

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2025/0398
Valid 01/09/2025

14 MARKET PLACE
LEEK

**CONVERSION OF FIRST AND
SECOND FLOORS TO CREATE
THREE, ONE BEDROOMED
FLATS AND TWO STOREY
SIDE EXTENSION**

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

- Principle of development
- Impact on Conservation Area – Character and Appearance
- Impact on Neighbour Amenity
- Highway Impact

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The application site is located to the south of the Leek Town Centre Market Place at land behind 14 Market Place, Leek. The ground floor is currently being used as a hairdresser with its most recent former use being that of a travel agent. The upper floors are currently unused but have benefitted from previous planning consents for their conversion to residential accommodation. The site is located within Leek Town Centre and forms part of the Leek Conservation Area.

Leek Conservation Area, which was designated for its medieval origins overlaid with Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian buildings. Typically, buildings are 2- and 3-storeys, constructed in red brick walling and Staffordshire blue tiles or slates. One focal point of the town centre is Market Place, with buildings overlaid on the burgage plots overlooking the market area. Although there have been some alterations, no.14 Market Place makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

PROPOSAL

The proposal represents a full planning application seeking planning permission for the change of use of upper floors to create 3no one-bedroom flats and two storey side extension. This is a new application for 'identical' development to that previously approved in 2014 (SMD/2014/0559) and again in 2017 (SMD/2017/0678). The development has not yet been carried out and, unimplemented, both permissions lapsed. This application seeks a renewal of the consent.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Local Plan (adopted 9th September 2020)

SS1 Development Principles
SS2 Settlement Hierarchy

SS5 Leek Town Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations
DC2 The Historic Environment
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

SMD/2017/0678 Conversion of first and second floors to create three one-bedroom flats and a two-storey side extension. APPROVED.

SMD/2017/0317 Erection of external staircase. APPROVED

SMD/2014/0681 Alterations to the front elevation. APPROVED.

SMD/2014/0559 Conversion of first and second floors to create three one-bedroom flats and a two-storey side extension. APPROVED.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 13th Oct 2025

Neighbour consultation period ends: 13th Oct 2025

Press Advert: 15th Oct 2025

Public Comments

None

Town / Parish Comments

Leek Town Council: No objection

Staffordshire County Council Highways

Given the site's central (sustainable) location, its accessibility to nearby services and facilities, which include good public transport links, I do not believe the lack of car parking provision is a material consideration for this application and therefore have no objection

SMDC Conservation Officer

No Objection

In summary, the proposed external alterations would likely have a minor harmful impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area as a result of the inappropriate window opening mechanism design and the subdivision of the bay window. This would fail to satisfy s.72 of the Act. With reference to the planning policies, this would likely be 'less than substantial harm to the designated heritage asset (par.215 of NPPF and policy DC2 of the local development framework), but at the lower end of the scale of harm. There are no objections to the principle of the proposal from a conservation perspective, but it would be recommended that the following is altered/provided to remove any heritage harm:

- Subdivision of the bay window with the replacement, to create the illusion of a traditional transom detail
- Alteration to tilt-in opening windows on the front elevation
- Further specific details on the frosted glazing

Environmental Health

No response within consultation period.

Waste Collection

No response within consultation period.

Severn Trent

No response within consultation period.

Comments made in respect of previous applications suggest no objection because the development would have a minimal impact on the public sewerage system.

OFFICER COMMENTS**Principle of Development**

For the purposes of the adopted SMDC Local Plan, the site is in the Leek Town Centre settlement where area strategy policy SS5 applies. Generally, the policy supports the provision housing where it would not be detrimental to Leek's special character and heritage. The ground floor retail offering, currently a hair salon, would be retained and the development would affect only upper floors. The front of the premises is not, in any event, subject to the Local Plan's 'primary shopping frontage' designation. The vitality and viability of the town centre would not be adversely affected.

Further, housing applications are to be viewed positively in view of the 5-year under supply unless there would be significant and demonstrable harm when viewing the framework as a whole. Considered afresh, following the 2017 determination, the proposed development is still considered to be acceptable in view of current local and national planning policy and would contribute towards the provision of much needed housing within the district. There have been no material changes in planning policy or circumstances on site since the previous approval.

Impact on the Conservation Area

The proposal would involve the conversion of the upper floors to three flats. The proposed development would involve some external alterations to the first floor bay window and installation of a window to a side elevation at the rear.

The rear of the property, where the side extension and new windows and doors would be provided, is completely enclosed by other building form and concealed from the car park behind and the wider environment of the Conservation Area.

At the front, the alterations to the bay window would involve installation of two top-hung opening windows to the centre of the bay. The Council's conservation officer recommends that the design of this is slightly altered to be more in keeping with the architectural interest and character of the building and the surrounding built heritage. Particularly, it is recommended that a transom detail is installed across the whole bay window and that windows should be altered to tilt-in openers.

There are no concerns with the proposed frosting to the bay window and the new window to the side elevation, although it is recommended that further detailing is provided.

The proposed external alterations would likely have a minor harmful impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area as a result of the inappropriate window opening mechanism design and the subdivision of the bay window. This would fail to satisfy s.72 of the Act. With reference to the planning policies, this would likely be 'less than substantial harm to the designated heritage asset (par.215 of NPPF and policy DC2 of the local development framework), but at the lower end of the scale of harm.

With revision to the window alterations that are proposed and control over the detail, the alterations and impacts are considered to be acceptable.

Amenity Impacts

The flats would be provided within the town centre within proximity of public houses that regularly offer live entertainment and karaoke.

Environmental Health officers have not made comment within the consultation period. However, it is of note that the previous 2017 permission was subject to a condition that required the submission and approval of a scheme to protect occupants from excessive external noise. It would be prudent for any new or renewed permission to be subject to such a condition.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

The change of use would contribute to housing supply and would not adversely affect the vitality and viability of the town centre. The proposal would likely have a minor harmful impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area as a result of the inappropriate window opening mechanism design and the subdivision of the bay window. With reference to the planning policies, this would likely be 'less than substantial harm to the designated heritage asset (par.215 of NPPF and policy DC2 of the local development framework), but at the lower end of the scale of harm. Subject to conditions requiring additional control and detail over alterations to the first floor bay window, the proposal is considered acceptable.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : APPROVE

Case Officer: Ben Hurst

Recommendation Date:

X 

Signed by: Jane Curley

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council

