Hewitt&CarrArchitects

Design & Access Statement
Heritage Statement

19-21 St Edward Street, Leek ST13 5DR
DPS Properties

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Design and Access Statement in support of:

The renovation and conversion of Grade II listed building into retail/office space at ground floor, with 2no. self-contained flats above

"Good design can help to create lively spaces with distinctive character, streets and public spaces that are safe, accessible, pleasant to use and human in scale; and places that inspire because of imagination and sensitivity of their designers."

- *By Design, Urban Design in the Planning System; Towards Better Practice (DETR & CABE, 2000).*

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1. This Design & Access statement has been prepared in response to the Governments changes to the planning application process outlined in circular: Guidance on Changes to the Development Control System, which came into effect on the 10th August 2006.

1.2. The statement provides an analysis and narrative of the proposals and is in line with guidance produced by CABE entitled Design and Access Statements: how to write, read and use them.

1.3. The building is located at No. 19-21 St. Edward Street, Leek.

1.4. The proposals consist of the renovation & conversion of the property into retail/office space and residential accommodation.

1.5. The production of this appraisal has been considered as a necessary part of the design development process to ensure that any potential changes actively seek to respond positively to the building's specific context and significance.

2.0 USE

2.1. The four-storey building (including basement) currently lies vacant and in a poor state of repair, though much improved by the present owners. The previous owner had occupied the building for approximately 40 years, during which time it was used for the sale and repair of electrical equipment.

2.2. During this time, it's likely that, while the ground floor rooms to the street provided retail space, the rest of the property was used for workshop/storage purposes. There is no running water to the upper storeys.

2.3. It's reasonable to assume that the property was originally built as a single private residence.

2.4. A previous application (SMD/2012/1099 & SMD/2012/1100) was submitted and subsequently approved in May 2013. Much of the works to repair and stabilise the building were then carried out, but the conversion was put on hold in the intervening years. The owners now wish to submit a revised application with an amended scheme to provide 2no. 2-bed flats to the upper storeys.

3.0 AMOUNT

3.1. Internal floor area of the existing property extends to:

- Cellar 61sqm
- Ground Floor 85sqm
- First Floor 86sqm
- Second Floor 70sqm

3.2. It is proposed to add a small extension at the rear, to house a new staircase and bathroom facilities. The total additional floor space created by this extension would be 15sqm.

3.3. It is also proposed to create a small mezzanine area at second floor level, adding an additional 3sqm.

3.4. The total internal floor space dedicated to the proposed uses are:

- Basement & Ground Floor Retail/Cafe 115sqm
- Flat 1 112sqm
- Flat 2 93sqm

3.5. Externally, a small yard of approximately 7sqm will belong to the retail use. A garden area of approximately 40sqm is to be split between the two residential flats.

4.0 LAYOUT

4.1. Cellar

The cellar will remain largely unchanged but could be used as a kitchen for a potential café use to the floor above. The addition of a new WC will provide customer facilities. There are currently four sets of stairs accessing the cellar, two of which have been blocked, and one which emerges on to St Edward Street. Depending on the eventual use of this space, there is potential to reinstate one or two of these staircases, to aid access/fire escape. Natural daylight is possible via existing light wells to the front.

4.2. Ground Floor

There are few alterations proposed to the retail premises at the front of the building, the main one being the addition of a potential access to next door (No. 23-25), to maximise flexibility. This was approved under the previous application. The retail unit will retain the existing internal access to the basement, but a partition wall will be added to the side of the staircase, separating this use from the residential areas.

To the rear, it is proposed to create an additional entrance to avoid the need for a communal hallway, giving each flat its own private access. The space is then split between a hallway and staircase for Flat 1, and a hallway, laundry and bedroom for Flat 2. A small extension provides stair access to Flat 2's living accommodation at first floor, alongside an ensuite bathroom.

4.3. First Floor

Flat 1 retains the use of the existing staircase to access a master suite at first floor and living accommodation and further bedroom/family bathroom at second floor. To facilitate this layout, it's proposed to block doorways into 3 rooms at first floor, which will be dedicated to Flat 2's living accommodation. All new walls and blocking of doorways will be done in partition, leaving any original features (architraves/skirtings etc.) in place.

Flat 2 is smaller in footprint, with the new staircase extension providing access to living accommodation and master bedroom at first floor. The living room utilises one of the grandest rooms of the property, with feature fireplace (to be retained) and full height sash windows overlooking St. Edward Street. A new opening into the adjacent room allows for a kitchen/dining area, also at the front of the property.

At the rear, the master bedroom occupies the double height space created as part of the previous repair works. This area had been badly fire damaged and the floors and roof have since been carefully restored, creating an impressive vaulted ceiling. To maximise this space, it's proposed to add a small mezzanine, accessed via ladder, which establishes a little snug area for reading, an office, or just for additional storage. The benefit of the mezzanine is that it avoids the need for the stair lobby partition walls to travel the full height of the room, and also creates a small wardrobe area below. It means this room can be viewed from an entirely different angle, level with the truss, and a new rooflight provides access for valley gutter maintenance.

4.4. Second Floor

Flat 1 occupies the entirety of the second-floor accommodation, with living, dining and kitchen within the open plan attic space and benefitting from an abundance of natural daylight. The remaining spaces are given over to a second bedroom and family bathroom. This floor requires minimal alteration to accommodate the proposed layout – merely the addition of partition walls to form the bathroom and landing, and a single opening to the bedroom. The plan attempts to make the most of the spaces and their quirky details, such as the large rooflight and oddly shaped internal room (to be used as a laundry).

4.5. External

To the rear of the property there will be bin & bicycle storage for both flats & the retail unit, a small yard and private garden space, all accessed via a shared alleyway.

5.0 APPEARANCE

5.1. No changes are proposed to the impressive frontage along St. Edward Street. Repairs and improvements were undertaken under the previous approval, which included refurbishment of the sash windows, repointing of the brickwork, and the addition of a centre post to the large glazed shopfront. Beyond any additional repair and maintenance, such as painting of the front door and general tidying up of the central pediment/shopfront brackets & fascia etc., this elevation will mainly benefit from the appearance of being occupied.

5.2. To the side, it is proposed to drop the sill of the existing ground floor window to create a doorway. No other changes are planned for this elevation.

5.3. The major change will be at the rear, with the addition of a 2-storey gabled extension. This will be in reclaimed brick and tile, to match the existing as closely as possible, with small arched timber windows to the ensuite bathrooms. Given the location of the extension, it should only be visible from the upper floors of the surrounding buildings, most of which are retail units or eating/drinking establishments, with offices or flats above.

5.4. Also to the rear, it is proposed to change Flat 2's ground floor window to a set of double French doors. This was approved under the previous application and the timber doors were subsequently made but are yet to be installed.

6.0 SCALE

6.1. The scale of the extension has been carefully considered in relation to the existing building at the rear. The height was key, being tall enough to allow sufficient headroom above the new staircase and ensuite, whilst still appearing subservient to the existing roofline.

6.2. A gabled design is necessary to create the required headroom, but the eaves and ridge line are kept low. It was also important to avoid too much disruption to the existing roof (recently repaired).

6.3. The footprint is just large enough to accommodate the stair & bathrooms, without completely filling the external yard area, or stepping proud of the existing.

7.0 LANDSCAPING & ENVIRONMENT

7.1. The property benefits from a small area of green space at the rear, which is a major asset for a town centre premises. The small yard will be dedicated to the ground floor unit, while the remaining garden space shall be split between the residential flats, together with bin and bicycle storage.

7.2. The gardens will be laid to lawn, with small low maintenance patio areas using stone slabs.

8.0 ACCESS

8.1. For the purpose of this statement compliance with the current edition of the Building Regulations Part M is assumed to be covered within the detailed design and the proposals, as this is mandatory. It is not intended to provide exhaustive coverage of all means taken to secure such compliance.

8.2. For the purposes of this statement of the definition of 'disability' is taken as that in Part 1 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

8.3. The site is considered to be in a sustainable location, being located within the town centre, with the many facilities it has to offer.

8.4. There are no parking facilities on site, but there is nearby on street parking and longer-term parking at High Street car park. Several bus stops are accessible within 5 minutes' walk, and Leek bus station is just a 7-minute walk, providing regular access to the Staffordshire Moorlands, Stoke-on-Trent and beyond.

8.5. Access into the ground floor unit will be directly off St Edward Street, via the front door to No. 19 or No. 21. The access to No. 19 is stepped, but No. 21 provides level access for anyone unable to manage stairs.

8.6. Access to the residential flats is via the side alleyway, both with private entrances that step down into a hallway. Both flats are set over 2 or 3 floors, with little scope to add a passenger lift, meaning that these properties may not be suitable for disabled occupants.

9.0 HERITAGE STATEMENT
Description of the Asset

9.1. Under the National Planning Policy Framework (2012), any design should seek to "conserve and enhance" the historic environment. Section 12 of the NPPF states that LPAs should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by a proposal, including any contribution made by their setting, with a level of detail proportionate to its importance (P128).

9.2. No. 19 St Edward Street is a Grade II listed property, designated in 1972 with the following description:

House, now in partial use as shop, the rest disused. Late C18. Brick with plain-tiled roof. EXTERIOR: 3 storeys, 7-window range with central entrance. 6-panelled door with fluted frieze and radial fanlight in highly enriched composite case: Corinthian capitals to fluted columns, twisted in the centre; swagged cornice, and open pediment. Inserted late C19 shop front to right of doorway, with heavy brackets to fascia, and recessed off-centre doorway. Other windows all 12-pane sashes with painted stone cills and lintels. The central window on the first floor has fluted lintel and cornice. 9-pane sashes to attic storey. Moulded stone fluted eaves cornice. End wall and axial stacks. Coped gable to left. INTERIOR: not inspected. The building incorporates a sandstone block wall in the upper gable return, and there is reputed to be similar stonework to the rear.

9.3. St Edward Street is also situated within Leek Conservation Area. In developing this scheme, consideration has been given to the listed status of the building, together with the *Leek Conservation Area Appraisal* and the *Extensive Urban Survey*, both of which evaluate the historic significance of the area and identify features of townscape and landscape importance.

9.4. Leek is situated to the north east of Staffordshire, the largest town within the Staffordshire Moorlands. Its location provides good transport links with Macclesfield, Stoke, Stafford & the Peak District.

9.5. Leek's history can certainly be traced back to the early medieval period, with a mention in the Domesday Book, but could possibly be even earlier (the placename suggests Saxon activity within the area). It was granted a market charter in 1207 and burgage plots were laid along Stockwell Street, Derby Street and St Edward Street, meaning the latter is one of the oldest streets in the town.

9.6. No.19-21 sits within the town's historic core, in an area believed to have been the medieval market place. What exists of the market today, situated to the east behind St Edward Street, is likely to have been much larger. The EUS document speculates that infilling to the west could have occurred as early as the late medieval period.

9.7. The town remained a small settlement until the arrival of the silk industry in the 17th century. The built character of Leek is very much associated with the expansion of the textile industry that followed over the next 200 years. The majority of Leek's historic buildings date from the 18th to early 19th century, as timber framing was replaced with stone and then brick.

9.8. By the 1830s, Leek was described as "one of the handsomest market towns in the county." Development during this time reflects the influx of new trades such as silk, mohair and buttons, but also associated professions moving into the area, such as doctors and lawyers. The wealthy middle classes built their own properties, or updated existing properties, based on the fashionable 'pattern book' houses in the popular Georgian style.

9.9. In St. Edward Street, known originally as Spout Street, a large number of 3 storey properties were built in the 18th century by lawyers or button merchants. The street is one of the finest in Leek, defined by its gentle curving slope, flanked by attractive Georgian buildings, with views of two landmark churches to each end.

9.10. The street narrows to the northern end, and the conservation area appraisal speculates that "the ragged brickwork of No. 19" indicates 19th century road widening at the narrowest part of the street. The adjacent Shirley Building, by Sugden, was built in 1873.

9.11. The property itself looks to be of late 18th century origin. The sash windows to the front elevation are recessed behind the wall, implying it was built after the 1774 Building Act that tried to reduce fire risk. Its Flemish bond brickwork, stone eaves cornice and decorative centrepiece with Corinthian columns and simple fanlight all date it to this period.

9.12. There's also a strong possibility that the building retains elements of an earlier property, with its much-altered sandstone walls to the rear. Brickwork replaced stone as the primary building material in Leek in the 18th century, and the brick extension to the rear obviously replaced an earlier structure here – the remnants of the gable and a second-floor doorway can be seen both externally and internally. It's possible the owner simply updated the façade of the property in the fashionable style of the time.

9.13. Little documentation exists to help identify the original owners, but the property was obviously built as a rather grand private residence. Although it's possible that the building was intended as two properties, it would be difficult to prove given the insertion of the shopfront and the numerous internal alterations. Given the symmetry of the façade, with the door centred within a 7-window range, it seems more likely that it was originally intended as a single property.

9.14. The shopfront was inserted in the late 19th century, which possibly coincides with the division of the property. Research has shown that the Philips family resided at No. 19 between 1861 & 1911. John Philips was a draper, and Harry Philips a

photographer. The 1901 census shows No. 21 as being occupied by Arthur Harbourne, a hosier and hatter, but it isn't until 1966 that the OS maps show it definitively as two properties.

9.15. The large roof window to the frontage is a rather incongruous feature for a building of this period, but it was installed for the benefit of The Leek Embroidery Society (founded in 1879 by Sir Thomas & Elizabeth Wardle), which moved here from their former premises at No. 56 some time after 1912.

9.16. Internally, the property is in a poor state of repair and has obviously undergone numerous alterations over the years. Some original features, such as 6-panel doors and deep moulded skirtings, remain, but are currently not in-situ as most require repair following fire damage.

9.17. The current owners purchased the property in 2012 and have undertaken a series of repairs and restoration, under a previous approval, to make the building structurally sound. Approval for change of use to A4, together with the conversion of the upper floors to flats, remains in place.

9.18. Staffordshire HER returns 39 results within 100m of the property, including St Edward's Church (Grade II*) and Leek market place. There are 18 listed buildings along St Edward Street, but the majority are focused to the southern end. The closest are the late 18th century Wilkes Head Inn and Bank House, both to the western side of the street.

10.0 HERITAGE STATEMENT
Assessment of its Significance

10.1. To assess the significance of any affected heritage assets, this document adopts the methods outlined in Historic England's publication "*Conservation Principles, Policies & Guidance*." The guidance describes four heritage values that may contribute to the significance of a place: Evidential, Historical, Aesthetic and Communal.

10.2. *Evidential Value* is described as "the potential of a place to yield evidence of past activity." For example, archaeological deposits may provide clues in place of any written record. It is often proportional to the amount of material evidence that has since been lost or altered.

10.3. The extensive urban survey reports high evidential value for the historic core of Leek (HUCA 1), which includes St Edward Street. There is potential for below ground archaeological deposits from the early medieval period onwards. Previous archaeological intervention around St. Edward's Church has already uncovered such evidence.

10.4. There is also potential for extant historic buildings "to retain earlier fabric relating to their origins and function and so may further inform our understanding of the development of the town." This could apply to No.19/21, with evidence of earlier sandstone walling to the rear.

10.5. *Historical Value* derives from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present. It tends to be illustrative or associative and may be closely related to whether an asset retains its original use.

10.6. Historical value is identified as high within the town centre as there remains a number of legible heritage assets, such as the medieval street pattern and burgage plots. No. 19/21 doesn't demonstrate a typical burgage plot as it's believed to be within what was originally the market place, but this is perhaps less clear.

10.7. The property was obviously intended as a private residence, and still reads as such to the average passer-by. However, the insertion of the later shopfront has compromised the legibility as a whole. Numerous internal alterations over time mean that the building is no longer an extant example, somewhat limiting its historical value.

10.8. The large roof window, visible from the front elevation, adds another layer to the building's history, being installed for the benefit of the Leek Embroidery Society, with its links to Sir Thomas Wardle. Sir Thomas was a key figure within the town during the 19th century, known for his silk dyeing and collaborations with William Morris, who visited his dyeworks in Leek.

10.9. *Aesthetic Value* derives from the way in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place. Aesthetic value within the town centre is high, with its many attractive Georgian buildings, interspersed with piecemeal development from the late medieval period onwards. A small amount has been lost to poorly considered 20th century development and the provision of open car parks.

10.10. The northern end of the street has suffered from 19th/20th century road widening and development, and is arguably less appealing than the southern end, with its mix of Georgian brick, older stone, and later half-timbered arts & crafts architecture.

10.11. No.19/21, though not referenced within the EUS (and only very briefly within the conservation area appraisal), is a particularly attractive building along St Edward Street. Its highly decorative door surround, fanlight, 6 over 6 pane sashes with slender glazing bars, and moulded cornice make for a pleasing façade.

10.12. Internally, very few features beyond the curved staircase and an attractive fireplace remain in-situ. Modern interventions have been inserted to ensure

structural stability, the walls have been stripped back to brick in many places, and various elements, such as internal doors, coving, skirtings etc., have been removed or lost to fire damage/alterations over the years.

10.13. *Communal Value* is about the meaning of a place for the people who relate to it. Again, communal value within the historic core is high, being the commercial heart of the town. It allows the community to interact with historic buildings on a daily basis.

10.14. As a private residence, the property would have had low communal value, but this will have increased through its use as a retail unit at ground floor. St Edward Street retains a variety of unique and individual shops, alongside financial and professional services. However, as a visibly vacant building the current impact on communal value is negative.

11.0 HERITAGE STATEMENT
The Design Concept

11.1. The proposals for alterations and change of use to No.19/21 have been discussed at length in preceding chapters of the design & access statement, but in summary consist of:

- change of use of ground floor unit to A3 use, providing potential retail or café facilities
- installation of new WC to basement level
- potential reinstatement of basement staircase & new access into the adjacent property (No.23/25)
- conversion of the upper storeys into 2no. self-contained flats, utilising separate entrances accessed via the side alleyway
- addition of running water and drainage facilities to upper floors
- new build extension to the rear, providing staircase and ensuite facilities to flat 2
- blocking of internal openings and adding of others to facilitate new layout
- addition of mezzanine to bed 1 of flat 2
- reinstatement of period features such as architraves, skirtings and 6 panel doors, retaining and repairing original pieces wherever possible.
- recreate like-for like to match existing
- general repair and maintenance to the external elevations

11.2. The layout has been carefully considered through exploration of several alternatives before settling on the submitted design. It was felt this is the best compromise between minimal alteration and maximising potential use, which should serve to enhance the existing historic features.

11.3. Wherever possible, works should be in line with the conservation principles of minimum intervention, careful repair and reversibility. For example, internal openings should be blocked using stud partition, leaving reveals and architraves visible to ensure future legibility of the building.

12.0 HERITAGE STATEMENT
The Impact

12.1. The aim of this report is to assess the impact of any proposals on the significance of any heritage assets that might be affected. In line with current NPPF guidance, proposals should seek to conserve and enhance historic character.

12.2. The property lies within the Leek Conservation Area, which is a heritage asset that can be afforded a relatively high level of significance. The building is Grade II listed and makes a positive contribution to the character of the town centre. Therefore, it is considered to retain a high level of heritage significance in terms of legibility of the medieval market town, and the evolution of the high street (particularly in the 18th century).

12.3. Impact on the significance of the conservation area will be minimal. The key elevation to the front will remain unchanged, benefitting from repair and maintenance where necessary.

12.4. The building currently lies vacant on all storeys. The application seeks to reinstate a use at ground floor, while converting the upper storeys into much needed town centre accommodation, ensuring continued use and maintenance, making a positive contribution to the area as a whole.

12.5. The extension to the rear will have little to no impact on the surrounding buildings nor the character of the conservation area. It's footprint and scale are minimal, and its location is tucked away and should barely be visible from any aspect, but certainly not St Edward Street, Sheep Market or the market place. No further heritage assets will be affected by the proposals.

12.6. The impact on the listed building has been kept to a minimum – the staircase and bathroom facilities are as small as reasonably possible, and the design reflects that of the existing building, being in brick with corbelled detail and tiled gable roof. The eaves and ridge are kept low, so as to appear subservient, and minimise intervention to the existing historic fabric.

12.7. The main impact will be the loss of the external staircase from the basement, but this stair is not in use and has been blocked at basement level. An extension to the rear of this building was previously submitted and approved but has never been built.

12.8. Internally, changes have been kept to a minimum where possible. Although the layout requires the blocking of some existing doorways, and creation of new, particularly at first floor level, it was felt this would be the least invasive option that still made use of the existing stair, avoiding the need to insert a new stair internally, raise the height of the roof at the rear and various other alterations that have been looked at in previous incarnations.

12.9. The addition of partition walls (and blocking of openings using studwork) ensure that changes are reversible and shouldn't negatively impact the significance of the building.

12.10. It is clear from the assessment of significance that primary value lies with the continued presence of the building within the town centre, and the legibility of development during the 18th century due to the arrival of the textile industry. Its listing refers primarily to its age, Georgian styling and impressive frontage, particularly the decorative door surround. The internal layout provides far lower historical and aesthetic value due to the loss of fabric over the years.

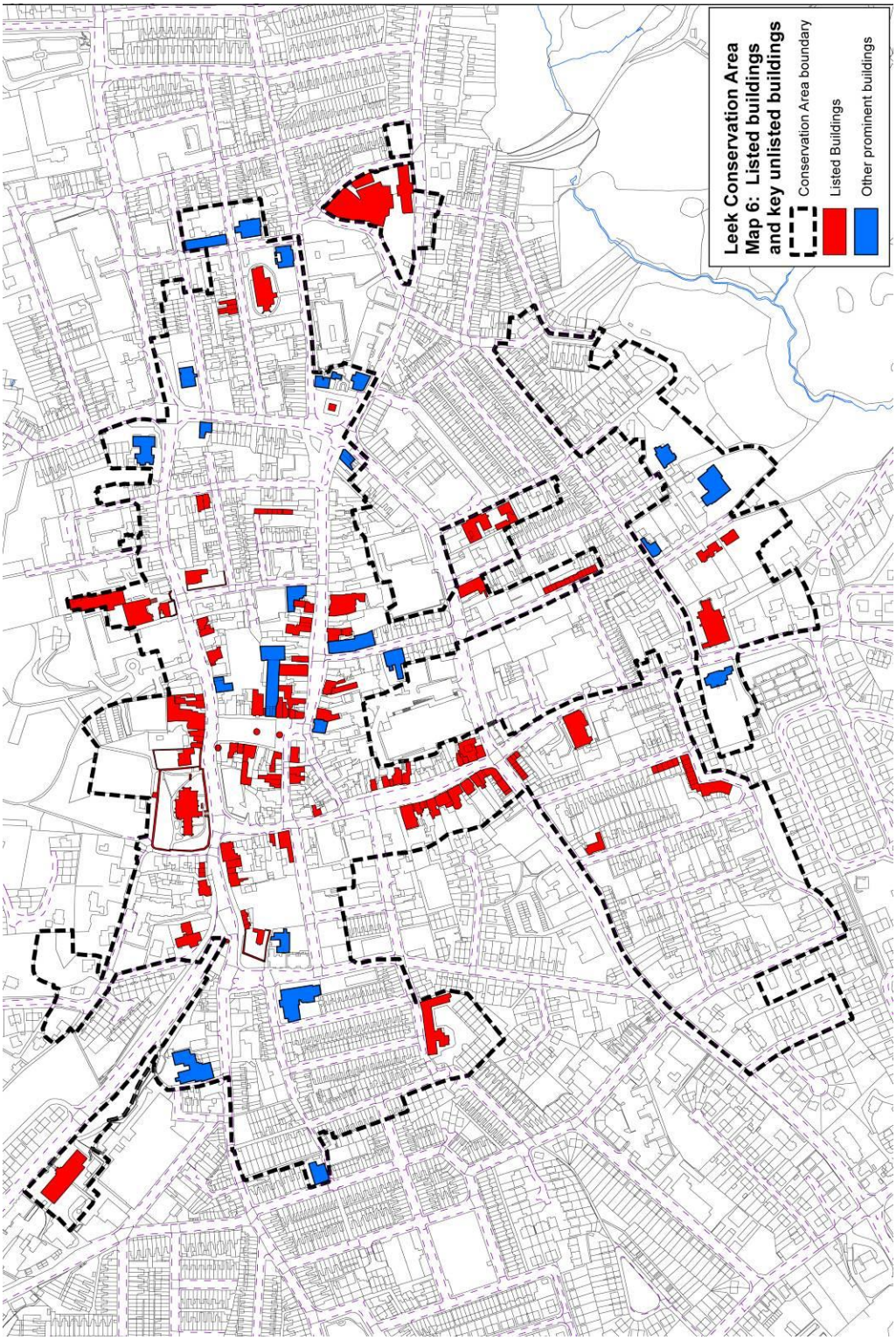
12.11. Therefore, it is considered that by providing a new use, involving considered alterations and careful conservation of the historic fabric, it will ensure the significance of the heritage asset is maintained and enhanced. Continued occupation is the biggest factor in securing long term maintenance of such historic buildings and would make a positive contribution within the conservation area.

12.12. In conclusion, the changes to No.19/21 represent no substantial harm to the character of the conservation area, and less than substantial harm to the significance of the listed building.

References

Staffordshire HER - http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk
Staffordshire Records Office - http://www.archives.staffordshire.gov.uk
Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance – Historic England (2008)
www.staffspasttrack.org.uk
http://www.british-history.ac.uk
www.old-maps.co.uk
www.historicengland.org.uk
Leek Conservation Area Appraisal - SMDC
Leek Historic Character Assessment – Staffordshire Extensive Urban Survey (2012)

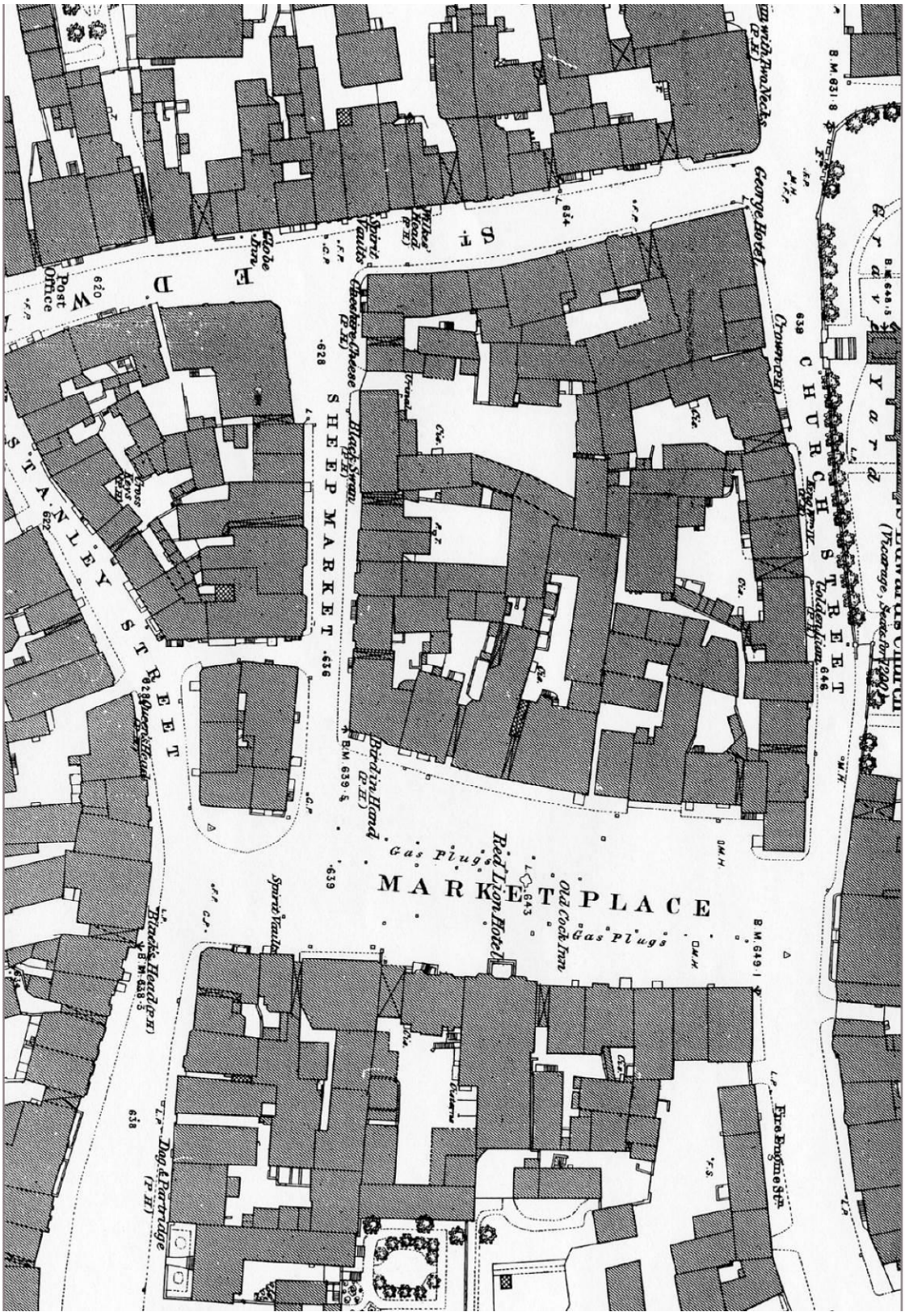
13.0 APPENDIX



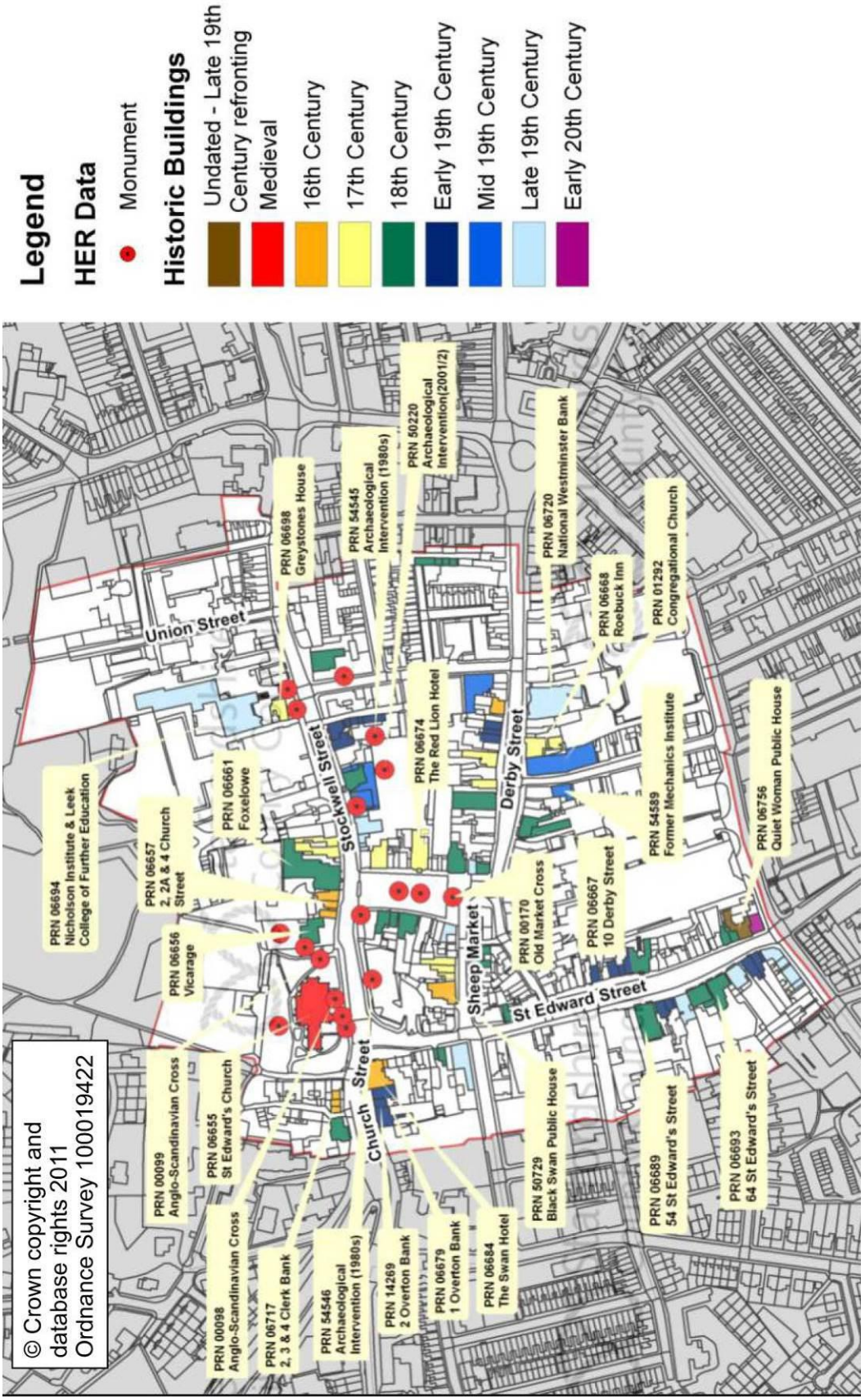
1: Map showing Leek Conservation Area boundary, Listed buildings & other prominent buildings (Leek Conservation Area Appraisal)



2: 1838 map from Miller's Olde Leeke (Leek Conservation Area Appraisal)



3: 1879 town centre OS map (Leek Conservation Area Appraisal)



4: Map showing heritage assets and their date of origin (Leek Historic Character Assessment)