# *DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT*

*IN RESPECT OF*

*SOCIETY OF FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE*

*OVERTON BANK*

*LEEK*

*ST13 5ES*

10/00486 LBC - 2 JUN 2010 / SMDC

*DATE: THURSDAY 27 MAY 2010*

***USE***

*The current use of the building is as a meeting house for the Society of Friends (Quakers). The building has been used as a meeting house since its construction in 1694 and the building is Grade II listed.*

*The proposal is to make the current meeting house more user friendly and capable of providing a venue for alternative associated uses i.e. meetings, small weddings or other appropriate community uses.*

*It is not proposed to enlarge the area of meeting space or in any way to alter the ground or first floor meeting halls but it is proposed to modernise the facilities i.e. the toilet accommodation, kitchen and disabled facilities. Drawing no. 2 of the accompanying Listed Building Application clearly shows the amendments when compared with the plan of the existing.*

*No external alterations are planned and it is not proposed to increase the capacity of the existing ground and first floor meeting halls.*

***AMOUNT***

*As noted above it is not proposed to increase the capacity of the ground or first floor meeting halls but merely to enhance the associated facilities so that the building could be hired out for appropriate associated uses. The frequency of use will therefore be*

*higher but the surrounding amenities i.e. car parks etc. are considered to be more than adequate to cope with the possible increased frequency of use.*

***LAYOUT***

*The existing layout does incorporate toilet facilities at ground floor level but are inadequate and there are none at first floor level. It is proposed to modernise the existing facilities and to provide reasonable facilities for the disabled. A unisex disabled toilet will be provided.*

*In addition small kitchens will be provided at both ground and first floor level. It is not proposed to provide catering for large events but merely to provide a space to facilitate tea making and light snack preparation. In addition to modernised toilet facilities and the kitchens, a small chair store will be provided. The current seating arrangements in the hall are long timber pews and these will be removed and flexible folding seating will be provided.*

***SCALE***

*There are no proposals to alter or enlarge the existing building externally and the two meeting halls located at the ground and first floor level will not be enlarged but the facilities beyond the meeting halls will be modernised.*

***LANDSCAPING***

*The proposal does not incorporate any additional landscaping to the site. The building is surrounded by lawns, shrubs, trees etc. which are considered adequate.*

***APPEARANCE***

*The proposal does not incorporate any alterations to the external appearance of the property.*

*The property is Grade II listed and therefore we have given consideration to the alterations internally. We have met the Local Authority conservation officer to discuss the details and intend to match the existing internal finishes and in particular the proposed doors will be a traditional four panel doors to match the panelling to the upper floors overlooking the main hall.*

*Details of the proposed joinery are shown on the drawings accompanying the planning application.*

*All other finishes will be to match the existing i.e. plastered walls and ceilings and all joinery will be painted to match the existing.*

## *ACCESS*

*The property is located within easy walking distance of the centre of Leek and the property is located immediately adjacent to one of the town main public car parks which fronts High Street and the rear of the car park is adjacent to Overton Bank. The site of the car park does slope down to High Street but if parking can be obtained to the area immediately adjacent to Overton Bank then there is reasonably flat access from the car park into the meeting house grounds.*

*The property is well situated close to public bus routes and is within easy reach of the town centre.*

*Inclusive access to the property is currently poor and as part of the scheme it is intended to improve the access to a reasonable standard. As part of the scheme it is proposed to provide an almost level threshold over the main entrance doorway and alterations to the floor level internally are proposed to alleviate steps and provide shallow ramps in lieu of these steps.*

*Currently there is no disable toilet facilities but incorporated into the new scheme will be a unisex disabled toilet.*

*Improved lighting will be provided internally and externally and general*

*consideration will be given to providing reasonable access for all. It is not proposed to completely modernise facilities but to provide reasonable inclusive access.*



***W ROCK MRICS***
***CHARTERED BUILDING SURVEYOR***
***NICOLSONS***

10/00486 LBC - 2