

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council
Planning Department
Via email

20 May 2025

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: SMD/2025/0225 | The Nicholson Institute, Stockwell Street, Leek, ST13 6DW (Grade II*, Conservation Area, *William Larnar Sugden*, 1882-84 with later alterations). Application for internal and external alterations.

Thank you for consulting the Victorian Society on this application. Having considered the proposal carefully, we **object** to these plans in their current form.

Built in 1882-1884 by *William Larnar Sugden*, The Nicholson Institute is a Grade II*-listed building making it of exceptional national significance and special interest. *Sugden* (1850-1901) was a widely renowned architect of the period, designing many civil and institutional buildings including schools, co-operative societies and banks.

The Nicholson Institute is currently used as an important community hub, housing a museum, library and art gallery. It also has space for artists' workshops which form a key part of this application.

The applicant seeks permission for works to the interior and exterior of a Grade II* building. While the majority of works do not represent much harm to the building, other works to windows, doors and external fabric do. The Society raises concerns that these changes have not been fully assessed, and the application is not accompanied by an adequate heritage statement for a building of this importance (Grade II*). There has been insufficient clear and convincing justification for the works to windows and exterior fabric, which are the most likely to harm the character of a listed building. The NPPF is very clear for the need for an adequate assessment of impacts and for clear and convincing justification for any alterations to a listed building (2024, paras. 212-215).

The Society strongly urges your Authority refuse this application until this critical aspect of planning policy is fulfilled. I would be grateful if you could inform the Victorian Society of your decision in due course.

Yours faithfully

Northern Conservation Adviser