

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2024/0381
Valid 19/08/2024

1 AND 1A SOUTHFIELDS
WESTFIELDS
LEEK

PROPOSED CONVERSION
FROM 2 FLATS TO ONE
DWELLING.

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

- Principle of development
- Design and visual impact
- Neighbouring amenity
- Highway safety

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The application relates to an end of terrace Victorian redbrick town house within the development boundary of Leek. It is part of 4 traditional properties with accessible via a private road (Westfields). The dwelling benefits from a large garden that looks onto woodlands to the south of the site. The main entrance is taken from the south elevation. It is currently used as two dwellings known as 1 and 1a Southfields Westfields Leek however, the internal arrangement is open. Parking is located to the rear of the property accessible from Westfield road.

The site is within the Leek Conservation Area.

PROPOSAL

Planning permission is sought to convert the building into a 4-bed dwellinghouse, under single household ownership. There would be no external or internal alterations required to achieve this. The back yard would be used as a small outdoor amenity area.

The parking arrangement will be maintained as existing, to the rear of the property.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (Adopted Sept 2020)

SS5 Leek Strategy
H1 New Housing
DC1 Design Considerations
DC2 Historic Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework

Section 5: Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
Section 12: Achieving well-designed places

SITE HISTORY

SMD/1979/0807	Established use certificate for use of dwelling as two self contained flat	Approved
SMD/2024/0027	Proposed conversion from 2 flats to one dwelling	Withdrawn

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 12/11/24

Neighbour consultation period ends: 25/10/24

Press Advert: 6/11/24

Public Comments

Neighbour comments	No representatives received
Leek Town Council Comments	No objection
Staffordshire County Council Highways	No objection
Waste Services	No objection

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development/ Impact to the conservation area

The application site is located within the development boundary of Leek within the Conservation area. Policies SS2, H1 and DC2 are applicable for this application.

Policy SS2 seek to focus future growth within the settlement boundary for Leek and to strengthen its role as a service centre.

Policy H1 identifies the principle of development can be supported if the development provides for high quality, sustainable housing and to which it meets identified housing needs, having regard to the location of the development, the characteristics of the site and the economics of provision.

Policy DC2 of the Local Plan seeks to conserve and where possible enhance heritage assets including their setting in a manner appropriate to their significance. It says that protection of such assets and their setting will be given as set out in the NPPF. Para 213 of the NPPF says that any harm to the significance of a designated asset should require clear and convincing justification. Para 215 says that where harm is judged to be less than substantial, it should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including where appropriate securing its optimum viable use.

In addition to this, LPAs have a statutory duty under the 1990 Act to pay special regard to the desirability of preserving Listed buildings or their setting and that of Conservation Areas.

The proposal would result in the loss of one unit of accommodation which is contrary to the current Planning aims of the Council to provide more housing to address the undersupply as the Council cannot currently demonstrate a five year housing land supply. However, in the case of a historic asset within the Conservation area, consideration should be given to the restoration of its former use as a single dwelling. It is evident from the character of the property, a large Victorian town house, it was intended to serve a large household. The case officer is of the opinion that the loss of one unit will have limited impact to the housing land supply and the benefits of reverting a historic building to its previous use outweigh the need to retain housing numbers.

A heritage statement was provided. It is rudimentary at best. The statement has referred to the Leek Conservation Area Appraisal 2017 which notes that the Victorian property is circa 1900 and is part of an attractive and well-preserved row. Each has a large bay under a forward gable, giving a strong sense of unity. The key features of the property includes the plain brick facades, bay windowed fronts and front doors protected by ornate porches. Given that no proposed works have been proposed, the historic fabric of the building will remain intact.

Internally, the applicant has proposed no changes. The case officer has queried why the internal arrangements are already set up as a single household and not two flats as per its current use. The applicant states that the property was made up of two flats- the ground floor being 1a and the middle and upper floors being a 2nd flat 1b. The property was separated internally via heavy curtains blocking the stairs between the ground and upper floors therefore, there were no structural changes aside from separate utility services. The restoration to one dwelling and the purpose of the planning consent is to provide the necessary evidence to streamline the utility bills of the property.

In view of the above, the conversion of the building to one dwelling is not considered to have any impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area and would sustain the importance of the heritage asset. The proposal would result in the restoration to its previous use prior to change of use of flats in 1979 as well as provide cohesion with the three historic dwellinghouses that it adjoins and is a part of.

Accordingly, the general principle of development and impact to the Conservation area are considered to be acceptable.

Impact to design and neighbouring amenity

Policy DC1 refers to design and seeks to secure development of a high quality which is designed to add value to the area and to respect the site and its surroundings. New development should promote a positive sense of place and identity through its scale, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance. In addition, policy DC1 seeks to secure development that protects amenity, including residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, sunlight, outlook, privacy and soft landscaping.

With regards to the character of the area, the street-scene will remain intact as no external changes are to be made. The restoration to a single household dwelling is deemed more in keeping with the row of dwellings it is part of.

Referring to neighbouring amenity, there would be less scope for overlooking/loss of privacy, noise and disturbance arising from a single household than a two flat units. Therefore, the impact to neighbours will be improved following the changes to the property.

This application is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy DC1 of the Local plan.

Highway Safety

Policy T1 of the Local Plan states that permission will only be granted for development incorporating adequate and satisfactory parking provisions.

The property benefits from off highway parking to the rear of the property. There are no changes to the current parking arrangement which can accommodate parking for 3 vehicles within the curtilage of the property. County Highways has been consulted and raised no objection noting that it will not have a detrimental impact on the adopted highway.

As such, the proposal will not have a detrimental impact on the adopted highway. This application is therefore considered to be in accordance with Section 9 of the NPPF and Policy T1 of the Local Plan.

CONCLUSION

The proposal represents sustainable development. there would be no adverse impact on the visual and residential amenities of the area, the Conservation area and on highway safety, it would comply with the Council's Local Plan and the government planning guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : Approve

Case Officer: Lisa Li

Recommendation Date: 28/01/25

X 

Signed by: Jane Colley Signature

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council

