

Conservation Team Advice

Date: 8th July 2025
Application Ref: SMD/2024/0509
Site Address: The Old Court House, High Street, Leek
Proposal: Proposed Change of Use of use / conversion of un-occupied first and second floor accommodation into 9 residential units

Conservation Advice – Amendments

Assessment and Impact

These comments are based upon the following amended plans received:

- *Typical Window Details & Schedule (dwg no. AL24 Rev B)*
- *Elevations ‘as proposed’ (dwg no. AL19 Rev B)*
- *Elevations ‘as proposed’ (dwg no. AL18 Rev B)*

Previous conservation comments (dated 13/02/25) suggested some amendments to the design of the proposed replacement windows and an amended schedule has, subsequently, been provided. The amended window schedule shows that the leaded light detailing would be applied to the glazing and the horns have been removed. Overall, the amended detailing has addressed previous conservation suggestions and is more sympathetic to the historic character of the building.

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 proposed development would still result in a degree of harm to the Conservation Area through the loss of traditional window detailing and new smoke vent which would fail to satisfy the provisions of s.72 in 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), but this would likely be at the lower end of the scale of harm (subject to the window design). There is likely public benefits arising from the scheme which would balance or outweigh this level of heritage harm and there is clear justification for the need for fire attenuation measures. Overall, there are no objections from a conservation perspective to the proposed amendments.

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

1. No external trickle vents shall be installed in any new or replacement windows hereby approved.

Reason: To preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

2. No development shall be commenced in respect of the features identified below, until details of their design, in the form of manufacturers specifications or drawings at a scale of not less than 1:20 have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the local authority. Development thereafter shall be undertaken and retained for the lifetime of the development in accordance with the approved details.
 - i. External doors
 - ii. Colour of replacement windows
 - iii. Dormer details
 - iv. Vents and flues
 - v. Heads and cills for new windows
 - vi. Rooflight details

- vii. Any new rooftiles (for dormers and infill rooflights)
- viii. Smoke vent details (inc. external finish and specification)
- ix. Any cladding

Reason: Insufficient details of these matters have been submitted with the application and to ensure the development preserves the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Conservation Officer: