SAMMONS Architectural LIMITED
Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists

10 Cawdry Buildings
Fountain Street
Leek, Staffordshire, ST13 6JP
Tel / fax 01538 386002
e-mail info@sammonsltd.co.uk

PLANNING, HERITAGE IMPACT & DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

PROPOSAL : ALTERATIONS AND EXTENSIONS INCLUDING PROVISION OF NEW RAMPED ENTRANCE WITH PORTICO AND AMENDMENTS TO EXISTING SIGNAGE

ADDRESS : 50 ST EDWARD STREET, LEEK, STAFFORDSHIRE, ST13 5DL

APPLICANT : LEEK UNITED BUILDING SOCIETY

DATE : AUGUST 2022 JOB No.: 2022-2706

CONTENTS:

1.0 INTRODUCTION
2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION
3.0 PROPOSAL
4.0 PLANNING POLICY
5.0 ASSESSMENT INC HERITAGE IMPACT STATEMENT
6.0 CONCLUSION
7.0 DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

- **USE**
- **AMOUNT**
- **LAYOUT**
- **SCALE**
- **LANDSCAPING**
- **APPEARANCE**
- **ACCESS**

INTRODUCTION

This statement is submitted in support of a full planning application for alterations and extensions to the existing building including the provision of a new ramped entrance with portico and amendments to existing signage 50 St Edward Street at 50 St Edward Street, Leek. The application has been submitted by Sammons Architectural Ltd on behalf of Leek United Building Society and is accompanied by drawing numbers 2022-2706-01A, 2022-2706-07B, 2022-2706-08, 2022-2706-10 and 2022-2706-11 which should be read in conjunction with this statement.

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. In addition to the above this statement 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.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The application building sits within a generous plot on the western side of St Edward Street at its junction with Strangman Street. It comprises of a three storey brick building with a tiled roof. Attached to the southern gable is a two storey flat roof extension which sits just below the eaves of the main building. A similar but lower two storey extension is also provided to the rear of the building. Access to the building is currently provided through the side extension via a series of steps which lead directly off the pavement.

For the purposes of the application the application site lies within a protected retail shopping street within the town's development boundary. It also lies within the Leek Conservation Area.

PROPOSAL

This is a full application which seeks alterations and extensions to the existing building. These are centred mainly around improving the current access arrangements to the building. The existing stepped access is to be removed and replaced with a more accessible ramped and stepped access which will provide access for both wheelchairs and pushchairs. The ramp and steps are to be formed with stone to match the original building with stainless steel handrail and glass balustrade.

The existing canopy is to be removed as shown and a new portland stone portico, complete with columns, fascia, cornice and pediment is to be constructed in front of the existing entrance doors to create a statement entrance to the premises.

The existing front and side elevation of the two storey extension which is currently brick will be rendered using a white textured waterproof K rend. Existing windows to the ground floor of the main building are to be removed and openings adapted by lowering the cills to floor level and combining the two outer windows on each end of the façade into two larger openings. New white powder coated aluminium windows are to be installed into altered openings. In addition 4 portland stone half columns are to be introduced below the existing stone fascia on the main building to complete the facade improvements

As well as the alterations and extensions outlined above the application also seeks advertisement consent to alter a number of existing advertisements on the building. The existing green corporate signage panels are to be removed and replaced with simple individual silver lettering fixed onto the existing stone fascia with letters backlit to produce a green halo effect. This design will be echoed on the Strangman Street elevation whilst the southern gable contiguous with the private access will have the same lettering applied albeit in a vertical direction. Similar individual silver lettering will be applied to the gable of the portico although this will not be illuminated as shown on the submitted plans.

PLANNING POLICY

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.

Section 72 of the same Act is also relevant and states "in the exercise with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area. of any functions under or by virtue of any of the previous mentioned in subsection (2), special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area."

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.

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004 requires proposals to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan taking into consideration any material considerations relevant to the determination of the application.

The development plan for the area is the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020) and 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 SS 2 (Settlement Hierarchy) identifies Leek as a ‘Town’, which is the highest-ranking position in the hierarchy. Towns are defined as large settlements which contain services and facilities. Future growth in the District should be focussed on Towns, which have fixed development boundaries.

Policy SS 5 (Leek Area Strategy) sets out the Council’s desire to consolidate the role of Leek as the District’s primary service centre. It states that new development opportunities should be established in accordance with the town centre masterplan, and sensitive improvements to increase the quality of supporting town centre uses should be supported. The Policy also refers to Leek’s special character and heritage, requiring the conservation and enhancement of sites and areas of heritage importance, with distinctive, high quality and sustainable buildings. Moreover, the setting and historic character of the town should be protected and improved.

Policy DC 1 (Design Considerations) requires development to be well-designed so that it reinforces local distinctiveness and positively contributes to the character of the area. Design should be of a high quality, respect the site and its surroundings, and promote a sense of place. In addition, design concepts for buildings should reduce the impact of development, the amenity of the area must be protected, and the maintenance, enhancement and restoration of biodiversity and geodiversity should be promoted where appropriate. There should be safe and satisfactory access, with a contribution towards meeting the parking requirement arising from the development. New developments should be well-integrated for car, pedestrian and cycle uses, with sustainable transport links.

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

Policy TCR 1 (Development in the Town Centres) state that the vitality and viability of Leek should be protected and enhanced. This can be done through focussing and promoting retailing as well as other town centre uses, supporting proposals which will enhance the town centre environment, and ensuring that development is well-connected to pedestrian shopping routes. Furthermore, there should be suitable parking facilities in and around town centres, and designs should improve and enhance the distinctive heritage of town centres.

Policy T1 (Development and Sustainable Transport) notes that the Council will support development which reduces reliance on the private vehicle and the need to travel. Development should be located where the highway network can accommodate the traffic the scheme will generate, and appropriate parking should be made available.

Policy T 2 (Other Transport Measures) states that the Council will support development proposals which encourage electrical battery powered vehicles.

The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied in decision-making. The NPPF constitutes a material consideration. Paragraph 38 states that local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way and that decision-makers should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

Paragraph 81 states that planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand, and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.

Paragraph 111 states that development should only be refused on highways grounds if it would lead to an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or severe impacts on the road network resulting from residual cumulative impacts.

Paragraph 126 states the importance of creating high-quality, beautiful, and sustainable buildings. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, which contributes towards creating better places within which to live and work. Paragraph 130 goes on to add that developments should add to the overall quality of the area, and be visually attractive in terms of its architecture, layout, and landscaping.

In addition to the above the Council's Design Guide which is adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document gives principles on good design is a further material consideration when determining all planning applications. The setting, character and context of a building/site should be considered, and the pattern for new development will be dependent on the nature of the settlement – new buildings should respect the settlement's "grain", i.e. the relationship buildings have to the street and to each other. The scale and proportion of surrounding buildings should be considered.

For shopfronts, corporate signs and colour schemes should be adapted to suit the local area, with well-proportioned signage complementing the frontage, with only discreet illumination. Moreover, it is important for shopfronts to respect the host building and street scene. Traditional materials and finishes are generally preferred, and it is said that access should be improved wherever possible. Regarding building materials, it is noted that stone, slate, tile and brick and the predominant materials for roofs and walls in Staffordshire Moorlands – however, high-quality modern materials

can also be acceptable. Proportion and subdivision of windows should have vertical emphasis, and the colour of window frames and doors should be considered in relation to its use.

ASSESSMENT

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 Leek Conservation Area was designated in 1970 and has been extended a further four times, the latest being in September 2017. The Conservation Area itself is broken into five Character Areas with the application site located in the Central Section. The application building lies within the core of the Leek Conservation area. The Leek Conservation Area Character Appraisal it states that "The sinuous shape of St. Edward's Street and the fine quality of its buildings are enhanced by views of two major churches. To the north is medieval church of St. Edward, and to the south the Roman Catholic church of St. Mary, the latter towering over the diminutive form of the Ash Alms Houses (4.8). It goes on to state

"Formerly known as Spout Street, it was once a steep sided valley carved out by running water. Level house platforms cut into the valley sides left a cliff-face at the rear whose height increases as the street descends. This severed the houses from their crofts, and probably led to the sale of those on the eastern side where, by 1879, the majority of the back land ran with a single large-scale property. By contrast occupants on the western side retained their burgage plots well into the 20th century, and had substantial gardens and a view across the fields. Consequently the scale and design of the houses varies from side to side, and along the length of the street. Buildings on the western side tend to be of above average scale and architectural quality, particularly at the southern end (4.9). Here prominent buildings include fine examples of late 19th century timbered framing over lower storeys of stone such as Les Hetres, Spout Hall, and the Victoria Buildings. The earlier houses were smaller and include both a double fronted house of stone (No. 62) and houses of mellow handmade brick, of which the largest (no. 54) was the later home of Sir Thomas Wardle (5.4)."

Notably the application building is not listed although all the buildings to the south are (Grade II) as are numbers 39, 43 and 45 (also Grade II) on the eastern side of St Edward Street. No specific mention is made of the application building in the conservation appraisal.

Statement of significance

The application buildings heritage significance is its external design and character and its contribution to the town's character, which in this location comprises of a mix of heritage brick and stone buildings.

The application proposals seek a number of alterations and extensions to the buildings external appearance. The provision of a new stepped and ramped access will ensure inclusive access for all and will aid the building's maintenance and therefore preserve its future contribution to the character of the Leek Conservation Area.

The alterations to the external appearance of the building are a direct approach to upgrade the entrance to the building and also improve the external appearance of the existing extension which is rather unsympathetic in terms of its form, materials and detailing. The proposed development is considered to reflect and respect the character and appearance of the host building and would not affect the special or historic interests of any of the neighbouring listed buildings or their settings.

As such it is considered that the impact on the Conservation Area will be positive and the contribution the non designated asset makes will therefore be preserved. On this basis it is considered that the proposal is compliant with policies SS1a,SS5a, DC1 and DC2 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan.

Impact on residential amenity

National planning policy dictates that at the heart of its core principles, planning should always seek to secure a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings. This is further re-iterated in CS Policy DC1, which seeks to protect residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, sunlight, outlook, privacy and soft landscaping as informed by the Council's 'Space about Dwellings' SPG.

It is not considered that the proposed development would give raise to any adverse amenity issues having regard to the modest scale of the proposals, the existing use of the application building and its location within a mixed commercial setting and neighbouring land uses. On this basis it is considered that the proposal accords with such requirements in relation to CS Policy DC1 and the NPPF.

Highway Safety

Paragraph 32 of the NPPF states: 'Plans and decisions should take account of whether: the opportunities for sustainable transport modes have been taken up depending on the nature and location of the site, to reduce the need for major transport infrastructure; safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people and improvements can be undertaken within the transport network that cost effectively limit the significant impacts of the development. Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe' as is reflected within CS Policy T1 'Development and Sustainable Transport'.

Whilst no off street parking is provided the application site lies within a sustainable town centre location which is easily accessible by a means of alternative transport options. It is a short walk from the bus station which lies to the south east and several public car pars are provided in close proximity. On street parking is also provided within the vicinity. It is therefore considered that there would be no adverse impact on highway safety and accordingly there is no conflict with CS policy T1 or with the guidance of the NPPF.

CONCLUSION

The Framework sets out that there should be a presumption in favour of sustainable development and indicates that to achieve that, economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system.

The application site lies within a sustainable town centre location. The proposed extension and alterations are modest and will ensure that the existing business can continue to grow. The proposed development would not by virtue of its modest size, scale, form, design, positioning and materials have any adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the host building, application site or wider surrounding area including the Conservation Area within which it is located. Furthermore, it is not considered that it would be prejudicial to the reasonable enjoyment of the existing residential properties nor would it affect neighbouring land uses. It lies within a very sustainable location close to public transport links and easily accessible on foot and bicycle. In this respect the proposal is considered to be an acceptable form of development and compliant

with policies SS1, SS1a, DC1, and DC2 of the adopted Core Strategy as well as guidance contained within the NPPF.

The Local Authority is therefore respectfully requested to grant full planning permission for the proposed development in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

7.0 DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

USE

The application proposes a number of alterations and extensions to the building which is currently and has historically been occupied by Leek United Building Society. This form of development is considered to reflect the nature and character of existing development which surrounds the site.

AMOUNT

The existing branch floorspace which measures 110 sq metres will stay the same. The existing stepped access which will be removed is 13.5 sq metres. The new ramped and stepped access will add a 33 sq metres.

LAYOUT

The layout is shown on the submitted drawing accompanying the application.

SCALE

The proposal will not affect the scale of the existing building.

LANDSCAPING

No landscaping is proposed as part of this proposal.

APPEARANCE

The modest single storey extensions seeks to minimise the impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host building and conservation area. The extension will visually complement the existing building and its surroundings and the use of matching materials will ensure that it is quickly assimilated into the locality.

ACCESS

The site is located within a sustainable town centre location well located to existing local facilities and public transport links are easily accessible to the site and other parts of the Staffordshire Moorlands as well as the neighbouring city of Stoke on Trent.