



**14 Market Place, Leek Staffordshire, ST13 5HH**  
**Planning Statement**

**On behalf of: Arc Dev (Wigan) Limited**

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Report prepared by: Faye Wright

01295 711 928

07812 140 099

Faye@fwpd.co.uk

# 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This heritage statement assesses heritage matters associated with the planning application for a development at 14 Market Place, Leek, Staffordshire (herein referred to as “the building”).
- 1.2 This planning application is a renewal of a previous planning permission (Ref: SMD/2014/0559). This planning permission was for the conversion of the upper floors of 14 Market Place to residential use to create three, one bedroomed flats and a two storey side extension. This was granted on 11 November 2014 and is due to expire shortly.
- 1.3 The submitted application is identical to the previously approved application and the proposed layouts of the residential units have been checked against Lifetime Homes standards.
- 1.4 The building is currently in retail use at ground floor level as a single retail unit. The upper floors are currently vacant.
- 1.5 This application proposes the change of use of the upper floors (first and second floor) to three one bedroom residential units. A small two storey side extension is proposed which enables separate, self-contained access to the proposed residential units.
- 1.6 Planning permission is sought for:  
  
**“Conversion of first and second floors to create three, one bedroomed flats and two storey side extension”.**
- 1.7 This heritage statement is one of a number of documents, which have been submitted in support of the application for planning permission. The other supporting application documents are:
  - Planning application forms;
  - Ownership Certificate A;
  - A site location plan;
  - Existing and proposed plans, sections and elevations;
  - Planning Statement produced by Forward Planning and Development
  - Design and Access Statement (including Lifetime Homes Statement) produced by Building Link Design.

- 1.8 This heritage statement provides a comprehensive review of national and local heritage policy and guidance relevant to the nature of the proposals and the specific degree to which the proposals would accord with the policies of the statutory development plan. It is concluded that the development proposals accord with the aims and objectives of national, strategic and local heritage policy and therefore support the grant of planning permission.

## **2 Site and surroundings**

- 2.1 The building is located on the southern side of Market Place between Derby Street to the east and Stanley Street to the west.
- 2.2 The site extends to 0.134 hectares.
- 2.3 The existing building currently provides a single retail unit at ground floor level which is occupied by Co-operative Travel with two upper floors which are currently vacant. The ground floor retail unit does not form part of this application.
- 2.4 The building comprises three storeys and forms part of a terrace of buildings which run from east to west along Derby Street and Stanley Street. The building has a pitched roof, a distinctive window at first floor level (thought to be a late C19 or early C20 first floor shop window) and two sash windows at second floor level.
- 2.5 There is a yard area to the rear of the site accessed via an alley way and a public car park to the rear of the yard area.
- 2.6 The site is located within the Leek Town Centre Conservation Area.
- 2.7 A character appraisal has been prepared for this Conservation Area. The Conservation Area was first designated in July 1970 and its boundaries have been revised a number of times since that time.
- 2.8 The site is located in the centre of the Conservation Area although the boundary of the Conservation Area falls along the rear boundary of the site.

### **3 Proposed Development**

- 3.1 As set out previously, the proposal seeks to convert the first and second floors of the existing building into residential use to create three self-contained residential units each comprising one bedroom. A small two storey side extension will be constructed to create separate access to the residential units.
- 3.2 The ground floor will remain in retail use and no changes are proposed to the retail unit.
- 3.3 Each residential unit will provide a bedroom, a bathroom and a kitchen/living area.
- 3.4 The existing building will be retained with limited external alterations proposed. The first floor window which is currently covered with acrylic advertisements will be re-glazed with a safety glass and will be obscured up to a height of approximately 0.8 metres. This proposal will result in a significant enhancement to the appearance of the existing building.
- 3.5 The proposed side extension will be approximately 5.2 metres high, 5.8 metres long and 1.4 metres wide (8 square metres GIA of new floorspace will be created by the proposal). It will have a monopitch roof and a ground floor timber entrance door. A window will be provided at first floor level of the extension to create natural light to the staircase. A small additional window will be provided on the eastern elevation of the building to provide additional light to the rear first floor flat.
- 3.6 Access to the new residential units will be gained from the rear.
- 3.7 Further detail can be found in the Design and Access Statement prepared by Building Link Design and the Planning Statement prepared by Forward Planning and Development.

## 4 Planning Policy Framework

4.1 Relevant planning policy relating to the Historic Environment for this site comprises:-

- Section 12 of The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published in March 2012;
- Local policy is contained within the Core Strategy March 2014;
- The Leek Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal.

4.2 It is also necessary to have special regard to the statutory duties imposed by Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which are to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area.

### 4.3 National Planning Policy Framework

4.4 Section 12 of the NPPF relates to conserving and enhancing the historic environment and provides guidance on the impact of development on the significance of Designated Heritage Assets and Heritage Assets.

4.5 Paragraph 128 of the NPPF states that “in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance”.

4.6 Paragraph 131 states that 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”

- 4.7 Paragraph 132 states 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”.
- 4.8 “Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent” (Paragraph, 133).
- 4.9 Paragraph 134 states that “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”.
- 4.10 Paragraph 135 relates to non designated heritage assets and states that “the effect of an application on the significance of non-designated heritage assets should be taken into account in determining the application”.

### **Core Strategy**

- 4.11 Policy DC2 states that “the Council will safeguard and, where possible, enhance the historic environment”.

### **Leek Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal**

- 4.12 When the Conservation Area was designated in 1970, it contained a medieval town, and the earliest surviving silk mill with related housing. The CA boundaries were revised in 1989, 1994 and 2004 to place greater emphasis on Leek’s industrial heritage.
- 4.13 The underlying pattern of the Market Place and road system and fragmentary remains of burgage plot boundaries are medieval and the appraisal notes that a market has been present in the town since around 1207.
- 4.14 The market is considered to be the Core of the CA with the church, market place and medieval street pattern formed by Church Street, St Edward’s Street, Derby Street and Stockwell Street.



- 4.15 The Market Place is described as the “hub of the town”. It is a sizeable open space which is surrounded by close-packed houses and shops.
- 4.16 The Appraisal states that 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 heyday in the mid-late C19”.

## 5 Principal Planning Considerations

- 5.1 The level of detail contained within this Heritage Statement is proportionate to the importance of 14 Market Place as a heritage asset in accordance with Paragraph 128 of the NPPF.
- 5.2 The building is located within the Leek Town Centre Conservation Area and whilst the building is not identified as being notable in its own right, alterations to the building could have an impact on the significance of the conservation area (the Designated Heritage Asset).
- 5.3 The market place itself is identified as a key element of this part of the Conservation Area.
- 5.4 The proposals have been carefully considered to ensure that there is no harm to or loss of significance of the Conservation Area as the Designated Heritage Asset.
- 5.5 The proposed alterations to the front floor window will enhance this building and contribute to the significance of the conservation area and this building as a heritage asset.
- 5.6 The removal of the existing first floor advertisements which currently detract from the significance of the Conservation Area will significantly improve the contribution that this building makes to the Designated Heritage Asset.
- 5.7 These alterations have been discussed with officers to ensure that the proposals will sustain and enhance the significance of the heritage asset.
- 5.8 The conversion of the upper floors into residential use will bring this vacant floorspace into active use which is supported by National Policy and will make a positive contribution to the local character.
- 5.9 The small extension which is proposed to the side elevation, is not visible from Market Place and will have no impact on the significance of this important part of the Conservation Area nor will it impact upon views into and out of the Conservation Area. The design and materials used for the proposed extension are in keeping with the existing building.

- 5.10 It is therefore considered that the proposals support national and local planning policy relating to the historic environment and will preserve, and due to the proposed first floor alterations, enhance, the character and appearance of the Conservation Area thereby upholding the statutory duties imposed by the 1990 Act.

## 6 Summary and Conclusions

- 6.1 The applicants have instructed Building Link Design to design a scheme for the sustainable conversion of the upper floors to residential use whilst retaining the ground floor retail unit.
- 6.2 The revised proposals will deliver improvements to the appearance of the building through the removal of existing advertisements at first floor level. All other external alterations have been kept to a minimum to ensure the significance of the Conservation Area is preserved.
- 6.3 The proposal will result in the conversion and extension of the building to residential use as three residential apartments bringing currently vacant floorspace back into active use.
- 6.4 The use of the building as three residential units will result in the creation of much needed residential accommodation in accordance with and supported by housing policies at a national and local level.
- 6.5 The units will comply with Lifetimes Homes standards wherever possible.
- 6.6 Accordingly, the proposals are fully consistent with the strategic and local objectives for Leek. The proposed scheme ensures that the most is made of the opportunities presented by the building and would make a positive contribution to the future social, economic and environmental well-being of this part of the town.
- 6.7 The proposal supports the policies of the development plan and in accordance with Section 38(6) of the 2004 Act, planning permission should be granted.