

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2025/0109
Valid 25/03/2025

23 – 25 ST EDWARD
STREET
LEEK

PROPOSED CHANGE OF USE
FROM DRINKING
ESTABLISHMENT TO RETAIL.

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

- Town Centre Retail
- Community Facilities
- Neighbours

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

Distinctive and prominent two-storey town centre building at street corner with Stanley Street marking a 'gateway' to the core pedestrianised retail zone. The Stanley Street elevation is classed as 'primary shopping frontage' in the Local Plan.

The building functioned as a popular public house through the 1990s and into the early 2000s. Restaurant dining operated from the first floor. Public house has remained the planning use up to the present time but its opening has been intermittent and more latterly it has been closed for a number of years and the building vacant.

The building is of likely early 19thC date and historically functioned as the Wheatsheaf Inn (p.132 Spirit of Leek II, Walton and Porter 2001).

PROPOSAL

To open as a retail trading venue at ground floor and utilise the first floor as a store / packing area. According to the submitted Heritage Assessment / Planning Statement the change of use will not involve any changes to the external elevations.

No details of signage or advertisement are put forward.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Local Plan (adopted 9th September 2020)

SS1	Development Principles
SS2	Settlement Hierarchy
SS5	Leek Area Strategy
DC1	Design Considerations

DC2	The Historic Environment
E3	Existing Employment Areas / Premises
TCR 1	Development in the Town Centres
TCR 2	Primary Shopping Frontages
T1	Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework (Dec 2024)

Paragraph(s) 1 – 14;

Section(s) 4 – Decision making; 6 – Building a strong and competitive economy; 7 – Ensuring the vitality of town centres; 8 – Promoting healthy and safe communities; 9 – Promoting sustainable transport; 11 – Making effective use of land; 12 – Achieving well designed places; 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Adopted Supplementary Planning Documents/Guidance (SPD/G):

- Space About Dwellings SPG
- Design Principles SPG
- Design Guide SPD adopted 21st February 2018

Local Plan Supporting Evidence Documents:

- Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment (2008)

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

None on recent record

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 22.04.2025

Neighbour consultation period ends: 17.04.2025

Press Advert: 30.04.2025

Public Comments

None

Town / Parish Comments

Leek Town Council – none received

SMDC Historic Conservation Adviser

Desk-based assessment including a review of the submitted Heritage Assessment.

Concludes no technical advice is required.

SCC Highways

Recommends in favour noting that the proposal is for a change of use from a drinking establishment to retail within Leek Town Centre. The previous commercial use generated traffic, parking for staff and customers and deliveries, which will continue take place following the change of use. The duration of customer visits may reduce due to the change given that customers tend to stay longer to socialise at a

drinking establishment. The proposal for the change of use is considered not to cause a detrimental effect on the highway. No objection (SMD/2025/0109).

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

As a primary shopping frontage the proposed change to retail use is supported as a matter of principle (LP/TCR-2).

Design

With no external changes proposed no considerations arise.

Approached up St Edward Street from the south it is important to note that the frontages – especially that on to Stanley Street – are prominent in the Conservation Area street scene.

The mix of brick and extensive stone detailing and boldly prominent windows arched to ground floor, square-topped above and deeply recessed glazing are all to be noted as important elements in this building.

Amenity

There are unlikely to be any adverse implications for any adjacent residential neighbours for example in any adjacent or nearby first floor accommodation – as exists for example at the adjacent 18 Stanley Street.

Highway Safety

As noted in the HA response there may be some cross-over in traffic impacts between the existing and proposed use though the nature of the customer base and contrasts in opening hours will result in a different pattern of daily usage impacts. The location is highly sustainable in transport terms and public transport and nearby off-street parking are both available.

Other Matters

The application includes details of proposed opening hours 10.00am to 16.00 daily including Sundays and Bank Holidays. However it is not judged necessary to impose any particular restriction holding the retail use to these specific timings.

Similarly, a 'retail' planning use covers a range of possible undertakings under the current use class E: Commercial, Business and Service uses. Again, given the town centre location this is not foreseen as problematic particularly given the range and nature of nearby premises.

Under Part 7 of Schedule 2 to GPDO (2015) permitted development rights for alterations to commercial, business or service premises are specifically not permitted in a Conservation Area (A.1(e) – article 2(3) land).

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

No adverse implications are identified and the development can be welcomed as bringing a much-needed functional use to an important street scene building currently vacant within the Leek Conservation Area.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : **Approve**

Case Officer: Arne Swithenbank

Recommendation Date: 19.05.2025

X *B.J. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council