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PLANNING / HERITAGE AND DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT



PROPOSAL : ERECTION OF EXTERNAL STAIRCASE

ADDRESS : 14 MARKET PLACE, LEEK, STAFFORDSHIRE, ST13 5HH

APPLICANT : MR A GRAHAM

DATE : MAY 2017 **JOB No. : 2017-2228**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Sammons Architectural Ltd have been appointed by Mr A Graham to prepare and submit a full planning application to Staffordshire Moorlands District Council for the erection of an external staircase.

2.0 USE

The application proposes a new external staircase to enable separate access to the upper floors.

3.0 AMOUNT

The area of the site measures approximately 0.13ha in area.

4.0 LAYOUT

The staircase will be located within the external yard area and will be located on the east facing wall

5.0 SCALE

The proposal will comprise an external staircase that will provide access to the upper floors of the property from the external yard.

6.0 LANDSCAPING

No landscaping is proposed as part of this proposal.

7.0 APPEARANCE

The proposal will be in the form of a galvanised metal staircase that will be painted black.

8.0 ACCESS

The site already has an established pedestrian access to the rear of the property that will remain unaltered as part of this proposal.

9.0 PLANNING POLICY

As you will be aware Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that when determining a planning application, the decision maker must make their determination in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Given this obligation, this chapter therefore considers national guidance relevant to the application as well as the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (March 2014). The following is considered relevant:

<u>Core Strategy</u>,

SS1 – Development Principles
SS1a – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
SS5a Leek Area Strategy
SD1 – Sustainable Use of Resources
TCR1 Development in Town Centres
DC1 – Design Considerations

DC2 – The Historic Environment

National Planning Policy Framework

There is considerable planning policy and guidance relevant to the planning application proposal at both local and national levels. The NPPF is significant as it sets out the Government's commitment for a positive response to planning proposals that would deliver sustainable development in order to assist growth to the economy. It has been made clear that the planning system has a key role in facilitating growth and development should be supported with a presumption in favour of granting planning permission. This change of emphasis provides an important background to the application proposal.

National Planning Policy Framework places a strong emphasis on promoting economic growth and sets out policies for the control of development. The Development Plan represents the starting point for the determination of this application, which in this instance is the Core Strategy. The guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework is also relevant, in particular the following Chapters:

1. Building a strong, competitive economy
7. Requiring good design
12. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Within the NPPF it is also worth noting the following relevant paragraphs:

- Planning decisions must be taken in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise (para 2).
- Plans and decisions need to take local circumstances into account, so that they respond to the different opportunities for achieving sustainable development in different areas, (para 10)
- Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, (para 11).
- At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. LPA's should approve proposals which accord with the development plan without delay (para 14).
- The Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Therefore, significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system (para 19)
- The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people (para 56)
- In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness (para 131)
- Non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest that are demonstrably of

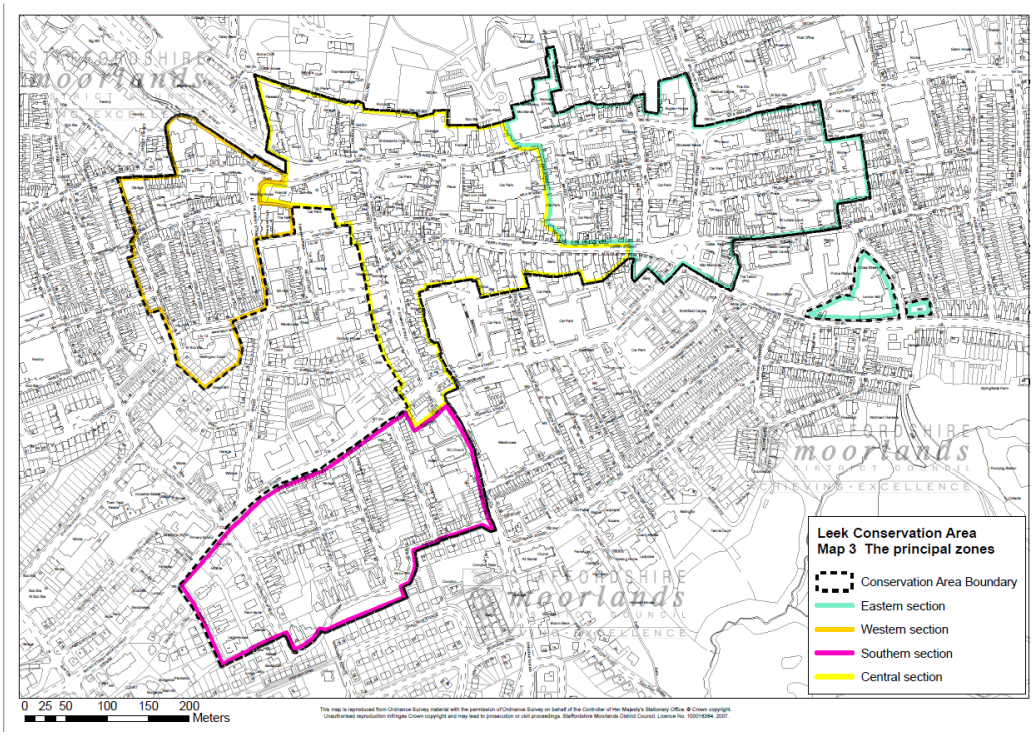
equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets (para 139)

- Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use (para 134)

10.0 HERITAGE STATEMENT

The host building is a non-listed building within the Leek Conservation Area. Its heritage significance relates to its external design and character. The building is three storeys high with a modern retail shop frontage at ground floor. Floors one and two maintain the original character with a large area of glazing present at first floor on the front elevation. The building's main contribution to the character of the Conservation Area is through the front elevation and not to the rear where the proposal is to be located.

The Leek Conservation Area was designated in 1970 and has been extended a further 4no. times, the latest being in December 2013. The Conservation Area itself is broken into 4no. Character Areas and the site forming this application is situated in the southern section as shown on the plan below:



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 closepacked 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.

As the proposal is located to the rear of the building and is well enclosed, it will not be clearly visible from anywhere in the public realm. On this basis, it will certainly not have any adverse impact on the Conservation Area. The assessment therefore concludes that the proposal will not result in a harmful impact on the building's significance as a heritage asset or contribution to Conservation Area as a heritage asset. The proposal will give the upper floors a much-needed separate access

that will allow the upper floors to be accessed more easily and thus ensuring that they will continue to contribute to the character of the Conservation Area.

11.0 SUMMARY

The site is located within the settlement boundary of Leek and within a principal frontage in the Leek town centre and within the Leek Conservation Area.

Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy Policy TCR1 applies to Leek and Cheadle town centres. The policy sets out measures that will be used to protect and enhance the viability and vitality of the town centre. Measure 1 focuses and promotes retailing in the town centres and measure 7 promotes the use of upper floors of properties in primary frontages for housing. Spatial Objective SO8 promotes the protection and enhancement of heritage assets. Policy DC2 seeks to safeguard and enhance the historic environment and promotes development that sustains, respects or enhances buildings and features that contribute to the character or heritage of an area.

Guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework seeks to create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities and to make efficient use of land. The thrust of the NPPF is to support sustainable development. It seeks to promote competition and customer choice in town centres and has policies that steer new residential development towards sustainable locations such as service centres. Paragraph 128 requires applications to include a description of any heritage asset affected by its proposal. The application building is located in a sustainable location as it is in a town centre location and therefore within easy walking distance of the town's bus station, shopping, employment and leisure facilities.

There are other examples of external staircases in the immediate locality, such as the one on the adjacent property as shown in the photograph below:



11.0 CONCLUSION

The Government has a strong commitment to growth and provides a strong presumption in favour of development and is committed to increasing levels of growth. Paragraph 186 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should approach decision-taking in a positive way to foster the delivery

of sustainable development. It goes on to state in paragraph 187 that local planning authorities should look for solutions rather than problems, and decision-takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible. It also states in the NPPF that where proposals accord with the development plan they should be approved without delay, and where policies are out-of-date permission should only be refused where there is significant and demonstrable harm to outweigh the benefits of the development.

The proposed development is therefore considered to constitute a sustainable form of development when considered against the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework as a whole, furthermore the proposal is in accordance with the provisions of the policies listed above in the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy. There are examples of this form of external staircase in the immediate vicinity that are much more prominent than the location proposed in this application. It is with due respect that the Local Planning Authority is politely requested to support this planning application to allow the construction of the external staircase and grant planning permission accordingly.