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Planning and Heritage Statement incorporating Design and Access Matters



PROPOSED EXTENSION TO MORGUE AT LYNDHURST HOUSE, QUEEN STREET, LEEK, ST13 6LS

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This is a Full Planning application for the erection of a single storey extension at the rear of Lyndhurst House. Lyndhurst House is a non-Listed building in the Leek Conservation Area. It is a two-storey 19th Century former dwelling and constructed with a local red brick and has a plain tiled roof. The front of the building incorporates two large ground floor bays- one square and the other bowed. Between these, the entrance door and its semi-circular fanlight, are set back in a brick arched opening. There are three windows at first floor level. All first-floor windows have painted stone cills and headers, and the two front corners have unpainted stone quoins. The two side gables and all rear elevations are rendered. There is a low brick wall on the front boundary providing a small forecourt.

1.2 The application building occupies a corner plot at the junction of Queen and Earl Streets, the front facing Queen Street. The side of the plot runs alongside Earl Street from which vehicular access is gained. This part of the site is dominated by a very tall evergreen hedge which obscures views of the proposed extension, other than at an oblique angle from near the access. There is a recently built single storey extension near the proposal. This gives a new entrance to the Main Reception. There is also a high brick wall across part of the site of the proposed extension. This is proposed to be demolished.

2.0 PLANNING POLICY

2.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that when determining a planning application, the decision maker must make their determination in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Given this obligation, this chapter therefore considers national guidance relevant to the application and the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan submission version (2018). The following is considered relevant:

Core Policies

SS1 – Development Principles: expects development to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the Staffordshire Moorlands in terms of delivering quality local services and development which maintains the distinctive character of the towns and villages of Staffordshire Moorlands and their settings and in a way that protects and enhances the natural and historic environment;

SS1a – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development: seeks a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework.

SS5a – Leek Area Strategy: seeks to consolidate the role of Leek as the principal service centre and a market town and support its regeneration to be achieved by….

Strengthening the role of Leek as a principal service and retailing centre for the District.

DC1 - Landscape and Settlement Setting: requiring all development to be well designed, and reinforce local distinctiveness by positively contributing to and complementing the special character and heritage of the area in line with the Council's Design SPD in particular, requiring new development to be of a high quality and add value to the local area.

DC2 – The Historic Environment: safeguarding and enhancing the historic environment…. including in particular …. Conservation areas by resisting development which would harm or be detrimental to the special character and historic heritage of the District's towns and villages and those interests of acknowledged importance.

National Planning Policy Framework

There is considerable planning policy and guidance relevant to the planning application proposal at both local and national levels. The NPPF is significant as it sets out the Government's commitment for a positive response to planning proposals that would deliver sustainable development in order to assist growth to the economy. It has been made clear that the planning system has a key role in facilitating growth and development should be supported with a presumption in favour of granting planning permission. This change of emphasis provides an important background to the application proposal.

National Planning Policy Framework (Feb 2019) places a strong emphasis on promoting economic growth and sets out policies for the control of development. The Development Plan represents the starting point for the determination of this application, which in this instance is the Local Plan. The guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework is also relevant, in particular the following Chapters:

6. Building a strong, competitive economy

12. Achieving well-designed places
16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Within the NPPF it is also worth noting the following relevant paragraphs:

- Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, (para 2).
- The Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Therefore, significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system (para 7)
- The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people (para 124)
- 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. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation (para 189)
- 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, including securing its optimum viable use (para 196)

3.0 HERITAGE STATEMENT

3.1 The application proposes a small single storey extension on the rear elevation of the funeral directors that will face in a northern direction. The application property is a non-listed building in the Leek Conservation Area. It is a two storey former dwelling dating from the later part of the C19th. The Leek Conservation Area was designated in 1970 and has been extended a further four times, the latest being in December 2013. The Conservation Area itself is broken into five Character Areas and the site forming this application is situated in the eastern section. This area is then broken down into three further character areas, where the site is located within East of Ball Haye Street with Queen Street and the Monument. In the Leek Conservation Character Area at 4.15 it states:

East of Ball Haye Street 19th century houses jostle for position on rising ground leading up towards former moorland. Parallel roads (Regent Street, Queen Street, and Fountain Street) were in place by 1838, with a substantial scatter of detached houses in the centre between Regent Street and Queen Street. Elsewhere large areas remained undeveloped, despite major industrial development south of Fountain Street.

In 1838 each of the islands created by the road system contained north-south property boundaries. Consequently, in the mid-late 19th century, the area developed piecemeal as individual holdings were sold. In the north east corner the Church of St Luke forms a major landmark, flanked by the gentler forms of its former schools. Detached houses and modest terraces include a group on Queen Street built by Larner Sugden for himself. Near the Monument at the western end of Fountain Street are the Cawdry Buildings, a pleasant terrace of shops with housing above dating to 1889.

3.2 The application building represents an extended 19th century property in Leek. Its significance is its contribution to the town's character, which in this location comprises of a mix of heritage brick properties in the form of terraced and detached housing and mills. Whilst the site faces The Church of St Luke, which is a Grade II* listed building, the proposal is situated to the rear of Lyndhurst House, so it will not have an impact to the Church's setting. The design of the proposal will complement the existing property and its additions and has been created to enable the business to satisfy a growing need for storage at the property.

3.3 The proposal constitutes a modest extension on the property, which can be comfortably accommodated on this part of the building. Therefore, the proposal will be comfortably located within the site and the character appearance of the of the host building will be maintained. As such the impact on the Conservation Area will be minimal and the contribution to the historic asset has been preserved. On this basis, it is considered that the proposal is considered to have been favourably assessed against the criteria and is therefore acceptable from a planning and historic viewpoint.

4.0 SUMMARY

4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework definition of sustainable development is:

> *"Sustainable means ensuring that better lives for ourselves don't mean worse lives for future generations. Development means growth. We must accommodate the new ways by which we will earn our living in a competitive world. We must house a rising population, which is living longer and wants to make new choices. We must respond to the changes that new technologies offer us. Our lives, and the places in which we live them, can be better, but they will certainly be worse if things stagnate. Sustainable development is about change for the better, and not only in our built environment"*

The NPPF determines that sustainable development includes three dimensions:- economic, social and environmental. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:

- **Environmental role** – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy

- **Economic role** – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;

- **Social role** – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being;

4.2 The site is located within the development boundary of Leek and is also situated within Leek Conservation Area. The proposed extension has been identified as a necessary requirement for the business as it will help with the functional operation of the funeral directors.

5.0 USE

The application proposes a small extension to an established funeral directors.

6.0 AMOUNT

The area of the site measures approximately 1.161m^2 in area. The existing floor space is 260m^2 and the proposed additional floor space is 9.5m^2.

7.0 LAYOUT

The layout will infill and utilise an area off the existing rear elevation that faces the car park

8.0 SCALE

The proposal will be single storey in form and appearance.

9.0 LANDSCAPING

No landscaping is proposed as part of this proposal.

10.0 APPEARANCE

The extension seeks to replicate the form and appearance of the existing property and recent additions and, consequently it is considered that the extension will visually complement the existing building and its surroundings.

11.0 ACCESS

The site already has an established access onto Earl Street that will remain unaltered and utilised as part of this proposal.

12.0 CONCLUSION

12.1 The Government has a strong commitment to growth and provides a strong presumption in favour of development and is committed to increasing levels of growth. The NPPF states that local planning authorities should approach decision-taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development. It goes on to state that local planning authorities should look for solutions rather than problems, and decision-takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

12.2 The proposed development is considered to constitute a sustainable form of development as it complies with the three elements of sustainability (social, economic and environmental) as advocated by the NPPF. Furthermore, the proposal is in accordance with the provisions of the policies listed above in the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy. It is with due respect that the Local Planning Authority is politely requested to support this planning application to allow the erection of a single storey rear extension and grant planning permission accordingly.