

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

**SMD/2024/0357
AND 0358
Valid 05/08/2024**

**QUIET WOMAN 73 ST
EDWARD STREET
LEEK**

**CHANGE OF USE FROM
CURRENTLY VACANT PUBLIC
HOUSE TO FORM 4 HOLIDAY
LETS AND ASSOCIATED**

**(LISTING BUILDING CONSENT
& FULL - MINOR)**

MAIN ISSUES

- The principle of the proposal
- The impact on the character and appearance of a listed building
- The impact on the character and appearance of a Conservation Area
- The impact on residential amenity
- The impact on highway safety

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The site is within the town centre of Leek and comprises an ornate looking Tudor-style Victorian-built red brick mid-terrace two-storey building which was formerly a pub. It is Grade II listed. It faces St Edwards Street to the west and is also very close to the traffic light cross-roads junction with Brook Street (A53 road). To the rear of the pub building (to the east) is a glass-covered courtyard area enclosed by a range of more standard brick and tile two-storey buildings. The ground floor of all the buildings was used in connection with the pub. The upper floors are shown on the "Existing" drawings were used as two apartments with a 3-bed flat at the front and a 2-bed flat occupying the upper floor of the building to the rear of the courtyard but are referred to in the application documents as bed and breakfast accommodation in connection with the pub.. To the rear of the site to the east is the large modern red-brick shopping building formerly occupied by Wilkinsons. Attached to the building to the north side is a terraced dwelling. On the opposite side of the road is a dwelling and a café. Attached to the south side of the building on site is "The Unicorn", another former pub which now appears to be used by counselling services but also claimed by the owner to be a residential property. The site is The site is in a Conservation Area.

PROPOSAL

This is a full planning application and Listed Building Consent application for the conversion of the buildings to provide four holiday let units which would result in the complete loss of the pub. Unit 1 would occupy both floors of the frontage building and the rear/side wing to the south of the courtyard and would provide four bedrooms. Unit 2 would occupy the building to the north of the courtyard and provide two bedrooms. Units 3 and 4 would occupy the rear building as apartments, with the ground floor being a large studio arrangement and the upper floor, accessed

via a proposed external cast-iron spiral staircase in the courtyard, being a 2-bed unit. The courtyard would be a communal space. The scheme would involve both external and internal changes but no extensions.

This is a scheme amended from one approved in March 2021 which also provided four self-catering holiday lets but which retained the ground floor of the frontage building as a pub, not resulting in its complete loss. This new scheme also proposes further internal and external changes from that approved in 2021.

The alterations include the removal of existing contemporary lantern roof which covers the central courtyard.

The new applications include a Heritage Assessment, which was later updated in Sep 2024, Window Report, later updated/revised on 23.9.24 and a Design, Access & Heritage Statement which states the following:

Currently the property is empty and has not been operational as a Pub Since 2019. prior to this there have been other failed attempts to revitalise the Public House, including Limestone Brewery and The Pound Pub.

The Previous Owners Woodcock and Leather Partnership secured Change of Use into Holiday Let Units in March 2021. The work stalled and no changes have been made to bring the building back into use.

The building has been more recently been subjected to squatters which have been operating an illegal cannabis operation. These activities have had a further detrimental impact on the building.

The Current Owner bought the property in April 2024 and propose to bring it back into use as holiday apartments.

Part 7 of the Heritage Assessment Report (Sep 2024) gives the details of all changes and alterations proposed for the building and assesses the level of harm of each. The changes proposed which are assessed as resulting in at least some degree of harm to the listed building are as follows:

Window will be inserted in the east elevation (403) placed in the oldest, stone part of this elevation. Although there is already a vent here, enlarging the opening will be harmful by the removal of more historic stone.

Insertion of internal doorway to proposed ensuite in Unit 1. Minor harm through some loss of historic fabric.

Unit 2: toilets and store 2: remodel to provide lounge, kitchen and staircase to first floor considered to be mildly harmful.

Unit 1: eastern range: subdivide to provide two bathrooms and insert doorway to bedroom. Deemed to be harmful as will subdivide space and insertion of doorway will result in some loss of historic fabric.

Unit 2: loft: insert staircase and subdivide for bedrooms. Mildly harmful –Proposals would result in change to floor plan but infilled opening to be re-opened and fitted with double glazed, timber window. Layout already consented (refs. SMD/2020/0690 and SMD/2020/0689).

Amended plans were received on 21.10.24 showing the following amendments:

Unit 1: Removal of the en-suite bathroom to ensure no damage to existing original stone wall and access.

Unit 2: Clarification of the wall removal in this unit. Only the breeze block in fill to the walls will be removed. Original elements will be left in-tact.

A further amended Windows report was received on 17.10.24 which proposes further changes to the window design as further investigation into the windows reveals the style shown to be the original design and also shows double glazed units with a “Heritage” style flush UPVC material.

On 29.10.24, a further amended plan was received identifying blocked-off windows on the ground floor (facing the yard area of the adjacent residential property) to remain blocked off.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Local Plan (Adopted September 2020)

SS5 Leek Area Strategy
SS11 Churnet Valley Strategy
E4 Tourism and Cultural Development
TCR1 Development in the Town Centres
C1 Community Facilities
DC1 – Design Considerations
DC2 – The Historic Environment
T1 – Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework (Dec 2023)

Sections 6 (Economy), 7 (Town Centres), 8 (Communities), 12 (Design) and 16 (Historic Environment).

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

SMD/2021/0689 and 0690: Change of Use to provide 4 self catering units of Holiday Accommodation within part of, and alongside, the Public House; including associated alterations and works. Full planning permission and Listed Building Consent granted on 4.3.21.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 30.9.24

Neighbour notification expiry date: 30.9.24

Press advert: 6.8.24 (Affecting a Conservation Area and Listed Building)

Public Comments

A letter of objection has been received from the adjacent property to the south, the former "Unicorn" and now claimed to be a residential property. The resident objects to a proposed fire escape route through the courtyard of The Unicorn which lies to the rear of the Unicorn building and south of the Quiet Woman courtyard and then through courtyard gates onto Brook Street. The objector considers this to be unsafe and would also harm the heritage of both listed buildings and also affect the privacy of the Unicorn residents.

The neighbour also objects to windows facing the courtyard which would harm the listed buildings and also harm privacy and claims that two of the windows shown do not currently exist.

Leek Town Council

Support.

Local Highways Authority

No objection. Site is located in Leek town centre. Site had a former commercial use. No parking is proposed at the site, nor can any be provided. There are public car parks nearby, the closest less than 100m away. Site is in a sustainable location and will not have a severe effect on the highway.

Environmental Health

No objection subject to standard Env Health conditions to protect nearby residents from noise and disturbance during the construction phase.

Conservation Officer

Recommends that amendments be made to window design and to Units 1 and 2 as follows:

- Unit 1 – ground floor – ensuite extension equals less than substantial harm. The extension leads to the loss of cart entrance and requires loss of original fabric to create doorway. the extension renders the original opening unreadable for its original purpose.
- Unit 2 internal alterations: removal of some modern partitions are acceptable. However, large portion of original wall to be removed to form opening. Less than substantial harm due to large loss of original fabric.

In response to the receipt of subsequent amended plans and window details, the Conservation Officer commented as follows:

Unit 1 – now acceptable following removal of en-suite.

Unit 2 – acceptable as they have confirmed that the wall being removed is modern in material.

Windows – design much improved, now acceptable. A timber window would be preferred, however, given a heritage upvc would be acceptable subject to pre installation condition. Condition should require full details to 1:20 scale, including details of proposed finish/colour and opening type.

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB)

No objection to the principle of the proposal but consider the details in the Design Access & Heritage Statement to be insufficient to carry out a full assessment and request a full Heritage Assessment.

SMDC Waste Collection Service

No issues regarding waste collections.

OFFICER COMMENTS

This is a resubmitted scheme for the conversion of the former pub into four holiday let units. The previous application was approved in March 2021 but not implemented and the permissions/consents have now expired. The principle of the provision of four holiday lets remains acceptable in principle and would provide a benefit to the tourism economy and in turn the local economy in this sustainable town centre site and would also help contribute to the vitality and viability of the town centre. The previous scheme kept part of the pub for a possible re-use but this has not materialised despite attempts to bring it back into use as such. The complete loss of the pub would not be a benefit to the vitality and viability of the town centre and the loss would also be unfortunate as the listed building has always historically been for this purpose but the fact remains that it has not attracted a new food or drink provider to take on the premises and has now remained empty for five years, even before the pandemic. Its continuing deterioration and vacant appearance would be harmful to the character and appearance of the town centre and the Conservation Area and it essentially needs a suitable and viable new use so that the building can be appropriately restored and safeguarded in the interests of the historic character and appearance of the listed building, which also requires a programme of essential repairs as well as improvements, as well as protecting the Conservation Area and the town centre. Furthermore, there is no significant conflict with Policy C1 which aims to protect “community facilities” as this is a town centre site and there are several other public houses nearby.

There are further alterations to the building proposed in addition to those approved in 2021. SPAB considered the information originally submitted with this new application to be insufficient and recommended a detailed Heritage Assessment be formed. This has been undertaken. SPAB were not consulted on this but were also

not consulted on the previous scheme. The Conservation Officer felt that the scheme was largely acceptable but requested the removal of the proposed use of part of the south wing of the building as a ground floor ensuite and this has been undertaken as shown in the latest amended plans. A concern was raised about the removal of an original internal stone wall in Unit 2 but this was actually demonstrated to be a breezeblock wall. The Conservation Officer has approved of the amended plans and also window detail. The crucial windows of the primary elevation of the building, the traditional frontage facing St Edwards Street, are original sash windows and these will be repaired along with the entrance door. They will be repainted in "Heritage Colours." The remaining windows and doors to be fitted or replaced will be "Heritage style" flush UPVc double glazed windows. The Conservation Officer approves of the details

With regard to residential amenity, the neighbour to the south raises concerns that the drawings show new windows facing the rear courtyard of the dwelling to the south and outlines two ground floor south-facing windows in Unit 3 which would serve a bedroom area and a bathroom. The applicant claims that the windows shown on the floorplans were original windows but which have been blocked off and amended plans were received to show these as remaining to be blocked off. A condition will be added requiring that these remain blocked off and not to be reinstated as windows. There would be no new openings facing the property to the south as a result of this scheme. There is just one existing windows facing the property to the south, on the first floor and which would serve an ensuite bathroom. I do not consider this would lead to any additional overlooking concerns given that this formerly served rental flats above the pub or B&B accommodation.

The objector also raises concerns over the fire escape route through the courtyard of the neighbouring property and onto the road via an existing gate. The applicant confirms that this is intended to be a secondary route only as each flat will have an exit either onto St Edwards Street or the passage to the rear of the site next to the former Wilkinsons building (which leads to Brook Street).

The issue was also raised in response to the previous application and the case officer stated the following in his report:

"The applicant does have a right of way through this yard area, but this scheme only makes use of this as an additional emergency fire exit area, of course only to be used in very occasional extreme circumstances. A planning condition could be used to clarify this and impose such a restriction and matters of fire escape are relevant to building regs."

The fire escape issue is a matter for Building Regulations and is not a material planning consideration. However, the condition imposed on the previous approvals can be repeated.

With regard to traffic and highway safety, there is no parking at the site and this will remain the case with this new scheme. However, this is a sustainable town centre site which is also adjacent to public transport and there are nearby public car parks and also other nearby streets without parking restrictions. The proposal would not impact on the road network or highway safety.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

The revised proposal is acceptable in principle and on the basis of amended plans would not harm the listed building or the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and would not harm residential amenity. It would therefore comply with the Council's Local Plan and government planning guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and therefore planning permission and listed building consent should again be granted.

**OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : APPROVE THE GRANT OF FULL PLANNING
PERMISION AND LBC**

Case Officer: Chris Johnston

Recommendation Date: 4.11.24

X *B.S. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council