

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

**SMD/2022/0422
(FULL)**

SMD/2022/0054

(ADVERT)

Valid 28/07/2022

**20 DERBY STREET
LEEK**

**INSTALLATION OF NEW SHOP
FRONTAGE**

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

The impact on the character and appearance of a Conservation Area and the town centre.

The impact on the setting of adjacent listed buildings.

The impact on the viability and vitality of the town centre.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The application site is on the main shopping street in Leek town centre and comprises a modern shop unit on the south side of Derby Street and which is wedged between two historic buildings including the Victorian Natwest Bank to the east and black and white timber framed Grade II listed Roebuck Hotel pub to the west. On the opposite side of the road to the north is a row of retail units in typical red-brick Victorian shop buildings. The unit is vacant and previously accommodated a Ponden Mill soft furnishing store. Derby Street is within the Leek Conservation Area.

PROPOSAL

This is a full planning application and Advertisement Consent application for a new shopfront and new fascia sign directly above, spanning the whole width of the new shopfront and projecting sign to the side of the fascia sign. The applicant is "Card Factory" who plan to take up the vacant unit. The whole of the shop-front would be replaced with one of equal width, height, shape and size. It currently comprises two modern full-height display windows on short stone stall risers. The display window on the right has a recessed double-door entrance. The two windows are separated by a white column. There are slim black timber window and door frames. The new shopfront would effectively swap the recessed entrance from the right to the left display window. The separating column, window and door frames would be the same width and design and would be painted heritage white (with the frames remaining in metal). They would be placed on new stone stall risers of equal size, height and design. This is shown on amended plans. The original plans differed only in that the column and frames were to be painted dark grey.

Both the signs will have a blue background with yellow lettering. The fascia sign background will comprise blue paint on the existing render. MDF lettering will be applied. The projecting sign would comprise vinyl lettering on a timber painted panel

which would hang from a traditional black metal bracket. Both signs would be non-illuminated.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Local Plan (Adopted Sep 2020)

DC1 Design Considerations.
DC2 The Historic Environment
TCR1 Development in the town centres

National Planning Policy Framework

Sections 12 (Design) and 16 (The Historic Environment).

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

No recent planning applications.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 20.9.22
Neighbour consultation period ends: 20.9.22
Press Advert: Expired 31.8.22.

Public Comments

None.

Town / Parish Comments

None.

Local Highways Authority

No objection subject to a condition.

Conservation Officer

No objection. However, I note the reconfiguration of the shop front is not very clearly outlined or justified. I don't see this overhaul to be a necessary intervention. It will neither enhance nor alter the façade for the better, as such the configuration should be left as is.

New signage, window and stone repair, and shop lettering to suit the new vendor is satisfactory.

The choice of new colour for the repainting of the shop and lower portion of the front

façade is proposed to be 'Grey RAL 7012'. I cannot see a reason for this seemingly random element and see it will cause unnecessary visual fragmentation of the front elevation.

In order for the front façade of unlisted no. 20 Derby Street to remain subservient between two visually striking Grade II listed structures of The Roebuck Inn and the National Westminster Bank, the alterations to no. 20 ought to be kept to what is relevant and therefore a minimum.

As such I would recommend the Grey paint element be left out of the proposal, or revised to a simple repainting of the current masonry in heritage sensitive off-white in respect of the Conservation Area setting. Additionally, I would recommend leaving out the reconfiguration of the shop front as stated above.

With my comments, the proposal will have no impact to the nearby heritage assets and Conservation Area.

OFFICER COMMENTS

The current frontage has an unusual modern design completely contrasting with the traditional frontages of the two historic buildings adjoining it to either side. Despite the reservations with the structural changes to the shopfront from the Conservation Area, it would remain with the same design, materials and appearance other than the swapping of the entrance doors from one side of the shop-front to the other and I do not consider this would upset the rhythm of the row of frontages along this side of the street, particular as the adjacent buildings are so different in design and appearance and where there is no real architectural consistency. As the shop-front replacement would have a similar design to the existing, I consider that the structural changes, although not enhancing the Conservation Area, would also not harm it. The application of a heritage white colour for all columns and frames, where currently the frames are black, could be deemed to count as an enhancement and would respect the white painted windows and panels of the adjacent historic buildings.

The applicant's agent has explained that the changes to the shop-front are required for the operational needs of the retailer and that a reversion to the current configuration via replacement would not suit them and risk the units not being taken up and remaining vacant which would potentially result in greater harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and that of the town centre and its vitality and viability.

With regard to the signs, these would not harm the character and appearance of Derby Street and therefore the Conservation Area as this stretch of the road is characterised by large shop fascia signs with bright random colours as often found in the middle of the main shopping streets of towns. Projecting signs are also a feature and the historic bracket respects the more traditional styles found within the shopping areas of the Conservation Area. The sign materials are also appropriate including paint on existing timber and neither sign would be illuminated as illumination, particularly internally has the potential to be harmful to the character of historic Conservation Areas.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

The proposal as amended would not harm the character and appearance of the Conservation Area or the setting of adjacent listed buildings. The proposal would therefore comply with the Local Plan and also the government planning guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

**OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : APPROVE FULL AND ADVERTISEMENT
CONSENT APPLICATIONS**

Case Officer: Chris Johnston

Recommendation Date: 29.9.22

X *B.S. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council