

Conservation Team Advice

Date: 14th August 2025
Application Ref: SMD/2025/0347
Site Address: 21 Russell Street, Leek
Proposal: Proposed single storey extension, to create an Orangery

Heritage assets affected:		
Designated Heritage Asset(s):	☒	Leek Conservation Area
Non-Designated Heritage Asset(s):	☐	

Conservation Advice

Summary of Significance

Leek Conservation Area was designated for its medieval origins as a market town, which later expanded in the 18th and 19th centuries as a result of the growth in industries such as textile manufacture and brewing. Buildings are typically 2- and 3-storeys, constructed in red brick walling and plain tile or slate roofs. This part of the Conservation Area is the commercial core, with predominantly Georgian and Victorian buildings laid out in a tightly knit form along the street. No.21 Russell Street makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area as it is illustrative of the urban vernacular terraces constructed in the 19th century.

Assessment and Impact

The proposal would involve a 1-storey orangery extension to the rear of 21 Russell Street, which forms part of a 19th century terrace. The extension would be a flat roof construction with a projecting lantern roof, finished in render with a brick plinth and black fascia boards. The extension would be approx. 3.6m (H – including the lantern rooflight) x 4.8m (L) x 2.9m (D).

Typically, residential buildings within Leek Conservation Area are characterised by their traditional pitched or hipped roofs, constructed in brick walling and tile or slate roofs. There are some historic flat roof buildings within the town, but these are usually on industrial buildings of a different scale and character to the development site. Russell Street is a linear street, with groups of buildings of varying character and design. However, the southern end, is characterised by small groups of pitched roof terraces with uniform fenestration.

There are some examples of render within Leek Conservation Area, but these are only a very small proportion of buildings and render does not form part of the overriding

character and appearance. In addition, render does not relate to the historic construction of the principal building which is faced in brickwork.

Whilst the proposed extension would be subservient to the height of the building, its inappropriate flat roof form and palette of materials would result in a stark visual contrast to the principal building and the surrounding built heritage. The proposed orangery design would be more ostentatious to the overriding vernacular character and appearance of the terrace.

The extension would be situated to the rear of the property, but this elevation is still quite visually prominent. It is noted that the Heritage Statement outlines that the extension would be visible from areas not within the Conservation Area. However, irrespective of this, the proposal would negatively impact the *character* of the Conservation Area which is an intrinsic quality that is not wholly dependent upon visibility from public vantage points. The proposal would, because of its inappropriate design and palette of materials, detract from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

The boundary of Leek Conservation Area is quite extensive, so the proposed development would likely result in minor harm to the overall significance of the Conservation Area (par.215 of NPPF). Nevertheless, there is no clear and convincing justification for this level of harm (par.213 of NPPF). From a conservation perspective, a more sympathetic design to a single-storey rear extension – such as a lean-to finished in bricks and tile/slate roof – would either reduce or remove the heritage harm.

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 character and appearance of the overall 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 significance of the designated heritage asset (par.215 of NPPF and policy DC2 of the local development framework). There does not appear to be clear and convincing justification for this level of harm (par.213 of NPPF) and there would be no heritage-related public benefits arising from the proposal that would balance or outweigh the harm (par.215 of NPPF). It is considered that amendments to the design could reduce or remove the heritage harm. It would, therefore, be recommended that the design is altered to a lean-to extension and the materials are altered to be more sympathetic. Without the suggested revisions, we object to the proposal from a conservation perspective and recommend it is refused.

Conservation Officer: