

Conservation Team Advice

Date: 6th May 2025
Application Ref: SMD/2025/0160 & SMD/2025/0172
Site Address: Natwest, 24 Derby Street, Leek
Proposal:

- Listed building consent for proposed removal of External ATM's, Nightsafe, Signage and reinstate these parts of the façade to match existing. Internal removal of public counters automation machines, digital screens and loose furniture.
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Heritage assets affected:		
Designated Heritage Asset(s):	☒	- Leek Conservation Area - National Westminster Bank – Grade II (listing ref: 1268590)
Non-Designated Heritage Asset(s):	☐	

Conservation Advice

Summary of Significance

The proposal would involve alterations to Natwest Bank, which is a Grade II Listed Building situated in Leek Conservation Area.

Natwest Bank (Grade II) is a purpose-built bank, dating c.1882 and designed by local notable architect William Sugden. The building is constructed in brick with stone dressings in eclectic revival style with jettied upper storey, Ipswich oriel windows, mullioned and transom window. The interior is of high significance with panelling to the main banking hall. The significance of the building derives from its historic association with the development of banking establishments along the high street in the late-19th century, association with local notable architect and high architectural value and integrity.

Leek Conservation Area was designated for its medieval origins, overlaid with Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian buildings. Leek developed as a market town and rapidly expanded with the industrial developments of textiles and brewing from the late-18th century. Typically, buildings are constructed in red brick walling with Staffordshire blue tiles or slate roofing. No. 24 Derby Street makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Assessment and Impact

The proposal would involve internal and external alterations to remove associated banking features.

External alterations

To the front elevation there is currently a fascia sign, projecting sign, two ATMs and a nightsafe, all of which are modern features of no heritage significance. Their removal would not harm the special interest of the Listed Building or character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The application form and supporting statements mention that any holes would be infilled with brickwork or stonework to match the existing façade. In principle, these alterations would not harm the architectural interest of the heritage assets although it would be recommended that a suitably worded condition is added to ensure the detailing of any infill materials is appropriate to the building's historic character.

Internal alterations

The interior of the building is of high architectural interest, with decorative panelling and décor still in situ. There has, however, been modern partitions and fixtures added around these features in the 20th century to facilitate the modern banking use of the building. The proposal seeks to remove these later additions of no heritage value and retain the existing historic décor in situ. In principle, this would not harm the significance of the Listed Building and likely better reveal its internal heritage significance.

Legislation and Policy

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

The local planning authority should have a desirability of preserving the special interest of the Listed Building (s.16 and 66) and preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area (s.72).

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024

In determining applications, local authorities should take account of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation, the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality, the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness (par.210).

Any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within the setting), should require clear and convincing justification (par.213).

Where a proposed development would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use (par.215).

Local Development Framework

Consideration should also be given to the following documents and local development framework policies:

- Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (Adopted 2020) – DC2 The Historic Environment
- Leek Conservation Area Appraisal (2017)

Conclusions and Recommendations

In summary, the proposal would not have a harmful impact on the special interest of the Listed Building nor the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Their special interest would be preserved, which would comply with s.16, 66 and 72 of the Act, Section 16 of the NPPF and policy DC2 of the local development framework. There are no objections to the proposal from a conservation perspective.

For any consent granted, we would suggest the following conditions for the Listed Building Consent and Planning Permission:

- Prior to the removal of the signage, ATMs and nightsafe hereby approved, a detailed specification and samples of the infill materials to be used for the building's restoration shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the Listed Building.

- In relation to the above condition, the works hereby agreed for the building's restoration shall be completed within 1 month following the removal of the signage, ATMs and nightsafe hereby approved.

Reason: To ensure the works take the agreed form envisaged and to preserve the architectural and historic interest of the Listed Building.

Conservation Officer: