DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2017/0240 **Valid 11/04/2017**	**NICHOLSON INSTITUTE** **STOCKWELL STREET** **LEEK**	**PROPOSED FIXING OF HERITAGE STYLE COMMEMORATIVE 'BLUE PLAQUE' TO FRONT ENTRANCE WALL** **(LISTED BUILDING CONSENT - ALTERATION)**

MAIN ISSUES

- Impact on the historic fabric and integrity of the Listed Building

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

This application relates to the Nicholson Institute, located with the Leek town development boundary and Conservation Area. The building was constructed at the request of Joshua Nicholson and comprised of a library, picture galleries, a museum and premises for a School of Art. The building is Grade II* Listed, with a listing description as follows:

Institute and library. 1882/4. By William Larner Sugden; extended 1899-1900 by W.L. Sugden by addition of the Silk and General Technical School. Brick (rusticated to ground floor) with stone dressings. Main roof not visible, but copper dome to tower. Renaissance style. EXTERIOR: 2-storeyed basement, 3-bay front, comprising Dutch gable to left, massive central mullioned and transomed window, and advanced entrance and stair-tower to right. Dutch gable has bow window with stone mullions to ground floor, flanked by square turret-towers built against the gable wall and 2-storeyed in height, surmounted by stone domed roofs. Gable rises above these, with pedimented head. Central 3-tier mullioned and transomed window with low-relief busts in entablature, and inscription plate above with enriched scroll-work and broken pediment below balustrading surmounted by urns. Advanced tower to right, the entrance raised up steps with cast and wrought iron lamp standards and rail. Renaissance entrance, with round/arched doorway in pedimented case, with fluted composite shafts carrying angled entablature. Tablet at apex of pediment inscribed 'Nicholson Institute'. Pediment cuts into 4-tier mullioned and transomed window with broken pediment over. Stone pilasters in upper stage of tower and central lunette. Copper domed roof and lantern return elevation has two 3-tier mullioned and transomed windows, and oriel window with Ipswich-style glazing at first floor. Rear wing beyond with 3 full-height round arched recessed with tiered mullioned and transomed windows. Fluted brick chimneys. Adjoining the Institute to rear right, the former Technical Collage (now Leek college of Further Education). Brick with plain-tied roof. 2 storeys, 3-window range with central gable. Large mullioned and transomed windows, in round-arched recesses to first floor, segmentally-arched to

lower storey. Low-relief plasterwork in tympana. Plain brick pilasters between the windows. Entrance (remodelled) in left-hand bay. INTERIOR of Institute retains many of the original features, including the entrance hall, the main staircase, and the museum and picture gallery in the attic, and studios on the ground floor with north lights; much of the original joinery and plasterwork remains intact. The technical school extension retains main staircase, moulded plaster tympanum with clock over doorway, and moulded brass memorial.

PROPOSAL

Listed Building Consent is sought for the proposed fixing of a heritage style commemorative 'blue plaque' to the front entrance wall of the building, on the western side of the main entrance door. The plaque is to be circular in shape and is to measure 400mm in diameter. Wording around the upper and lower sides of the plaque is to read 'Leek and District Civic Society'. Wording within the centre of the plaque is to read 'Joshua Nicholson 1812-1885 Silk Manufacturer gave the Nicholson Institute t the town in 1884.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Core Strategy Development Plan Document (Adopted 2014)

S01 Spatial Objectives
SS1 Development Principles
SS1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
DC1 Design Considerations
DC2 The Historic Environment

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph(s) 1 - 17
Section(s) 7, 12

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

There is no site history relevant to the determination of this application.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 19.05.2017
Neighbour consultation period ends: 21.05.2017
Press Advert: 24.05.2017

Public Comments

No comments received.

Town / Parish Comments

No objection.

Historic England

No objection.

SMDC Conservation Officer

No objection.

OFFICER COMMENTS

In accordance with policy SS1 (Development Principles) the Council will expect the development to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvements of the Staffordshire Moorlands. Policy SS1a (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development) states that the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF. This means that applications which accord with the policies of the Core Strategy will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Policy DC1 requires all development to be of a high quality and designed to respect the site and its surroundings. In accordance with policy DC2, the Council will safeguard, and where possible, enhance the historic environment by resisting development which would harm or be detrimental to the special character and historic heritage of the Districts towns and villages; and furthermore by promoting development which sustains, respects or enhances buildings and features which contribute to the character or heritage of an area.

Paragraph 132 of the NPPF advises that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building or park should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, battlefields, grade I and grade II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and world heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

The proposed development is of an appropriate design and scale that sensitively respects the historic integrity of the building. Historic England has been consulted on this on this application and has confirmed that they do not wish to comment. No objection has been received from the Council's Conservation Officer subject to a

condition that requires the plaque fixing to be into the mortar joints. Following consideration of the proposal and the consultation comments received I am satisfied that the development would not harm the significance of the heritage asset, and as such accords with policies SS1, SS1a, DC1 and DC2 of the SMDC Core Strategy and Chapters 7 and 12 of the NPPF.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : Approve

Case Officer: Lisa Howard
Recommendation Date: 24.07.2017

X B.J. Haywood

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council