

PLANNING, HERITAGE IMPACT & DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

**PROPOSAL : CHANGE OF USE OF FORMER BANK TO
PUBLIC HOUSE & FUNCTION ROOM (SUI
GENERIS USE) INCLUDING EXTERNAL &
INTERNAL ALTERATIONS**

**ADDRESS : 83 HAYWOOD STREET, LEEK,
STAFFORDSHIRE, ST13 5JN**

APPLICANT : MRS HOPE

DATE : NOVEMBER 2024 JOB No.: 2024-2928

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INTRODUCTION

This statement is submitted in support of a full planning application for the change of use of a former bank to a public house with associated external and internal alterations at 83 Haywood Street, Leek. The application has been submitted by Sammons Architectural Ltd on behalf of Mrs Hope and is accompanied by drawing numbers 2024-2928-01A, 2024-2928-02B, 2024-2928-03 and a Noise Report undertaken by Peak Acoustics all of which should be read in conjunction with this statement.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site comprises of a two storey red brick terraced building which lies in a ribbon of frontage properties on the north western side of Haywood Street, Leek between the junction of Derby Street and the Aldi Supermarket. To the south west on the opposite side of the highway lies the town's Smithfield Shopping Centre which contains a number of retail and commercial units. Formerly used as the town's Barclays Bank the property has been vacant since the end of September 2022.

For the purposes of the development plan the application site lies within the town's development boundary. It also lies outside of but contiguous with the towns conservation area and is designated as protected primary shopping frontage.

PROPOSAL

This is a full application which seeks consent for the change of use of the building from a bank (class E commercial use) to a public house at ground floor with function room above (sui generis use). In addition to the proposed change of use the application also includes a number of external and internal alterations to facilitate this change.

External works comprise of installation of timber mouldings around the existing ground floor window, removal of existing timber boarding to doorway and provision of new timber doors to the opening along with the provision of a new natural stone step to the pavement. The existing personnel door on the rear of the building, fronting onto the alleyway will also be increased in width to provide an emergency means of escape and the existing steel staircase at first floor level will be removed.

Internally the proposed works comprise of the formation of two new inner entrance lobby's, formation of ground floor disabled w.c., fixed seating, new servery counter, removal of existing and formation of new partition walls to form new kitchen area and toilet facilities at first floor with servery area for function room and provision of secondary glazing.

It is proposed that the public house would open from 12 noon every day until 1am. It is anticipated that 2 full time staff and 5 part time staff would be engaged in the business. Whilst food will be provided for functions there will be no cooking on site and an external catering company will be utilised to provide this service.

PLANNING POLICY

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 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which was originally published on 27th March 2012 and last revised in December 2024 replaced a significant proportion of central government planning policy advice with immediate effect. It is the Government's clear intention that the document should be considered to be a material consideration and as such carries particular weight where development is not addressed by planning policies in the existing Development Plan.

Whilst the recently published NPPF does not change the statutory status of the Development Plan as the starting point for decision making it does provide guidance to LPA's and is a material consideration in determining planning applications. The NPPF confirms that at the heart of the guidance is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (para 11) and that for decision making this means approving development proposals that accord with the Development Plan without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF also sets out requirements in respect of housing delivery and securing high quality design. The following are considered to be the most relevant chapters:-

- Section 2 - Achieving Sustainable Development
- Section 6 - Building a Strong and Competitive Economy
- Section 8 – Communities
- Section 7 - Ensuring the Vitality of Town Centres
- Section 9 - Promoting Sustainable Transport
- Section 11 – Making Effective use of Land
- Section 12 - Achieving Well Designed Places

The Development Plan for the Staffordshire Moorlands comprises of the adopted Local Plan (September 2020) and the Saved Local plan Proposals Map / Settlement Boundaries (1998). The most relevant policies of the adopted Local Plan are considered to be SS1 (Development Principles); SS1a (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development); SS2 SS5 (Towns) SS5a (Leek Sub Area Strategy), DC1 (Design Considerations); C1 (Creating Sustainable Communities), E3 (Existing Employment Areas and Premises, TCR1 (Development in the Town Centres), TCR2 (Primary Shopping Frontages) T1 (Development and Sustainable Transport) and T2 (Other Sustainable Transport Measures). For the sake of brevity these policies are not quoted in full but they are referred to where appropriate in the following section.

ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

The application site is located within the development boundary of Leek. Policy SS2 seeks to focus future growth within the settlement boundary for Leek and to strengthen its role as a service centre.

Local Plan Policy C1 seeks to protect "community facilities" and whilst a bank is not specifically listed within the preamble to the policy it could be considered as such. The preamble to the planning policy CR1 states that such community facilities play an important role in community life in the Staffordshire Moorlands and that the loss of such facilities can have a widespread negative

impact on the community. The application building was formerly used by Barclays Bank. Since its closure in September 2022 it has remained vacant. Prior to its closure an extensive review and consultation was undertaken and a copy of that report has been appended to this planning statement. Whilst it is not intended to reproduce the findings of that report here, it confirmed that its demise was down to changes in the way people did their banking, number of visits had actually reduced whilst at the same time alternative banking options such as telephone and online banking had increased. In addition there had been a fall in the number of people actually using this particular branch and counter transactions had more than halved over the previous 2 year period. The report identified that there was suitable alternative provision in the towns of Hanley and Kidsgrove and that reciprocal agreements were in place within the town with both Natwest and Co-op located just around the corner on Derby Street as well as the Post Office in the High Street. Following its closure Barclays Bank has retained a presence in the town and now operates a reduced service three mornings a week from the council's offices, Moorland House, in Stockwell Street, Leek.

Whilst the loss of the bank was unfortunate the appended report demonstrates that its closure was not a knee jerk reaction to market pressure but a very considered and planned approach to a declining customer base. In addition the introduction of the Barclays Local means that the community facility has indeed been retained, albeit in a reduced capacity, but importantly is still available to meet the needs of residents within the town.

Policy TCR 1 seeks to protect and enhance development in the town centres by positive management. The safeguarding of the retail function at the heart of town centres is considered to be a crucial factor in maintaining their vitality and viability. Policy TCR 2 which deals specifically with primary shopping frontages states that "Development falling with other use classes will only be permitted where it will not create a concentration of non shopping uses and result in an unacceptable change in the retail character of the immediate area or have an adverse effect on the vitality or viability of the town centre." It goes on to state that "any non-A1 use must be complementary to adjacent shopping uses in terms of its operational characteristics." The preamble to the policy provides some useful background in terms of what constitutes a concentration and how widely the assessment must be made. It also recognises that "sometimes non-A1 uses in Primary Shopping Frontages can help contribute towards the vitality and viability of town centres" and that a judgement will need to be made on a case by case basis.

Whilst it is noted that the changes to the uses classes order in 2020 means that A1 uses have now been amalgamated into the more generic commercial use category. It is important to note that at the time the Local Plan was drafted the use of the building as a bank would actually fall within an A2 rather than A1 use. Immediately adjacent to the building to the north lies a chiropractors with a tax consultant, toyshop, and shoe repair / key cutting shop running to the junction with Derby Street. In the opposite direction to the south lies a Thai restaurant, café, jewellers, printing shop, takeaway, vacant retail unit (previously used as an ironmongers), and a carpet shop. In the Smithfield Centre opposite lie the Salvation Army charity shop, convenience store, Albertos Kitchen café, dry cleaners, nail bar, vape shop, florist, double glazing windows and doors retail showroom with a vacant unit on the corner. Accordingly it is not considered that the proposal will result in a loss of retail frontage or a significant break in frontage that it would be detrimental to the vitality and viability of the town centre.

On the basis of the above it is considered that the area is predominantly in commercial uses and that the proposed sui generis use is considered to be appropriate for this town centre location and would contribute positively to the distinctiveness of this area of Leek and would actually contribute to the vitality and viability of the town centre uses as well as result in other positive socio-economic impacts for example job creation.

The application site is ideally positioned within a sustainable location within the town centre and within easy reach of public amenities and services such as shops, cafes, restaurants and employment opportunities as well as being easily accessible to public transport including the town's bus station and within walking distance to several car parks. Accordingly it is considered that the principle of the development is acceptable subject to other material considerations including design, impact on residential amenity and highway safety.

Design & impact upon heritage assets

Policy DC1 refers to design and seeks to secure development of a high quality which is designed to add value to the area to the respect the site and its surroundings. New development should promote a positive sense of place and identify through its scale, density, layout, siting, landscape, character and appearance.

Policy DC2 requires heritage assets and their setting to be enhanced and gives protection to designated and non-designated heritage assets. Whilst not located within it the application site abuts the Leek Conservation Area which was first designated in July 1970. Originally it encompassed the historic shopping centre but has since been extended in 1989, 1994, 2004 and 2013 to include the large mills and the streets of terraced workers' housing and attractive Victorian and Edwardian housing, much influenced by the Arts and Crafts Movement.

A Character Appraisal published in 2017 separated the town into five distinct zones (the application building lies within the eastern zone with Getliffe's Yard and London Mill to the north and the central section to the west).

The core of the Conservation Area is the medieval market town with its church, market place and medieval street pattern formed by Church Street, St. Edward's Street, Derby Street and Stockwell Street. By the 16th century the market place had been reduced to its present size and Sheep Market and Costard Street (now known as Stanley Street) had been created. Like Stockwell Street, Derby Street forms an integral part of the old town. In both cases the earliest buildings cluster towards the western end, while the eastern buildings belong mainly to the 19th century. From the centre of the town Derby Street falls gently towards the Monument, one of England's largest war memorials. Where Derby Street widens out this is framed by the dramatic outline of the former Talbot Hotel, and the simpler shape of the Cattle Market Inn, and flanked to the west by the Saunders Buildings, a fine corner building by Larner Sugden. To the south east of the application site the mills on Haywood Street reflect the hey day of the silk industry, when owners had the money to lavish on more decorative schemes.

The external alterations proposed within the application are minimal. The uncovering of the existing doorway and its reinstatement would reveal a historic and original feature and allow this to be appreciated. The provision of authentic timber mouldings to the large window in the front elevation of the building would further improve its character and appearance. The alterations to the rear of the building would also result in a positive enhancement to the overall design and appearance of the building and the wider setting within which the application building is located including the conservation area. The proposed internal changes which are limited to the provision or alteration of existing timber partitions to form rooms are easily reversible. Overall the proposed changes integrate well with the street scene and will not affect the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and therefore accord with policies DC1 and DC2 of the adopted Local Plan and advice contained within the NPPF.

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.

Upper floors of the neighbouring units are in a mix of commercial and residential use. The unit lies adjacent to a Thai Restaurant with another café and restaurant to the south and south west. In addition a Chinese restaurant and two other drinking establishments are contained within the Smithfield Centre opposite the application site.

Given the nature of the proposed use, it is appropriate to consider potential impacts relating to public amenity, in particular issues relating to noise through the use of amplified music. A noise report undertaken by Peak Acoustics has been submitted in support of the application. The report confirms that subject to mitigation measures namely the provision of internal lobby areas and secondary glazing the proposed development would not raise any adverse impacts in terms of noise. These suggested mitigation measures have been accepted by the applicant and are provided for in the submitted plans. On this basis it is considered that the proposal accords with such requirements in relation to LP Policy DC1 and the NPPF.

Highway Safety

Paragraph 114 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' (paragraph 115 of the NPPF) as is reflected within LP 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 town's bus station and several public car parks are located within walking distance. On street parking is also provided within the vicinity. It is not therefore considered that the lack of car parking raises any concerns for this proposal. Having regard to the above it is concluded that there would be no adverse impact on highway safety and accordingly there is no conflict with LP 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 proposed development would derive a number of positive benefits. It would result in a positive enhancement to the character and appearance within the streetscene and the surrounding area, it would bring a vacant and redundant town centre building back into economic re-use as well as providing a number of modest indirect socio economic benefits, such as job creation, for

the centre of Leek. The proposed use would be compatible with neighbouring land uses and there would be no adverse impact upon residential or public amenity or highway safety. It lies within a very sustainable location close to public transport links and is 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, C1, DC1, and DC2 of the adopted Local Plan 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 the change of use of the commercial property into a sui generis use comprising of a public house at ground floor with function room above. Given the former use of the application building as a bank and having regard to its town centre location it is considered that this would maintain the nature and character of the site and would integrate well and not unduly harm the neighbouring land uses.

AMOUNT

The application building has a floor area of 360 sq metres (Basement 60 sq metres, ground floor 155 sq metres and first floor 145 sq metres). The proposed development would be carried out within the shell of the building without any extension.

LAYOUT

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

SCALE

No alterations to the scale of the application building are proposed as part of this application.

LANDSCAPING

No landscaping is proposed as part of this proposal.

APPEARANCE

Some minor alterations are proposed to the external and internal fabric of the building to facilitate the proposed change of use. These are all modest in nature and would not impact adversely upon the character and appearance of the application building or its wider setting including the conservation area within which it is located.

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.