

## Conservation Team Advice

**Date:** 26<sup>th</sup> June 2025  
**Application Ref:** SMD/2025/0108  
**Site Address:** Blakemore and Chell, New Street, Leek  
**Proposal:** Replacement of Windows and Doors (retrospective) 2a - 8  
 New Street Leek ST13 6EB

| Heritage assets affected:                |                                     |                                                                          |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Designated Heritage Asset(s):</b>     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leek Conservation Area</li> </ul> |
| <b>Non-Designated Heritage Asset(s):</b> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |                                                                          |

## Conservation Advice

### Summary of Significance

The proposal would be situated in Leek Conservation Area, which was designated for the area's origins as a medieval market town, which later grew with the industrial expansion of the town as a result of textile manufacture and brewing industries. Predominantly buildings date from the Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian period and are constructed in a dark reddish-orange brickwork with pitched and hipped Staffordshire blue tile or slate roofs. Typically, buildings are 2- and 3-storeys with some grander buildings, such as churches and public buildings, dominating the skyline.

The site forms a row of terraces immediately adjacent to the New Street mill complex, both of which are visible on the late-19<sup>th</sup> century mapping (Fig.1). Clemensha Brothers & Birch Ltd – a silk and cotton manufacturer – moved into the mill buildings c.1907, part of which later burnt down in 1965. The remaining part of the complex and the row of terraces make a positive contribution to the industrial and urban character of this part of the Conservation Area. The terrace is illustrative of urban vernacular housing stock in Leek during a period of industrial growth.



**Fig. 1** c.1899 OS map [online] (National Library of Scotland)

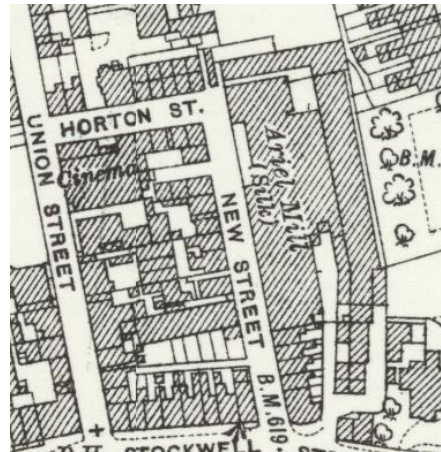


**Fig. 2** c.1925 OS map [online] (National Library of Scotland)

### Assessment and Impact

The proposal seeks consent for the retention of replacement windows and doors at no.2a-8 New Street.

#### Replacement windows

Prior to the commencement of works, no.2-4 had historic timber sliding sashes which were a mixture of 8-over-8 and 6-over-6 design. From streetview imagery (c.2015), these appear to be historic or very authentic replicas of the traditional craftsmanship usually seen in early- to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century sash windows. No.6-8, on the other hand, had modern inappropriate upvc windows which were stormproof and a mixture of top- and bottom-hung casements with sandwiched glazing bars and projecting trickle vents.

An Article 4 Direction was introduced in Leek Conservation Area in 2013, so it is likely that the replacements at no.6-8 were ‘permitted development’ at the time as they appear to have been in situ prior to 2009 streetview imagery. However, the timber sashes at no.2-4 were in situ after the Article 4 designation.

The replacement windows are flush upvc windows with sandwiched glazing bars and projecting trickle vents, coloured black. The flush fitting style creates a depthless visual effect to the streetscene. The bulkiness and proportions of the frames are not reflective of the typical craftsmanship of period properties in Leek Conservation Area. In addition, the sandwiched glazing bars and projecting trickle vents are overtly modern features.

It is noted that the supporting statement illustrates other examples of upvc windows in the vicinity, but these are not directly comparable as they may already be ‘permitted development’ or may be unauthorised alterations after the designation of the Article 4 Direction. The loss of historic or good replicas at no.2-4 is harmful to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the replacement with a modern inappropriately detailed upvc replacement window is also harmful as it diminishes the architectural significance of the designated area.

### Replacement doors

The front doors facing New Street have also been replaced with black upvc doors with a 4-panelled effect. It is noted on streetview c.2015 (after the Article 4 Direction was designated) that the doors to no.2-4 were black timber 6-panel timber doors and no.6-8 were boarded up. Whilst the panelled proportions of the door are not original or historic, there has been an attempt to replicate the detailing of a traditional timber panelled door. However, the use of upvc is unsympathetic to the Conservation Area as it is not reflective of the traditional historic architectural detailing for which the area was designated.

### **Legislation and Policy**

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

The local planning authority should have a desirability of 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 result in a minor degree of harm to the overall character and appearance of the Conservation Area. This would fail to satisfy the provisions of s.72 of the Act. With reference to the planning policies, this would be 'less than substantial harm' to the designated heritage asset (par.215 of NPPF and policy DC2 of the local development framework). There would be no heritage-related public

benefits arising from the proposal and it is not clear how the proposal would achieve the optimum viable use for the building (par.215 of NPPF) as their continued use as a dwellinghouses could have still been secured with a more sympathetic design and palette of materials. Whilst it is recognised that the windows at no.6-8 were unsympathetic design prior to the works commencing, the Conservation Area is designated for its enhancement as well as its preservation (s.69 of the Act) and this could have been an opportunity to improve their design. It is regrettable that the works have been completed prior to the submission of the application as this has limited the ability to secure a better design in the determination of the application. We object to the proposal from a conservation perspective and recommend it is refused.

**Conservation Officer:**