

Conservation Team Advice

Date: 23rd February 2026
Application Ref: SMD/2025/0375
Site Address: Land off Broad Street, Leek
Proposal: Erection of 'Drive Thru' Coffee Shop (Use Class E) with a loading area, car parking, 'drive thru' lane, hard and soft landscaping; and other associated works

Conservation Advice – Amendments

Assessment and Impact

Previous conservation comments (dated 14th January 2026) raised concerns with the design and palette of materials of the proposed development.

These comments are based upon the following amended plans / further information received:

- *Heritage Statement (dated January 2026)*
- *Illustrative CGI (dwg no. 0560(P)134A)*
- *Proposed Site Plan (dwg no. 0535(P)103 Rev C)*

The updated site plan indicates a change to the proposed boundary treatments, although this is not shown on the illustrative CGI. The boundary would consist of a low brick wall with metal railings, approx. 1.2m in height. This would be an improvement on the previous proposed timber fencing rail design and more in keeping with the surrounding character.

However, the revised site plan and supporting Heritage Statement do not alter conservation comments regarding the design and palette of materials of the proposed new building. The coffee shop building would remain a contemporary semi-industrial design, of which there are other examples of this exact design placed elsewhere in the country. Its homogenous design would diminish the unique built character of Leek, notably diminishing and distracting from the architectural interest of the surrounding built heritage to the development site.

As stated in previous conservation comments, it is unclear why there is a proposed projecting signage tower and why the proposed palette of materials could not be altered to assimilate better with the surrounding built heritage. The further information has not removed the level of 'less than substantial harm' (par.215 of NPPF) previously identified nor provided clear and convincing justification for the level of harm (par.213 of NPPF).

Legislation and Policy

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

The local planning authority should have a desirability of preserving the setting and special interest of the Listed Building (s.66).

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

Conclusions and Recommendations

Whilst the proposed alterations to the boundary treatments would be a slight visual improvement, the rest of the proposed development would still have a jarring visual impact on the setting of the surrounding designated heritage assets. It is considered that the amended drawings and further information have not altered the level of heritage harm nor provided the clear and convincing justification for this harm (par.215 & par.213 of NPPF and policy DC2 of the Local Development Framework). We maintain an objection from a conservation perspective and still recommend the following:

- Change of palette of materials
- Removal / reduction in height of signage tower

Conservation Officer: Megan Atkinson