

## Conservation Team Advice

**Date:** 19<sup>th</sup> May 2025  
**Application Ref:** SMD/2025/0021 & SMD/2025/0015  
**Site Address:** Well Street Mill, Well Street, Leek  
**Proposal:** Site conversion to 17 apartments

| Heritage assets affected:                |                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Designated Heritage Asset(s):</b>     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cross Street Mills – Grade II (listing ref: 1268622)</li> <li>London Mill – Grade II (listing ref: 1268663)</li> <li>Leek Conservation Area</li> </ul> |
| <b>Non-Designated Heritage Asset(s):</b> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |                                                                                                                                                                                               |

## Conservation Advice

### Summary of Significance

The proposal would involve alterations to part of Cross Street Mills, which is a Grade II Listed Building. This site is situated in Leek Conservation Area and within the vicinity of another Grade II Listed Building.

Cross Street Mills (Grade II) is a silk mill complex dating c.1850-60 with later additions and alterations. The principal Cross Street Mill is constructed in red brick, with blue brick and stone dressings and a mixture of slate and tiled roofs. This part of the mill complex is built in a Free Classical style with high quality architectural detailing and prominent visual position along the street. The Well Street Mill building is situated to the rear of the complex, facing along Well Street, and is 4-storeys with a 2-storey ancillary building at the front. The Well Street building forms part of the proposal and is constructed in red brick walling with blue brick bands and tiled roofs, but is less ornate than the Cross Street building. The significance of both parts of the mill complex derives from the historic association with the rapid expansion of silk and textile production in Leek in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, uniform appearance typical of industrial buildings, retention of historic fabric, detailing and plan form and prominence within the town.

Leek Conservation Area was designated for its medieval origins as a market town and growth in silk and textile production and brewing industries from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The area is characterised by its medieval planned settlement origins, overlaid with 18<sup>th</sup> to



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20<sup>th</sup> century buildings, predominant construction in bricks and gritstone with Staffordshire blue tiles and eclectic mix of architectural styles illustrative of the different phases of development. This part of the Conservation Area is typified by the former mill complexes which are dominating buildings within the streetscene and are illustrative of that industrial character in this part of the Conservation Area.



**Fig.1** c.1879 OS map (reprinted 1914) [online] National Library of Scotland



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**Fig.2** c.1940 OS map [online] National Library of Scotland

### Assessment and Impact

The principle of converting the former mill building to residential use would cause a degree of harm to the significance of the Listed Building as it would result in the loss of historic associative values of its former industrial use. The internal subdivision and associated alterations to the fabric would also diminish some of the architectural interest of the building. Nevertheless, it is recognised that these heritage values have already been diminished and harmed through the conversion of the building to staff accommodation for Alton Towers in the mid-2000s (application refs: SMD/2007/0450 & SMD/2007/0449).

This proposal seeks permission for further harmful alterations to the historic fabric, such as replacement windows. But it also seeks some mitigation of the previous harmful works, such as the infill of the lift shaft installed and replacement of the modern link building. On balance, the principle of this proposed scheme would not cause further heritage harm to the significance of the Listed Building than what has

previously been implemented. There may be a minor degree of heritage harm to the Listed Building setting and appearance of the Conservation Area arising from external works, such as the construction of a bin and bike storage, as these features would be quite visible from the public domain and impact some of the visual appreciation of the principal building.

Some technical details have been provided for the windows on dwg no. A105 Rev 1, however, it is unclear from the submission what extent of windows require replacing. In addition, the level of technical details provided in this drawing are not sufficient. A sectional drawing of the window and technical drawing (usually 1:20 or 1:10 scale) would be sufficient to demonstrate the technical detailing of any window replacement. It is considered that the details could be agreed via a suitably worded condition.

Overall, from a conservation perspective, it is considered that the building has been vacant for a number of years and this proposal seeks to secure the optimum viable use for the designated heritage asset (par.215 of NPPF).

## **Legislation and Policy**

### *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*

The local planning authority should have a desirability of preserving the setting and special interest of the Listed Buildings (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 substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, permission should be refused unless it can be demonstrated that the level of harm is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh the harm or all of the criteria in par.214 of the NPPF are met.

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**

The proposal would likely result in a degree of harm to the special interest of the Listed Building through loss of historic plan form and subdivision and potential loss of historic fabric. This would be contrary to s.16 and 66 of the Act. There would also be a minor degree of harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, which would be contrary to s.72 of the Act. With reference to the planning policies, this would be 'less than substantial harm' to the designated heritage assets (par.215 of NPPF and policy DC2 of the local development framework). As set out above, there is clear and convincing justification for the works (par.213 of NPPF) as it would help secure the long-term conservation and optimum viable use for the building (par.215 of NPPF). There are no objections to the proposal from a conservation perspective.

For any consent granted, we would suggest the following conditions:

- Prior to the commencement of any works to windows, a detailed condition survey and schedule of works, detailing the proposed repairs and any replacement windows, shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall thereafter be carried out only in accordance with the approved details.

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

- In relation to the above condition and notwithstanding the details on the submitted 'Window Schedule' (dwg no. A105 Rev 1), specific details of any new windows, including details of their design, specification, method of opening, fixing and finish, in the form of drawings and sections of no less than 1:20 scale shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall be carried out only in accordance with the approved window details.

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

- No works shall be commenced in respect of the features identified below, until details of their design, specification, fixing and finish in the form of drawings or

manufacturer's specifications shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall thereafter be carried out only in accordance with the approved details.

External doors and their immediate surroundings

Details of any new heads and cills

Rooflights

Rainwater goods

Soil and vent pipes

Extractor vents

Flues

Meter boxes

Airbricks

Smoke vents

Replacement fire escape

Alterations to boundary treatments

External lighting

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

- In relation to the above conditions, trickle vents shall not be inserted into the windows and doors hereby permitted.

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

- Prior to any re-roofing, samples or detailed specifications of any new roof tiles to be used shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall be carried out only in accordance with the approved details.

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

- Prior to the demolition of the link building, specific details and samples (upon request) of external facing materials to be used in the replacement link building shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall be carried out only in accordance with the approved details.

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

- Prior to the commencement of internal works, a schedule of works specifying proposed repairs, alterations and upgrades to internal floors, ceilings, walls, columns and beams, shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall thereafter be carried out only in accordance with the approved details.

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

**Conservation Officer**