Heritage Assessment: 15 Naylor Yard, Leek

Introduction

Town and Country Planning legislation requires the submission of a statement demonstrating how the special historic or architectural interest of a building or area has been considered within a planning application proposal.

This Statement demonstrates how design principles and concepts have been applied to the design of the proposal and how it has taken account of national and local historic environment planning policies, and in particular how the design preserves or enhances the historic and architectural importance of the application building; how the proposal has been designed to harmonise with the existing architectural style of the building and area; the application building's setting; and particular physical features of the building and area that contribute to its special interest or character.

The Statement also shows how the design approach to access balances the recommendations of the Equality Act 2010 with the historic asset.

Leek Conservation Area

The Leek Conservation Area was first designated in July 1970 and extended in 1989, 1994, 2004 and 2013. An Article 4 Direction has been confirmed by the Council in which the "permitted development" rights to extend dwellings were removed from some properties, including the application property.

There are Listed Buildings in the vicinity of the application building (at 2, 3 and 4, Clerk Bank House and The Maude Institute, Clerk Bank and St. Edward's Church), but none are close enough to be impacted by the proposal.

Leek is located on the A523 former trunk road between Macclesfield (to the North) and Buxton (to the East). It is historically a hill settlement dating back to the 13th Century. The conservation area is focused on the historic medieval streets at the core of the town centre and expands outwards to include the large mills associated with the silk industry that operated in the town in the 19th Century, the streets of terraced workers' housing and attractive Victorian and Edwardian housing, much influenced by the Arts and Crafts Movement. The application building lies in a pocket of small cottages to the west of the St Edward's Church sitting behind Clerk Bank House. These are thought to have been originally erected in the 19th Century as industrial buildings that have later been converted into dwellings. The application building is the most northern of these buildings on Naylor Yard and therefore some distance away from Clerk Bank House, and not within sight of it.

A Character Appraisal was published in 2017 for the Conservation Area. It concludes that the key positive characteristics of the Leek Conservation Area. These are separated into appraisals of the use of historic detailing and natural materials in the Conservation Area. Because of the range of periods during which the town has grown these vary depending on the age of the property.

The Historic Context of the Application Property

The application building is a two storey end of terrace dwelling. Given that the application property was constructed in the mid to late 19th Century, machine made bricks have been used in its construction. Its roof is of clay tiles manufactured from one of the local potteries.

Its windows are not original but are mostly painted timber sashes with brick lintels and stone cills. Its front door is also painted timber, but again not original. These are likely to have been installed at the time the building was converted from industrial use to residential use.

To the north of the Application Building and within its residential curtilage are two domestic garages/car port contained within a walled enclosure. These are proposed to be demolished. A lean-to extension at the rear of the dwelling is also proposed to be demolished. This is not historic and has little architectural merit.

The planning policy context

Conservation Areas are designated under the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and are defined as areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

The purpose of the Character Appraisal is to define and record the special architectural and historic interest of the Leek Conservation Area to guide decisions on planning proposals.

The development plan for the area is the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan.

Plan Policies

The Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan Submission Version February 2018 contains the planning and conservation policies that are relevant to this proposal.

Policy SS1 Development principles requires new development to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the area and maintains is local distinctiveness.

Policy 1A encourages Sustainable Development in the area.

Policy SO8 in the Design and Conservation section promotes local distinctiveness by means of good design and the conservation, protection and enhancement of historic assets.

Policy DC2 The Historic Environment requires heritage assets and their setting to be enhanced and gives protection to designated and non-designated heritage assets.

Heritage Assessment

The planning application has two elements to it. Firstly, the application proposes additions to the existing dwelling, and secondly it provides a courtyard for off-street parking.

The site benefits from a planning permission granted in 2016 for a larger addition to the application building. The planning permission has commenced by the demolition of the former garages and wall, and initial construction works on the approved additions. This application differs from the consented proposals only in the matter of smaller proposed additions to the dwelling. It is for this reason that the application was initially submitted as a Section 73 amendment rather than a new planning application. However, the proposed changes This Appraisal addresses the proposed differences.

The principal part of the proposed extensions is a two-storey building that accommodates garaging and a store at ground floor and a bedroom and en-suite at first floor. This is linked to the application building by a single storey addition (family room and kitchen).

The elevations are in brick and all roofs are proposed to be in a matching plain tile. Windows will be painted timber at a matching glazing pattern.

The elevation to Naylor Yard will be at the back of pavement to follow the line at the Application Building and its neighbours. The elevational treatment will be simple with only three small openings and reflects the “industrial” character of the original buildings on Naylor Yard. The separation of the two-storey element of the additions from the application building by the use of a single storey link retains the integrity of the heritage buildings.

The amendments to the approved scheme are not significant. The largest change is a reduction of the two-storey element by about a third so that it now only accommodates one bedroom, not two. Other elements of the scheme are the subject of only minor amendments that do not change the impact of the proposal on the heritage asset.

It is considered that the nature of the well-designed alterations and extension do not detract from the character of the Leek Conservation Area. In terms of Policy SO8, the proposal is in keeping with the character of the application building and the character, scale and design of buildings nearby. The proposal preserves the historic character of the Leek Conservation Area.

Conclusion

This Assessment has, with the assistance of the Council’s Conservation Area Appraisal, identified the elements of the character of the Leek Conservation Area and examined the value of the application building within this context. The proposal has been assessed against the Council’s Local Plan policies. The conclusion of this study is that the proposed alterations and extension to 15, Naylor Yard, Leek will not harm the historic character of the Conservation Area and will comply with the Council’s planning policies.