

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2025/0178
Valid 29/04/2025

NICHOLSON WAR
MEMORIAL MONUMENT
DERBY STREET
LEEK

ADVERTISEMENT CONSENT
FOR 6NO VINYL BANNERS TO
BE FIXED TO 6NO LAMP
POSTS TO PROMOTE THE
CENTENARY OF THE
NICHOLSON WAR MEMORIAL

(ADVERTISEMENT CONSENT)

MAIN ISSUES

- The impact on the character and appearance of a Conservation Area
- the impact on highway safety

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The site is on the eastern edge of Leek Town Centre and is within the Conservation Area. It comprises a stone block clock tower war memorial facing the end of Derby Street to the west and which is adjacent to a section of Ball Haye Street (to the west) which is also included in the application site along with paved areas next to the road and surrounding the memorial tower. Fountain Street is to the north and Ashbourne Road is to the south. There are building frontages to the east.

PROPOSAL

This is an Advertisement Consent planning application to place six individual vinyl banner type advertisements to six of the lamp-posts within the site, one for each. Two of the lamp-posts are in "front" of the war memorial (west) (LC4 and LC5), two are either side of the memorial to the north (LC6) and south (LC3) and two lie on the opposite side of Ball Haye Street further to the west, the one to the south (LC2) being on the corner of Derby Street and the other about 25-30m to the north of it (LC1). The banners are shown on amended plans which reduce the size of them from the original plans submitted. These would be 1.7m in height by 0.4m in width (reduced from 2.0m and 0.6m respectively). They would be placed a minimum height of 3.0m from the ground and would be attached to the lamp-posts by metal brackets and mounting arms painted a colour to match the lamp-posts (dark green). The lamp-posts have a traditional "Victorian" design.

The amended drawings also show the corrected position of one of the lamp-posts to the west of the road (LC1) which was shown in the original drawings as being too far south.

The banners are required in connection with the Centenary of the Nicholson War Memorial. An amended Planning & Heritage Statement was submitted which gives more details on the background to the proposal as follows:

They are to be displayed to support and promote Leek and its Heritage in the Council's asset, the Nicholson War Memorial Monument in its Centenary year while also embracing the future and the diverse and colourful communities which make Leek a culturally dynamic vibrant town, and to also encompass the richness and skill of the Town's embodiment of the arts, through Buxton & Leek (formerly School of Art), the Foxlowe Arts Centre, the artisan Markets and the local independent shops which make Leek a unique place to visit for tourists.

Lighting columns LC1, LC3 and LC6 are to have the banners fitted in Spring 2026 to the lighting columns for permanent use.

Lighting columns LC2, LC4 and LC5 are only to be brought into use between August 20th - September 30th, to display the banners during the Centenary Celebrations of the War Memorial. Upon the 1st of October, these banners will be removed.

The proposed banners are required to promote and support the Grade 2 listed Nicholson Memorial Monument for a celebration of its 100 years as a landmark of the town of Leek.

The 6no banners are to be designed professionally by local graphic designers using artwork commissioned by the War Memorial Committee. Opportunities for local artists to submit proposals for the artwork have been publicised.

As before stated, 3 lighting columns LC1, LC3 and LC6 are to have the banners and fixing brackets / arms and banners fitted in Spring 2026 whereas the Lighting columns LC2, LC4 and LC5 will only have the fixing brackets / arms / banners fitted prior to the 20th August and removed on the 1st October. The banners will be fitted to purpose designed and manufactured brackets painted to match the colour of the lighting columns. The proposal is for the banners to remain on the brackets fixed to the lighting columns until January 2027 at which point different banners will be allowed to be interchanged seasonally or when Leek Town Council promotes other local community events.

Examples of the artwork/advertisement designs for the banners have been provided in the Planning & Heritage Statement but no actual exact designs to be used have been put forward.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Local Plan (Adopted September 2020)

SS5 – Leek Area Strategy
SS11 – Churnet Valley Area Strategy
DC1 – Design Considerations
DC2 – The Historic Environment
TCR1 – Development in the Town Centres

National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)

Sections 7 (Town Centres), 12 (Design) and 16 (Historic Environment).

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

None.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 24.6.25

Neighbour notification expiry date: 24.6.25

Press advert: 8.5.25.

Public Comments

None.

Parish/Town Council comments

None.

Highways Authority

No objection.

Conservation Officer

In response to the original plans submitted:

The war memorial makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area as it is a landmark feature within the town centre and is a designed visual bookend when looking down Derby Street.

The banners would be situated at a high level and would be quite visually prominent. From a conservation and design perspective, banner signage can often create quite a cluttered appearance to the streetscene, particularly when multiple banners are used as it can dilute the effectiveness of the advertisement messaging and be a distraction to the surrounding character. Additionally, in this instance, the proposed banners would be situated in very close proximity to the memorial and would likely interfere with and distract from the appreciation of the architectural interest and the memorial's designed prominence.

It is also not clear what colour the proposed mounting arms would be as the visuals in the Planning and Heritage Impact Statement show a white bar, which would contrast with the colour of the main columns.

Whilst it is recognised that the proposed banners are initially intended for the promotion of the centenary of memorial's construction, the proposal sets out that the

banners would later will be used on an ad-hoc basis to promote local events. Therefore the proposal would have a degree of permanence in terms of its visual impact.

It would be suggested that consideration is given to alternative lighting columns for the banners, in less sensitive locations. From a conservation perspective, it would be recommended that the banners are not included on LC2, LC4 and LC5 as these are in direct and important sightlines of the Listed Building and an important focal point in the Conservation Area.

The proposal would result in a minor-moderate degree of harm to the setting of the Listed Building and minor harm to the overall character and appearance of the Conservation Area. This would be contrary to s.66 and 72 of the Act. With reference to 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). At this stage, we cannot support the proposal from a conservation perspective and recommend that the number of banners is reduced and/or the proposed banners immediately in front of the memorial are relocated to minimise the visual impact on the designated heritage assets. In addition, further information on the colour/finish of the mounting arms for the banners and an accurate site location plan would be required.

Historic England

On the basis of the information available to date, in our view you do not need to notify or consult us on this application under the relevant statutory provisions.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Policies DC2 and Section 16 of the NPPF require development (which can include Advertisements) to protect and enhance the character and appearance of Conservation Areas and not affect the setting of listed structures, such as the Nicholson War Memorial clock tower which is Grade II listed.

The Conservation Officer was concerned about the impact of the banner advertisements as shown on the original plans as three of them would interfere with the main vista of the memorial tower which is along Derby Street towards the east, hence leading to a degree of harm to the setting of the Grade II listed structure and the overall Conservation Area. It was therefore requested that the banners proposed for lamp-posts 2 (at the end of Derby Street), 4 and 5 (the ones immediately to the front of the memorial) be removed from the application. The Conservation Officer also asked for details of the colour of the mounting brackets and arms and pointed out that one of the lamp-posts was shown in an incorrect position.

In response to this, a meeting was undertaken attended by the Case Officer, the Conservation Officer and the applicants. It was agreed that the banners intended for the affected lamp-posts would be only temporary in connection with the centenary of the war memorial later this summer and would be removed as soon as the

centenary events had finished (on 1st October 2025) and on this basis the proposal has been deemed acceptable.

Amended plans were subsequently received which slightly reduce the size of the banners and show that the fixing brackets and arms would be dark green to match the lamp-posts which is also acceptable.

For the remaining three lamp-posts which are not considered to interfere with the main views of the memorial, there is no objection to the permanent use of these for banner advertisements of the size shown in the drawings. It is understood these will showcase/celebrate local cultural offerings and events in the area separate to the war memorial celebrations but will be used periodically for different banners when required.

Conditions will be added requiring the removal of the banners and fixing brackets and arms by 1st October for lamp-posts 2, 4 and 5, the removal of the fixing brackets for the other three lamp-posts when these are not in use for displaying advertisements and a further condition requiring details of the particular design/visuals of the advertisements before they are installed (especially given that the ones for lamp-posts 1,3 and 6 will be interchangeable with new banners intended to be installed in January 2027).

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

The proposal as amended would not lead to significant harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area or the setting of the Grade II Listed war memorial structure on site. In this respect, the proposal would comply with the Council's Local Plan and the government planning guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : APPROVE

Case Officer: Chris Johnston
Recommendation Date: 16.7.25

X 

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council