# DESIGN AND ACCESS AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

FOR

# PROPOSED CHANGE OF USE, NEW SIGNAGE AND CONDENSING UNIT

# AT

# UNIT 2
# THE OLD COURT HOUSE
# 9 HIGH STREET
# LEEK
# ST13 5DZ

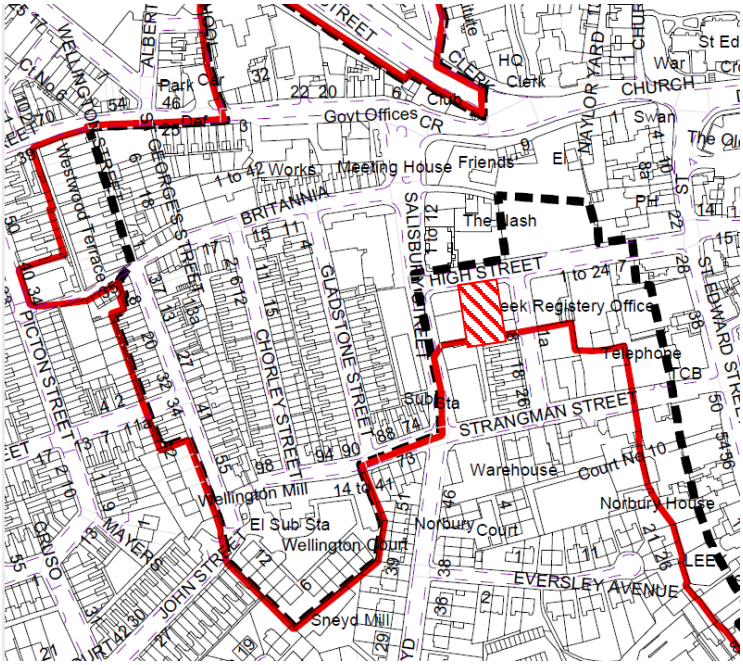
## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Statement has been prepared to accompany a Planning Application for a proposed change of use, new signage and condensing unit at Unit 2, The Old Courthouse, 9 High Street, Leek ST13 5DZ



Google Maps image showing site location

1.2 The application site sits within the Leek Conservation Area:



Location of property within the Conservation Area (extract from Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan)

1.3 The existing building was originally a Department Store (Emporium) which opened in 1911. The last full use of the building was as a Magistrates Court.

1.4 Since this use ceased, the building has been divided into several different units with use classes which have differed over the years.

1.5 The Unit which is the subject of this application was previously used as Staffordshire County Council's Register Office until December 2009, and the most recent use was as a Volunteer Centre and associated offices.

1.6 The unit is currently vacant.

**2.0 CHANGE OF USE**

2.1 The applicants run a Post Office and shop nearby and would like to improve their service to existing and new customers by relocating to a larger, more convenient and accessible position closer to the town centre and close to public parking.

2.2 The change of use will involve the removal of the existing stud walls which currently divide the floor space into offices.

2.3 The existing wc area at the rear of the building will be altered to include an accessible wc.

**3.0 NEW SIGNAGE**

3.1 A new signage scheme is proposed; this will include a new fascia sign, new hanging sign and a poster sign.

3.2 The new fascia and hanging signs will have a white background, with red Post Office lettering and logos. A vinyl poster sign is proposed to the window adjacent to the entrance door; this will also have a white background with red lettering.



Photograph showing existing frontage




Proposed signage

3.3 The building has previously held a fascia sign in the same position:




Image showing previous fascia sign and posters in windows

## 4.0 NEW CONDENSING UNIT

4.1 A new external condensing unit is proposed to the rear of the building, to serve an air conditioning unit inside.

4.2 This condensing unit will be fixed above the existing flat roof just in front of the rear elevation of the building.



Google StreetView image of rear of shop

4.3 The proposed condensing unit is a Fujitsu outside model ref. AOYG09LMCE. The dimensions of the unit are 535 high x 663 wide x 293mm deep.



Image of Fujitsu condensing unit

**5.0 ACCESS STATEMENT**

5.1 The existing entrance has a level threshold and a ramp up to floor level; this will remain.

5.2 The existing wc area at the rear of the unit is to be altered to include an accessible unisex wc.

**6.0 HERITAGE STATEMENT**

6.1 There will be no alterations to the fabric of the building required for the installation of the fascia sign, hanging sign or poster sign.

6.2 The condensing unit is located at the rear of the building and will therefore have no impact on the appearance or character of the Conservation Area.

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE & IMPACT**:

| *Proposed Works:* | *Significance of the historic fabric/area that will be affected:* | *The impact of the proposed work(s) on the historic fabric/area:* |
|---|---|---|
| **New fascia sign, hanging sign and poster sign** | The existing building dates from early 1900s and was built as an 'Emporium'. The building sits within the Conservation Area slightly outside the Town Centre. It is assumed that the existing shopfront dates from when the use of the building was changed from a Register Office to its most recent use, approximately 2009. The right hand bay of the shopfront has been bricked up. There is an area allocated above the modern shopfront for the positioning of a fascia sign; above this is an infill panel beneath a stone cornice which supports a stone and brick-faced frontage. Three windows with stone surrounds sit centrally above the remaining three bays of the shopfront. Two 3-faceted bays sit at each end of the elevation; the right hand of which sits above an adjacent shopfront, the left hand bay sits above the bricked-up shopfront. | The new fascia sign will be fixed within the area already used for the previous fascia sign. The hanging sign sits above the fascia sign, beneath the stone cornice. The poster sign will be situated behind the existing window to the left-hand side of the entrance door and is proportionate to the size of the window. The proposed signs will not be fixed to any of the original parts of the building. The signs proposed are simple in design and colour, with logos and text sizes proportional to each. None of the signs will be illuminated. It is therefore considered that these works will not adversely affect the appearance of the building or the Conservation Area. |
| **Proposed change of use** | The recent uses of the building have resulted in the addition of stud walls to divide the internal spaces into open plan and private offices. None are contemporary with the building. | The works proposed for the change of use are internal only and will not alter or affect the external appearance of the building or the Conservation Area. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Proposed Condensing Unit** | The original windows on the rear elevation of the Unit have been bricked-up below leaving windows at high level which bring light into the WC areas. The original windows still exist above these. A flat-roofed extension has been constructed at the rear, with a brickwork wall and fire door facing the alleyway behind. The rear of the building sits on the boundary of the Conservation area and faces away from it. | The condensing unit will sit above the existing flat roof which is not contemporary with the main building. The condensing unit is 535mm high x 663mm wide x 293mm deep and will be positioned slightly in front of the rear wall of the main building. The condensing unit will not be visible in the context of the Conservation Area so will have no impact on it. |

**END**