of houses on Regent Street also have 'shades', as do a group of house to the south of the Ashbourne Road.

Elsewhere the housing is a mixture. Two storey terraces like those on York Street and Deansgate may have housed workers for the silk mill that towered above them at the southern end of Market Street. Redesigned by Larner Sugden, this began a new life as Leek Central Liberal Club in 1898. In the same area (between Market Street and Ball Haye Street) are houses as diverse as Ford House (**2.6**) and Nos. 33-35 Bath Street. The latter, by Larner Sugden, are set at its junction with Ford Street where their decorative brickwork, gables and chimneys can have full effect. On the earlier streets (Regent Street, Queen Street, and Fountain Street) housing developed piecemeal, with a scatter of properties in place by 1838. In 1858 houses by William Sugden were erected on Queen Street (Nos. 4-10), where in 1877 Larner Sugden erected his own house, No. 29, (**5.11**).

5.7 Cross Street Mill

The Alexandra Mill (also by a Sugden) was in place on Earl Street by 1879, as was small mill lying at right angles to it. Detached, and to the south of these, the Cross Street, London, and York Mills form a detached outside the main limits of the Conservation Area, and beyond the site formerly occupied by other major mills. The pedimented front of the four storey London Mill (1853) lies half hidden by the bulky form of the York Mill (1898) on the approach road from Ashbourne (**4.20**). North of these the elaborate Cross Street Mill, built in three phases to a similar 'free classical style' with Venetian polychrome detail (**5.7**). These originated as a warehouse designed by William Sugden, extended in the 1892-3 by his son Larner, and linked to the rear to the smaller Well Street mill.

To the north of the town Union Street and New Street also have mill buildings, On Union Street is a handsome, mid-late 19th century polychrome brick building with arched window heads, probably part of John Brough's mill which was moved there from Silk Street in 1840. New Street has the former Clemensha building, with a fine doorway whose finely carved door-head carrying the firm's details lies masked under the Blakemoor and Chell shop sign.

South of Haywood Street is a particularly fine group which includes one by William Sugden (1876). Well preserved and with a fine mixture of round- and flat-headed windows it has all the hallmarks of the later mill buildings, where pride of ownership led to outward display. By contrast, the lower of the London Mills on Brook Street has the plain and sturdy functionalism of the town's earliest mills (**4.21**).

Mid-late 19th century buildings: the Sugdens, Longden, Shaw **Map 5**

5.6 While 18th century buildings included 'pattern book' houses, the 19th century and early 20th centuries saw the presence of both visiting and resident architects, encouraged by leading figures such as Joshua Nicholson (d. 1885), Hugh Sleigh (d. 1901) and Sir Thomas Wardle (d.1909). Key architects, particularly for public buildings, included William Sugden and his son Larner, whose work spans the second half of the 19th century. Hallmarks of their work include their command of a wide range of buildings styles, their use of moulded brickwork, particularly on domestic buildings, and the style and prominence of their chimneys (**5.12 and 5.13**).

To the west of the town West Street Wesleyan School (1854) and Big Mill (1857) are by William Sugden (**2.2**, **4.16** and **5.8**). The former school and attached houses are of red brick. The subdued classical façade of the main building faces southwards over West Street, where its Italianate campanile compliments the distant view of Big Mill's water tower. Also from the 1850s is the ornate brick and stone façade of the former Blackshead (now Woolworths) which towers above its neighbours to the south of the Market Place (**4.7**).

With the creation of Russell Street came a corner site for the Derby Street, and the Congregational Church (now Trinity Church), by William Sugden. Opened in 1863, it is a gothic revival building of stone with a fine stone spire sited on the street frontage for maximum impact (**4.11**). The Italianate façade of former Mechanics Institute, by William Sugden (1862), and a former furniture warehouse by Larner Sugden are among the key buildings on Russell Street. On Derby Street the National Westminster Bank (built as the District Bank by Larner, 1882) has a fine brick façade with stone dressings and elaborate pargetting, and retains fine interior decoration including tiles by William de Morgan **(5.10**).

Larner's output included domestic buildings. His own home, 29 Queen Street (1877) and 33-35 Bath Street (1880) are good examples of his earlier work and of the moulded brickwork and decorative chimneys that form an essential part of his style (**5.11**). A further house remodeled by the firm and visible from the Conservation Area is No. 10 Russell Street. The proudest of Larner's buildings is the Nicholson Institute where the main building and copper domed tower date from 1882-1884 (**5.9**). A major extension with low relief plaster decoration dates from 1900, and the Carr Gymnasium to 1901 (housing the 17th century plaster ceiling from the house that was demolished to make way for the Market Hall). Visible from the Conservation area, another of his late buildings, the former Co-op Central Premises (1899) also has low relief plaster decoration.

Other public buildings include the former Cottage Hospital (now Sugden House), which opened in 1870. A further wing opened in 1909, resulting in a two phase gothic revival building in mellow brick with stone dressings. By contrast, the façade of the former Police Station derives from the Scottish Baronial style, and is topped by a splendid series of multiple chimney flues in the style that marks out the firms domestic buildings (**4.22**).

[5.8.5.13 AS A PAGE]

Other named architects (Map 00.00)

5.7 If the Sugden's took the lion's share, a number of domestic buildings are the work of Longden or Longden and Venables. Other important contributors, particularly to ecclesiastical architecture, included Norman Shaw, G.F. Bodley, G.E.Street, and Albert Vicars, while a local architect, J.T. Brealey was responsible for some of the public buildings.

Longden's work includes High Barn on Fynney Street, the house that he built for himself (**4.28**), and its neighbours, Cranford and Ferne-Lee , and the firm of Longden and Venables were responsible for a fine pair of semi-detached houses, Nos. 2-4 Hartington Street (**5.14**) where the fall of the land allows an adventurous plan form, and houses on Westfields including No. 62 with a down-swept gable and interesting rainwater good (**4.29**). Brealey was responsible for the Butter Market (**4.7**) and the former Fire Station. The Market Hall is designed to draw attention to the entrance to the covered market, which it does through its height and the elaboration of its façade, while the tower of the former fire station forms a prominent feature on Derby Street.

5.14 Semi-detached house by Longden, front (left) back (right)

Norman Shaw's Spout Hall, built in 1873 for Hugh Sleigh, is a tall 'half-timbered' building with a first floor of stone (**4.9**) and forms a prominent feature on St. Edward Street. Its style was taken up in the more spacious residential areas to the south of the town, resulting fine terraces like Moorfields. All Saints Church, his most important contribution to the architecture of Leek (**4.27**) was decorated by members of the Arts and Crafts Movement as was the short-lived William Morris Labour Church, which opened in the Friend's Meeting House in 1896.

Places of worship

5.8 Throughout the Middle Ages the parish church of St. Edward served a vast 53,000 acre parish. Cheddleton, Ipstones and Horton became independent parishes in the 16th century, but the remainder was served by its ancient parish church until the 19th century. With the expansion of the industrial town additional churches were needed and new parishes were created in both town and country. In addition, both Roman Catholic and free churches were built to serve their respective congregations.

5.9 The ancient parish church of St. Edward (**3.3** and **4.1**) occupies the highest point of the town. Built of sandstone it consists of a chancel with south aisle and north vestry, a clerestoried nave which is aisled for three bays but continues westwards into an area known as the parlour, a south porch and pinnacled west tower.

The church suffered fire damage in 1297, but a Norman arcade survived until 1839-4 when John Leech provided designs for the present nave arcades. The tower has a 14th century west door and a crease line inside the east wall of the tower indicates that the church had a steep pitched roof and narrow aisles stretching the full length of the nave.

The sixteenth century saw major changes. Circa 1500 the roof was raised to allow a clerestorey to be added, and given the present tiebeam roof with its boldy carved bosses. This spans the full length of the nave as did the earlier aisles. The present aisles were built in 1556 (south aisle) and 1593 (north aisle). At a similar date the rear sections of the 14th century aisles were removed to create the 'parlour' and provide support for the west gallery.

The 14th century rose windows may have came from Dieulacres Abbey which was dissolved 1538, for such windows are normally found high up in the gable of a major abbey or cathedral. The masonry of the tower also indicates substantial rebuilding in the 16th century when it was both strengthened and raised to allow a new clock chamber and belfry. The chancel was rebuilt in 1856 to designs by G.E. Street and furnishings include a pulpit carved by Thomas Earp, who was probably responsible for the marble font, reredos and chancel screen.. Much of the glass is by

Morris and Co. Designs by Burne-Jones for the north-east window, and by G.F. Bodley for the rose windows. There is a Kempe window in the parlour.

5.15 St. Luke's Church

5.10 In 1846 land bounded by Queen Street and Fountain Street was bought for the site of a church and school, and St. Luke's Church was consecrated in 1848, to serve a new Anglican parish. Built in sandstone in a Gothic style, the church consists of chancel, aisled nave, and west tower with a south-east turret (**5.15**), a prominent feature in the eastern part of the Conservation Area.

5.11 The present church of St. Mary's was built for the Roman Catholics in 1887. Designed in a Gothic style by Albert Vicars of London and built in Bath stone, its position on rising ground makes it one of the town's most dominant buildings. As seen from St Edward Street its massive bulk towers over smaller building in the valley below, the simplicity of its roof complemented by pairs of tall lancet clerestory windows with more decorative windows to the side aisles below, the whole topped by a soaring spire (**2.5** and **4.8**).

5.12 In 1863 the Congregationalists opened a new chapel on Derby Street, now Trinity Church. Built of stone in the Decorated style, with a tower and spire (**4.11**) it was designed by William Sugden, a member of the congregation. The newly formed corner site lent itself well to a prominent new building, and in 1872 Sugden's meeting hall and classrooms were added to the south on Russell Street. Modifications to his original designs make its northern entrance hall available for a variety of uses.

6.0 LOCAL DETAILS[14]

Building materials and building types

Timber

6.1 Oak was the main building material for domestic buildings in the Middle Ages, and was still in use in the opening decades of the 17th century. Both cruck and box-framed buildings were built using either square framed panels with wattle and daub (interior of No. 8-10 Sheep Market) or close studding with split laths and plaster (exterior of the Roebuck, **4.11, 5.1).**

6.1 (a) Square framing with wattle and daub
6.1 (b) Close studding with split laths and plaster

Cruck blades converge at the apex and directly support the roof, giving little or headroom for an upper storey. As a result the buildings tend to be remodeled to allow a higher roof, and then encased in brick or stone. In Leek they are invisible from the street, but their scale can be appreciated at Nos. 2-4 Clerk Bank, where the raised roofline of a pair of cottages (now three) is dwarfed by its neighbours (**4.3**). Tree-ring dating indicates that the local examples date to the 16th century.

Larger buildings were box-framed and had greater headroom, allowing full use of upper floor and attic space as at the Roebuck (**5.1**) and the Swan (**3.3**).

6.2 Cruck construction
6.3 Box-framing

Stone

6.2 Leek lies on a long outlier of the Sherwood Sandstone Group. Elsewhere this is excellent building stone, but at Leek it is soft, poorly cemented, and weathers badly. This characteristic is exaggerated if used in combination with hard cement mortars and strap pointing. As a consequence it tends to be rendered. The town's earliest stone buildings appear to have been built of Sherwood Sandstone and only survive in fragmentary state (interior of No. 4 Church Street, gable of No. 7 Stockwell Street).

Clear of the town the Millstone Grit Series provides a more durable dark grey/orange sandstone (main walling of 2-4 Church Street, **4.2**). The source of the dark red sandstone used for St. Edward's Church is unknown, but the similar stone of the lych gate was brought from Horton.[15]

In the Moorlands, stone came into general use around 1600, and remained in use for rural buildings until the 19th century. In the town centre its use for domestic buildings lasted little over a century. By contrast, the 19th century churches are all of stone, and stone was used for the ground floor and detailing of several important mid-late 19th century buildings, and the 20th century War Memorial.

The quality and style of the stonework is variable. Ashlar (smoothly dressed stone) was the preserve of the wealthy. Ford House is a fine example with raised quoins and crisp detailing. Coursed rubble (roughly dressed stone) was used for the majority of houses and can be seen in the Sherwood Sandstone gable of No. 7 Stockwell Street, or the main walling material of 2 - 4 Church Street.

The stone for coursed rubble came from the nearest source: a small local quarry, or stone cut out to form a house-platform or cellar. Ashlar and dressed stone might come from further afield, so houses of coursed rubble generally have detailing that contrasts with the main body of the house. By the 19th century, with the advent of

[14] These details appear in several buildings, and generally a single, readily accessible, example is given for each.
[15] Leek Parish Register.

the railway far wider sources was available.



6.4 Stone: a) Strap
b) Contrasting qualities of stonework on 2-4 Church Street
c) Finely detailed ashlar at Ford House.

6.3 The status of a house and its owner were mirrored in the garden walls. Coursed walling with well-tooled capping stones and decorative gateposts were provided for gentry houses like Greystones (**5.9**). The dry stone walls with simple capping stones used for the boundary walls of farmhouses and cottages are the exception in Leek, as its rural origins have largely been lost, making the few that survive of particular importance. The most noticeable example is on Overton Bank by the Quaker Meeting House, where a massive stone wall bounds the remnants of a garden.

6.5 High status walling and gateposts
6.6 Drystone walling with traditional half-round coping stones

Brick

6.4 By the early 18th century brick was fashionable with the gentry, and by the mid-18th century it was in regular use for town houses, and remained the predominant building material throughout the 19th century.

Bricks vary in colour, size, and detailing. In the 18th and early 19th centuries they were hand made, giving a subtlety of texture and colour that is absent in the machine made bricks of the mid-late 19th century. Brick-makers may now aim to match the quality of the older materials, but hard textured and harsh coloured bricks are also available, and blend poorly with historic brickwork.

Leek's fine double-fronted 18th century houses are good examples of early brickwork (**4.5, 5.3, 5.4**), while from the 19th century there are outstanding examples of both moulded and polychrome brickwork on the Sugden buildings (**5.11**).

Brick was the predominant material for workers housing, where a surprising range of decorative detail is to be found (**6.7a**). The earlier examples use of Flemish bond, with dark headers contrasting red/orange stretchers (**6.7.b).**

6.7 (a) Moulded brick
(b) Flemish bond with dark headers.

Roofs and roofing materials

6.5 Until the 19th century many roofs both in and around Leek were thatched with a mixture of straw and rushes, although surviving examples are rare. A roof pitch of around 40% was used and the thatch was extremely thick. On the stone houses it was contained within raised copings like those of No. 2-4 Church Street. Here the characteristic roof pitch coupled to the depth of the tiles below the copings suggests

thatch as the original roofing material.[16]

Coping stones were either hog-backed (17th century) or flat (18th and 19th centuries), and shaped to throw water onto the roof and towards the guttering system. These can be seen on adjacent buildings (the Vicarage and 2-4 Church Street) (**6.8**) and still feature on several of the earlier buildings**.**

6.8 Coping and kneelers

Stone slates might be used for better quality housing. These are now rare in this area but may survive as a few courses at eaves level with tiles or welsh slate above. The 19th century saw the expansion of the Potteries coupled to new and better forms of transport. With these came the mass production and distribution of the clay roofing tiles, now regarded as the typical local roofing material, and much in evidence in Leek. The majority are plain rectangular tiles, but 19th century roofs may have alternate bands of plain and fish-scale or acorn tiles as at Sugden House, Stockwell Street. All were handmade and have an irregularity that cannot be simulated by modern machine made tiles.

6.9 Clay tiles (a) Plain
(b) Decorative

Slate is evident on a number of houses, for with improved transport Welsh slate became available, and is particularly on evidence on the 19th century town houses.

6.6 Dormers rarely feature on rural buildings in North Staffordshire, but by 1700 they are present on a small number of high status stone houses, set either on the wall line and continuing upwards to a small stone gable (62 St. Edward Street, **4.9**) or well inside the wall line to light a central attic space (the Vicarage, Greystones, **4.2** and **5.9**). Nineteenth century buildings often had elaborate rooflines including decorative gables and dormers as key features of the overall design. Numerous mid-late 19th century examples can be seen in Leek.

Windows and window surrounds

6.7 A window consists of three main elements: a window surround whose structural elements form the opening; a frame inserted into that opening; and glass. Early windows tended to be small, but as glass making and construction techniques developed and the openings changed shape, acquiring a vertical rather than a horizontal emphasis, greater size, and larger panes of glass.

Mullioned windows

6.8 In the earlier stone buildings glazing was applied straight into the structural surround, without recourse to a wooden window frame (Old Grammar School, Ash Alms Houses **5.2**, **3.4**). As a result, modern window-frames sit uneasily in 17th or early 18th century window openings, blocking the light and appearing clumsy

6.10 Mullioned windows: traditional and non-traditional methods of glazing
a) leading with diamond panes
b) wooden frame with single pane

The structural elements consist of a stone surround chamfered to match the mullions, carrying split lintels and dividing the windows into separate lights. Early mullions

[16] The roof construction, where single side purlins have been replaced by double side purlins also suggests the original roofing materials were much lighter.

were chamfered both inside and outside to a variety of designs. By 1650 windows were being mass-produced at the quarries and a truncated diamond shape became standard for most buildings (Old Grammar School, Nos. 2-4 Church Street). The wealthy could afford larger and more elaborate windows with mullions and transoms (Greystones, **5.9**). The same style can be seen in timber (Roebuck, **4.11, 5.1**). By 1750 a simpler version had appeared, with straight-cut masonry on the exterior and including 'block' mullions with a flat outer face. (**6.11**).

6.11 Mullions: changing styles etc …….

6.12 Mullion and transom windows at the Nicholson Institute

The Victorians revived the use of mullioned windows but on a grander scale and with single blocks for lintels and sills, technically impossible in an earlier age (Nicholson Institute) (**6.12**). In all cases the window surrounds were keyed into the surrounding masonry, a far cry from the machine sawn square or rectangle used in the cruder forms of modern 'restoration' work.

All were glazed with leaded lights. Diamond shaped panes gave way to rectangular panes by the early 18th century (Greystones) although conservatism produced the exceptions (Old Grammar School, where cast iron replaces leading. Both used simple, clear, hand-made glass, stained glass being reserved for churches and high status gentry houses. By contrast, the Victorians loved elaboration, using complicated leading patterns and stained glass with a cheerful abandon, of which the modern applied leading and coloured glass provide only a pale pastiche. Houses on St. Edward Street have fine examples of Victorian glass, where the use of leading set wooden frames is an important part of the design (**6.13**).

6.13 19th century glazing on St Edward's Street.

<u>Casements and sashes</u>

6.8 As glass became cheaper windows became larger, and stone surrounds gave way to the use of sills and lintels for windows with a vertical emphasis. These were designed to take wooden frames with side-hung casements or vertical sliding sashes. Early 18th century casements might still have leaded lights set in metal frames, but later examples had separate panes of glass divided by wooden glazing bars (Getliffes Yard).

6.14 Casement windows (etc)

The bars are slender and incapable of supporting double glazing, making its use inappropriate in a historic building because of the clumsy appearance of the glazing bars needed to support it.

Top-hung casements are rare in traditional buildings, and bulky 'storm-proof' casements are a creation of the 20th century. Both are inappropriate in a traditional building.

6.9 Vertical sliding sashes come in many forms. The earliest were set on the outer edge of the wall with the sash boxes visible (10 Stockwell Street). Later sashes occupied purpose built window openings with brick or stonework designed to mask the sash boxes (Foxlowe). **6.15** provides a small sample of the range of designs.

6.15 Vertical sliding sashes etc

As a rule of thumb, the earlier the sash the more panes of glass were used. Thus 6 over 6, or 8 over 8 panes were usual in the 18th century. By the 19th century glass manufacturers could produce large sheets of glass at a reasonable cost, and 2 over 2 panes, or even 1 over 1 became possible.

Horizontal sliding sashes known often 'Yorkshire' sliding sashes are relatively rare in Leek, where they generally have a series of 4 or 6 panes and are most likely to be found at the rear of a building.

Doors, fanlights and railings

6.10 Door styles also vary. The simpler buildings in both town and country had vertically boarded doors, as did farm buildings, and most ecclesiastical buildings. Panelled doors are common both inside and outside high status buildings, where an elaborate front door may contrast to simpler doors at the rear or in the interior.

6.16 Doors

6.11 Fanlights are an important detail in many town houses, where they compliment a traditional wooden door, but conflict with mass-produced modern doors which often include a mock fanlights (**6.17**).

6.17 The use and misuse of fanlights
a) over a traditional door
b) over a crude pastiche of itself

6.12 Houses in the old town and the earlier industrial areas often had a small area of land at the front enclosed by iron railings. Traditionally these were set directly into coping stones on a low wall, unlike the modern versions. Many fell victim to scrap collection in the second world war. Those that survive, or have been well restored add considerably to the appearance of a property. As with fanlights, faithful replicas of historic examples justify additional expense due to the quality of design (00.00).

6.19 Restored railing
a) Traditionally set railings
b) … and a poorly executed substitute

Chimneys and porches

6.13 The number and position of chimneys is an important feature, reflecting the interior design, and the relative wealth of the house owner. In 1666 three quarters of Staffordshire's houses had only one hearth, burning wood or turf, and only one chimney. Thomas Parker's house (2-4 Church Street) was taxed for 5 hearths, way above the local average, and stone fireplaces on each floor of the Red Lion (William Jolliffe's Hall House) also indicate wealth. By the mid-18th century wood was becoming scarce and coal more accessible. Smaller houses began to have more heated rooms, each with a chimney breast for a coal fire, and served by gable end chimneys until, by the 19th century most rooms were heated in the majority of houses.

6.14 Porches are not a feature of Leek's historic buildings. By the 18th century the occasional houses had a decorative canopy (Greystones, No. 16 Market Place), but by the 18th century the larger houses had a front door giving access to a hallway flanked by the principal rooms (Foxlowe). In the 19th century many of the larger houses had a covered entrance as an integral part of the design, while only the smaller terraced houses had doorways giving direct access to the living room.

6.15 Forward additions of any kind have a major impact on the design, and may be

inappropriate on buildings where this was not originally intended.

Plans

6.16 House plans like exterior details changed over time. The earlier buildings were single pile buildings, one room deep (2-4 Church Street). A larger version might have one or more crosswings, or for a town house an L-shaped building might be created (The Swan, Greystones). Double pile houses, two rooms deep, under separate roofs with a valley between (Foxlowe), or under a single roof span were rare in the 17th century, but became usual for the more substantial houses as the 18th century progressed.

Each had a characteristic arrangement of rooms and windows. In the earlier houses the windows are irregularly placed, and you can tell how the house worked from the exterior. In later houses polite façades masks the internal workings. Each is characteristic of its period and part of the essential character of the building. These contrasts are best seen at the north of the Market Place, where the single pile of Thomas Parker's mid-17th century house (2-4 Church Street) lies adjacent to the double-piled mass of Foxlowe built in the 1770s. The former with 5-, 4- and 3-light windows showing clearly where the most important rooms were situated, the latter with a central doorway and symmetrical façade is inscrutable.

6.19 Early House plans: three of many possible variants

7.0 GREEN SPACES, TREES, AND BOUNDARIES

7.1 There are no areas of public park within the Conservation area, and green space is limited to the graveyards surrounding St. Edward and St Luke churches, the former Mount Pleasant Chapel, and walled grounds by the Quaker Meeting House. Elsewhere only the gardens of detached houses such as the Vicarage, Ford House, Greystones and later detached houses provide additional areas of any size.

Within these, and the grounds of the former Cottage Hospital, mature trees or more recent plantings play a major part in softening the townscape, as they do on the site of the former Brunswick Chapel on Market Street. Elsewhere the major open spaces mainly have hard surfaces. Although trees have been planted along the northern edge of the Silk Street car park, the eastern section, created by the demolition of the Town Hall, remains an ugly gash that is urgently in need of bold tree planting to complement its neighbour on Market Street, and to soften the whole effect.

7.2 Boundaries play a significant role in defining the character of an area. The stone walls surrounding the churchyards, and older stone properties are of particular importance. Short lengths of stonework like that on Regent Street reflect the town's rural past, while walling east of Naylors Yard and north of the Vicarage garden developed piecemeal round fragments of vanished buildings. Some, like the high protective walls of the Quaker Meeting House, reflect the particular circumstances of the building.

Walls and gateways as an integral part of an architectural scheme are characteristic of many 19th century buildings, like the Sugden group on West Street, or the imposing entrance to the Nicholson Institute. Low walls bound the small front plots of many houses, with iron railings individually set into the stone copings (see **6.19**).

8.0 NEGATIVE FACTORS

8.1 Negative factors can be listed under the following headings

the major loss of historic fabric through demolition

the erosion of historic detail including

- The loss of historic windows and doors
- the introduction of non-traditional designs
- the bland repetitive nature of catalogue windows and doors
- the use of UPVC and applied leading in windows and doors
- the loss of chimney stacks and chimney pots

building maintenance

materials used and maintenance of hard surfaces

- areas of hard standing made of unattractive materials
- the loss of traditional materials for kerbs and pavements

lack of trees

the amount and quality of street furniture

the design and placing of street lights

the lack of co-ordination between services

the persistence of wheely bins at the roadside

the presence of general detritus in the town centre

the presence of satellite dishes

poorly designed 20th century buildings

heavy traffic

the impact of the approach roads and areas adjacent to the Conservation Area

8.2 The 20th century saw the loss of many fine buildings, including the Town Hall, Brunswick Chapel, and the George Inn. Piecemeal attrition of less prominent buildings has left Leek peppered with replacements, including some of poor quality and indifferent design.

Map 4 shows the extent of 20th century rebuilding, and car parks fronting a street also indicate major losses. Current legislation has slowed this process, but fine buildings that form part of the setting of the Conservation Area may be threatened if they remain unprotected by either Listing or Conservation Area status.
Where replacement is inevitable (of a poor quality buildings that have outlived their usefulness) redevelopment plans should be in place and ready for implementation if unsightly gaps on the street frontage are to be avoided.

8.3 Windows and doors are the most vulnerable element, and their survival is critical if a building is to retain its historic character. Of major concern are the detrimental effects of the replacement of historic windows and doors by bland and repetitive catalogue windows, particularly when coupled with the use of UPVC, double glazing, and applied leading.

8.4 For Listed Buildings and buildings in Conservation Areas there is specific exemption from Part L of the Buildings Regulations, a relaxation designed to allow the fundamental character of the historic buildings to survive, thus Listed buildings are protected against unsuitable alterations.

8.5 For other buildings the Local Planning Authority could consider making an Article 4(2) direction under The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995. With this in place, and with the specific inclusion of doors and windows, planning permission would be needed for replacements. This would be a major step

towards preserving this fine Conservation Area, and a move we feel many residents would welcome in an area where there is considerable pride of place.

8.6 Walling and roofing materials, and the exterior of commercial buildings are protected in the Conservation Area, but other features such as chimneys contribute significantly to the character of the Conservation Area, and should be retained as they are important elements from both a visual and a historic point of view.

8.7 Tall buildings are difficult to maintain, particularly those with valleys and gutters that are difficult to access and require the use of a cherry picker for maintenance. The Management Plan might consider encouraging joint hire to target specific buildings targeted according to need.

8.8 Materials used for hard surfaces impact greatly on the street scene. The impact of the demolition of historic buildings has already been discussed (8.2) but the spaces they leave remain a problem. While car parking is vital to the town, consideration should be given to these as key entry points where visitors gain their initial impression of the town. Large areas tarmac, or areas left rough and potholed are visually poor, and do nothings to enhance the historic character of the town (see below 8.10, 8.11).

8.9 The traditional paving materials in Leek are York paving slabs and cobbles. Damage to the former through vehicles mounting the pavements is a repeated problem, particularly in the Market Place. A partial solution has been found in re-ordering the layout of the market stalls to give more space for vehicles.

Failure to re-instate cobbles disturbed by services such as water and electricity leaves ugly areas of tarmac. The retention and reinstatement of the traditional materials is essential. Public awareness and direct comment can be helpful in achieving this.

8.10 The softening effect of landscaping is particularly evident opposite St. Edward's Church, where a high wall and tree planting has done much to ameliorate the removal of buildings and insertion of a car park. Tree planting and the retention of grass over the former graveyard on Market Street serve a similar function. Elsewhere there are car parks that present large areas of hard surfacing, un-softened by landscaping, and largely un-shaded by trees. Planting on the northern border of Silk Street car park, while excellent in itself, has had little impact on the key view from Market Street.

8.11 Maps and photographs show Leek as a greener place prior to the growth of modern traffic. Trees lined St. Edward Street, and gardens survived at the rear of many houses in the historic town centre including the Red Lion (now the Silk Street Car Park). The replacement of the St. Edward Street trees, and a concerted attempt to make the town greener and more welcoming would mitigate the visual impact of the demolition scars, and provide welcome shade in the car parks.

8.12 Street furniture at its best does the job it is intended to do and is unobtrusive. Derby Street currently presents the worst aspects of uncoordinated and poorly chosen street furniture, with a clutter of objects (bollards, benches, planters, street lights, road signs, poorly designed access ramps, and recycling bins parked obtrusively outside Listed Buildings). While stands for the sale of goods add interest, and help to boost trade, even these need care if they are not to represent obstructions for those with visual impairment. Experiments carried out by English Heritage indicate that an overload of information coupled to a clutter of street furniture does less to engender good behavior

and pride of place than a minimalist approach which leaves more to the good sense of the users.

8.1 The adverse effect of street clutter on Derby Street

8.13 Street lighting can enhance or detract according to the style and positioning of the lamp standards. In the Market Place street lights are mounted directly onto buildings, and are as unobtrusive as possible. In St. Edward's Street stylish modern lights have been well placed, close to buildings, and at the junction between one property and another where the vertical line of post merges into its background. Both approaches help to reduce the impact of these essential features, which can be glaringly obvious if badly placed, or of unsuitable design.

Concrete posts with an angular outline do nothing to enhance a Conservation Area, whereas painted metal of a more graceful design may add elegance to the street scene. For small streets like Church Lane a simple metal 'gaslight' is appropriate.

8.2 The visual impact of street lights

8.14 The lack of co-ordination between public services is a major handicap. While each may have good reason to require a particular fitting / notice these could often use the same post. Currently the plethora of instructions, particularly at the head of the Market Place and on Derby Street, distract rather than inform, and severely detract from their setting.

8.15 Wheely bins and recycling bins are essential. While the majority of owners keep their wheely bins out of sight except on collection day, recyling bins currently mar the front of one of the town's finest 18th century buildings on Derby Street (**8.2**). A less damaging position for a town centre collection should be sought.

8.16 The 20th century buildings are variable in quality and design. At their best they stand well with the town's historic buildings, at their worst they detract from their surroundings. Well designed shop fronts can sometimes ameliorate the poor ones (**8.3**) but a successful blend of scale, materials and design should be the aim. Future additions should either be top quality contemporary work, or meld quietly into the background with traditional styles and materials.

8.3 *Strongly designed shop fronts at the corner of the Market Place*

8.17 Traffic is a major problem for any historic town. Busy through roads carry an ever increasing number of vehicles, while lesser roads are clogged by parked cars. There are no easy solutions to traffic problems. Constructing a relief road would have environmental benefits for the town, but would impose heavy environmental costs elsewhere. The construction of a multi-storey car park might be a solution, but would require careful siting and a high standard of design.

8.18 Public perception, and particularly that of visitors to the town, is likely to be coloured by the approach roads which form the town's gateways. Consideration needs to be given to these areas, to optimize their good points and ameliorate the effects of redundant industrial buildings. Similarly the areas that are adjacent to, and inter-visible with the Conservation area need special consideration so that they they complement the area rather than detracting from it.

BOUNDARY CHANGES

9.1 Minor changes are proposed to the boundary to the west of St. Edward Street to include the former burgage plots (see **Appendix 2, map 2.1** for the line of the burgage plots prior in 1838). Changes to the northern boundary would bring in some fine detached 19th century houses, the rest of St. Edward's churchyard, the curtilage of Foxlowe, some fine mill buildings, and a range of weavers' houses to the south of London Mill. To the extreme west the boundary change brings in Westwood Terrace and the Picton Street Co-operative building, a further Sugden building.

9.2 The removal of the north eastern corner is proposed where building retain few if any historic features, and a substantial amount of demolition has already occurred.

9.3 The inclusion of the rest of Russell Street is proposed, bringing in the former Overfields Warehouse (Larner Sugden 1895) and Russell House, and beyond this is an area that contains a series of Listed Buildings. These include the weavers' housing on London Street, a silk mill on Haywood Street (William Sugden, 1876), and the former Police station (Larner Sugden, 1892), and a number of unlisted buildings that make a major contribution to the street scene, the former workhouse on Brook Street, and the London Mills, including one of the earliest of Leek's steam powered silk mills.

9.4 The final proposal is the inclusion of an exceptionally fine residential area to the south, where All Saints Church (Listed Grade I) and a number of late Victorian and Edwardian houses, including houses on Fynney Street by Longden (High Barn, Cranford and Ferne-Lee, Listed Grade II) are surrounded by well-preserved terraces built to serve Leek's white-collar workers.

9.5 This appraisal reflects the above boundary changes.