

PLANNING, HERITAGE IMPACT & DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

**PROPOSAL : EXTERNAL ALTERATIONS TO BUILDING
AND SHOP FRONT**

ADDRESS : 14 BATH STREET, LEEK, ST13 6JH

APPLICANT : LITTLE LUXURIES HEALTH & BEAUTY

DATE : MARCH 2026 JOB No.: 2026-3078

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This statement is submitted in support of a full planning application for external alterations to the building and shop front at 14 Bath Street, Leek. The application has been submitted by Sammons Architectural Ltd on behalf of Little Luxuries Health & Beauty and is accompanied by drawing numbers 2026-3078-01, 2026-3078-02B and 2026-2078-03 all of which should be read in conjunction with this statement.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site comprises of a two storey end terraced property constructed from facing brickwork under a plain clay tile roof which lies on the eastern side of Bath Street. The application building is currently in commercial use on both floors. It lies on the fringe of the primary shopping frontage to Derby Street and is therefore regarded as secondary shopping frontage within the adopted Local Plan. Notwithstanding this designation this side of Bath Street is predominately residential in nature. Whilst there are some commercial uses these are predominately concentrated closer towards the street's junction with Derby Street. The application building is not listed but lies within the town's designated Conservation Area.

3. PROPOSAL

The application seeks full planning permission for external alterations to the building and changes to the existing shop front.

4. PLANNING POLICY

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004 requires proposals to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan taking into consideration any material considerations relevant to the determination of the application.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which was published on 27th March 2012 and revised in 2024 replaced a significant proportion of central government planning policy advice with immediate effect. It is the Government's clear intention that the document should be considered to be a material consideration and as such carries particular weight where development is not addressed by planning policies in the existing Development Plan.

Whilst the recently published NPPF does not change the statutory status of the Development Plan as the starting point for decision making it does provide guidance to LPA's and is a material consideration in determining planning applications. The NPPF confirms that at the heart of the guidance is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (para 11) and that for decision making this means approving development proposals that accord with the Development Plan without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF also sets out requirements in respect of housing delivery and securing high quality design. The following are considered to be the most relevant chapters:-

- Section 2 - Achieving Sustainable Development
- Section 6 - Building a Strong and Competitive Economy
- Section 7 - Ensuring the Vitality of Town Centres

- Section 9 - Promoting Sustainable Transport
- Section 11 – Making Effective use of Land
- Section 12 - Achieving Well Designed Places
- Section 16 – Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

The Development Plan for the Staffordshire Moorlands comprises of the adopted Local Plan (September 2020) and the Saved Local plan Proposals Map / Settlement Boundaries (1998). The most relevant policies of the adopted Local Plan are considered to be SS1 (Development Principles); SS1a (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development); SS5 (Towns) SS5a (Leek Sub Area Strategy), DC1 (Design Considerations); DC2 (The Historic Environment); E3 (Existing Employment Areas and Premises; T1 (Development and Sustainable Transport), T2 (Other Sustainable Transport Measures) and TCR1 (Development on the Town Centres). For the sake of brevity these policies are not quoted in full but they are referred to where appropriate in the following section.

5. ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

Paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024) promotes a ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’. For decision takers this means (c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or (d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are more important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission, unless: i) the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

Paragraph 8 of the NPPF (2024) identifies three dimensions to sustainable development as being economic, social and environmental. In accordance with policies SS1 and 1a of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan, the Council will expect all new development to make a positive contribution towards the sustainability of communities and to protecting, and where possible, enhancing the environment. When considering development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF (2024).

The application site is located within the Leek Town development boundary and sits on the fringe of the main shopping frontage of Derby Road. Policy SS5a seeks to consolidate the role of Leek as a principal service centre and a market town through the sensitive redevelopment and expansion of the town centre to increase the quantity and quality of the retail offer. Policy TCR1 aims to protect and enhance the vitality and viability of Leek town centre through positive management, which includes focusing and promoting retailing as well as other key town centre uses within the town centre; enhancing local distinctiveness by supporting proposals which help retain, attract and expand the provision of independent retailers in the town. Within secondary frontages, non A1 retail development will be permitted where it will contribute to the vitality and viability of the town centre. The principle of development in this location is therefore considered to be acceptable subject to matters of detailed design, highway safety and the impact on nearby properties.

Design & Heritage

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty upon the local planning authority in determining applications for development affecting listed building to pay special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides the Government's national planning policy on the conservation of the historic environment. In respect of information requirements for applications, it sets out that: 'In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance

Paragraph 207 of the NPPF requires that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

Paragraph 208 goes on to state that "Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal."

Paragraph 199 advises that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be.

Paragraph 213 makes it clear that "Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of: •grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional; •assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional."

Paragraph 214 goes on to state that "Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss or significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply: •the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and • no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and •conservation by grant funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and •the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use".

Paragraph 215 states that "Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use."

Paragraph 216 states, 'the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that

directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset’.

In addition to the above paragraph 135 of the NPPF (2024) requires the design of a development to add to the overall quality of an area, by being sympathetic to local character and by being visually attractive as a result of good architecture.

In terms of adopted development plan policies, policy DC1 refers to design and seeks to secure development of a high quality which is designed to add value to the area to the respect the site and its surroundings. New development should promote a positive sense of place and identify through its scale, density, layout, siting, landscape, character and appearance.

Policy DC2 requires heritage assets and their setting to be enhanced and gives protection to designated and non-designated heritage assets.

The application building is not listed nor is it considered to be a non designated heritage asset. It does however lie within the Leek Conservation Area which was first designated in July 1970. Originally it encompassed the historic shopping centre but has since been extended in 1989, 1994, 2004 and 2013 to include the large mills and the streets of terraced workers’ housing and attractive Victorian and Edwardian housing, much influenced by the Arts and Crafts Movement.

A Character Appraisal published in 2017 separated the town five distinct zones. The application building is listed as lying on the edge of the eastern section. The townscape surrounding the application building in general comprises of densely packed buildings fronting onto a network of streets and lanes.

The Leek Conservation Area Appraisal deems the area as a settlement dating back to the 13th Century, town retaining its medieval street patterns and market place. The appraisal notes that like Stockwell Street “the core of the Conservation Area is the medieval market town with its church, market place and medieval street pattern formed by Church Street, St. Edward’s Street, Derby Street and Stockwell Street”.

Whilst Derby Street forms an integral part of the old town until the 19th century it consisted mainly of the area round the market place and of the streets leading off it, presumably the plan of the early 13th-century borough. Originally the market place probably extended to the west side of what is now St. Edward Street, thus forming the north-west corner of the town. The convergence of roads on the north-west, southwest and east sides of the town and the pattern of property boundaries suggest that the medieval town may have had a hard boundary, perhaps an earth bank pierced with gates.

The 1838 Plan of Leek from Millers Olde Leek shows that at this time Bath Street was not in existence.



In the 1850s and 1860s streets were built over the area between Derby Street and Stockwell Street. Market Street, Silk Street, York Street, and Deansgate were laid out in 1855 and Ford Street and Bath Street were completed in 1863. Ford Street was named after Hugh Ford (d. 1830), who had owned land, and Bath Street took its name from the baths opened at its junction with Derby Street in 1854. In 1863 the Leek and Moorlands Permanent Benefit Building Society, established in 1856, offered 44 building lots for sale in the two new streets and in Derby Street, Stockwell Street (which had been widened and raised to improve access), and Market Street. By the late 19th century Market Street was dominated by a number of major buildings. To the west there was the Central Club (a former silk mill) and the Town Hall, to the east the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel (Brunswick Chapel) with the Nicholson Institute forming the focal point to the north. Elsewhere the Public Baths (now gone) and the Cottage Hospital occupied the most prominent corners.

The 1879 ordnance survey map



Some of the application building's detailing has unfortunately been lost with the introduction of the existing shop front and the rather unsympathetic and poorly applied render to the remaining elevations. The application buildings significance therefore lies in its architectural, historic and historic values expressed through its positioning, detailing and previous use.

The application proposes to lower the existing window cill and provide a replacement larger shop front both of which would reduce the area of existing later modern brickwork. The existing uPVC door leading to the first floor of the building will also be removed and replaced with a much more appropriate designed vertically boarded timber door. The proposed development would provide the building with a much more cohesive development which is more appropriate in terms of its design and materials than the existing arrangement. Overall the proposed changes integrate well with the street scene and the application therefore would result in a positive enhancement to the character and appearance of the application building and the wider surrounding area including the conservation area within which it is located. Accordingly it is considered that the proposal complies with policies DC1 and DC2 of the adopted Local Plan and advice contained within the NPPF.

Impact on residential amenity

National planning policy dictates that at the heart of its core principles, planning should always seek to secure a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings paragraph 135(f). This is further re-iterated in CS Policy DC1, which seeks to protect residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, sunlight, outlook, privacy and soft landscaping as informed by the Council's 'Space about Dwellings' SPG.

The proposed alterations to the external treatment of the building and changes to the shop front would not result in any changes to the established use of the building or result in any intensification of its use. The proposal therefore accords with such requirements in relation to LP Policy DC1 and the NPPF.

Highway Safety

Paragraph 115 of the NPPF states amongst other things that 'In assessing sites that may be allocated for development in plans or specific applications for development it should be ensured that: sustainable transport modes are prioritised taking account of the vision for the site, the type of development and its location, safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users.' Paragraph 116 of the NPPF confirms that "development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe' as is reflected within LP Policy T1 'Development and Sustainable Transport'.

Whilst no off street parking is provided the application site lies within a sustainable town centre location which is easily accessible by a means of alternative transport options. It is a short walk from the town's bus station and several public car parks are located within walking distance. On street parking is also provided within the vicinity. It is not therefore considered that the lack of car parking raises any concerns for this proposal. Having regard to the above it is concluded that there would be no adverse impact on highway safety and accordingly there is no conflict with LP policy T1 or with the guidance of the NPPF.

CONCLUSION

The Framework sets out that there should be a presumption in favour of sustainable development and indicates that to achieve that, economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system.

The proposals comprise of changes to the external appearance of the existing building and its commercial frontage. The works aim to enhance the visual quality of the building while supporting the ongoing commercial viability of the premises. The application would result in a positive

enhancement to the character and appearance of the application building and its wider setting including the conservation area within which it is located through the removal of an existing deteriorated shop frontage and its replacement with a more appropriately design and sensitive treatment which uses more traditional materials and is more in keeping with the street scene. The proposed development would not be prejudicial to the reasonable enjoyment of the existing residential properties nor would it affect neighbouring land uses. It lies within a very sustainable location close to public transport links and easily accessible on foot and bicycle. In this respect the proposal is considered to be an acceptable form of development and compliant with policies SS1, SS1a, SS5, SS5a, DC1, DC2, H1 and T1 of the adopted Local Plan as well as guidance contained within the NPPF.

The Local Authority is therefore respectfully requested to grant full planning permission for the proposed development in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

7.0 DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

USE

The application proposes changes to the external appearance of the existing commercial building and its shop frontage.

AMOUNT

The proposed development will not make any changes to the footprint or volume of the application building.

LAYOUT

The proposed development would not make any changes to the existing layout of the application building.

SCALE

No alterations to the scale of the application building are proposed as part of this application.

LANDSCAPING

No landscaping is proposed as part of this proposal.

APPEARANCE

The external appearance of the application building will be enhanced as part of the application with a cohesive treatment of the existing render treatment and the removal of sympathetic elements of

the shop frontage and its replacement with a more appropriate and traditional shop front which is improved in terms of its design and materials.

ACCESS

The site is located within a sustainable town centre location well located to existing local facilities and public transport links are easily accessible to the site and other parts of the Staffordshire Moorlands as well as the neighbouring city of Stoke on Trent.