

## Conservation Team Advice

**Date:** 28<sup>th</sup> May 2026  
**Application Ref:** SMD/2026/0161 & SMD/2026/0162  
**Site Address:** 19-21 St Edward Street, Leek  
**Proposal:**

- Change of use of cellar and partial ground floor, with associated alterations to form flat
- Listed Building Consent for the change of use of cellar and partial ground floor, with associated alterations to form flat

| Heritage assets affected:                |                                     |                                                                                                                                             |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Designated Heritage Asset(s):</b>     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leek Conservation Area</li> <li>• 19 St Edward Street – Grade II (listing ref: 1268559)</li> </ul> |
| <b>Non-Designated Heritage Asset(s):</b> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |                                                                                                                                             |

## Conservation Advice

### Summary of Significance

The proposal would involve alterations to 19 St Edward Street, which is a Grade II Listed Building situated in Leek Conservation Area.

19 St Edward Street (Grade II) is a late-18<sup>th</sup> century house, with late-19<sup>th</sup> century alterations to a shop. The building is constructed in red bricks with a pitched plain tile roof. The principal elevation is 7-bays with a decorative central doorway with Corinthian capitals and fluted columns and a late-19<sup>th</sup> century a shopfront to the right-hand side. Internally, the building retains the plan form and layout to the upper floors with 19<sup>th</sup> century alterations on the ground floor when converted to commercial use. The building has been subject to some historic fire damage which has resulted in floorboards being replaced but, otherwise, there is some internal décor in situ, such as fireplaces, architraves, beams and staircases. The significance of the building relates to its historic association with the residential development of Leek in the Georgian period and later commercial expansion of the town centre in the late-Victorian period, its retention of historic fabric and plan form, illustrative Neo-Classical detailing, retention of decorative internal and external features and prominence on the streetscene.

Leek Conservation Area was designated for its medieval origins as a market town and later expansion with textile and brewing industries. Typically, buildings are 2- and 3-storeys constructed in red bricks with plain tiled roofs. The town centre is characterised by an eclectic mix of period and styles of buildings from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. 19 St Edward Street makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

### **Assessment and Impact**

The proposal seeks to convert the ground floor and basement level to residential accommodation. The upper floors have a previous approval for residential conversion (application ref: SMD/2018/0507 & SMD/2018/0506).

#### Internal works

The internal works to facilitate the change of use would involve raising the height of the floorboards to part of the shopfront, installation of secondary glazing to the shopfront and windows, installation of partitions and blocking up of doorways to the cellar.

The internal alterations would involve the installation of partitions to subdivide the ground floor level to create a living room, kitchen and bedroom. Historically, the ground floor layout has already been altered and opened up when it was converted to commercial use. Therefore, these works would unlikely harm the special interest of the Listed Building as it would return the ground floor to the more historic traditional room proportions when it was constructed as a dwellinghouse.

There are no new partitions proposed to the cellar level and the proposed conversion seeks to utilise the existing masonry walls well which would help maintain the legibility of the historic layout. Some openings would be blocked up in the cellar, but this would likely have a negligible impact on the character as the openings are disused and their infill could be designed to still retain the legibility of any historic opening.

It was noted on site visit that the floorboards to the shopfront entrance are modern, and the proposal seeks to raise the height of these. Whilst this may alter the proportions of the room, it would not result in the loss of historic fabric, nor would it negatively impact any décor internally as there did not appear to be any historic skirtings in this part of the building.

The principle of installing secondary glazing rather than replacing the windows would be supported from a conservation perspective as it would maintain the historic windows. It was, however, noted that there are historic shutters and architraves internally so further technical details on their installation would be useful to ensure that this would not negatively impact the historic character of the building.

The cellar area is of high significance in terms of retention of historic fabric, décor and features. This level still retains historic fire ranges, stone staircases and checked flooring. Whilst the Design & Access Statement outlines that there would be minimal

intervention proposed to this space, it is still likely that alterations to wall and floor linings would be required to make this area habitable and this has the potential to negatively impact the historic fabric and character of this space. It is noted that the fire ranges would be retained but, otherwise, it is not expressly clear in the submission what physical works would be required to walls and floors at this level to facilitate the conversion (e.g. removing historic floor coverings and tanking).

Similarly, it is not overtly clear what upgrades and alterations (such as fire and noise attenuation and thermal upgrades) may be required to the interior of the ground floor level, particularly as the upper floors have permission to be converted to residential use (application ref: SMD/2018/0507 & SMD/2018/0506). There are currently window architraves in situ which are ceiling height and exposed historic timber beams visible in the shop area. It is unclear how any upgrades would potentially alter or affect these features.

#### External works

The external works would involve replacement shopfront door, installation of lightwells and installation of obscured pavement glazing to cellar openings and general repairs to the principal elevation.

The existing shopfront, whilst in a poor condition, is highly decorative and a positive feature on the streetscene. It is supported from a conservation perspective that this would be retained in the proposed development as it is illustrative of an important part of the building's history.

The shopfront door is proposed to be replaced with a faux door so as to maintain the historic appearance of the shopfront and the proposed elevations indicate a similar design to the existing which would minimise alterations to the building's appearance. It is assumed that obscured glazing/frosting on the shopfront window would be installed to provide a degree of privacy. Whilst this might affect the appearance, it is considered this could be designed sensitively.

The installation of pavement glazing to the cellar/coal chute openings would have a negligible impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and there are similar examples elsewhere in Leek.

Overall, the external alterations would have a minimal impact on the special interest of the designated heritage assets.

#### **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.16 and 66) and 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 likely result in a moderate degree of harm to the special interest of the Listed Building, due to the potential internal upgrades/alterations required to facilitate the change of use. This would fail to satisfy the provisions of s.16 and 66 of the Act. With reference to the planning policies, this would likely result in ‘less than substantial harm’ to the designated heritage asset (par.215 of NPPF and policy DC2 of the local development framework). However, as set out above, it is difficult to fully determine the level of harm to the historic and architectural interest of the building at this stage as there is limited technical detailing on the works required to facilitate the proposed conversion.

The proposal would unlikely harm the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, which would satisfy the provisions of s.72 of the Act.

Overall, we are supportive of the principle of bringing the building back into use as it would contribute to the long-term conservation of the heritage asset. However, from the information provided it is difficult to fully determine the level of impact on the architectural and historic interest of the building. As set out in par.215 of NPPF, any less than substantial harm should be balanced against the public benefits and/or securing the optimum viable use for the building. The optimum viable use for the building is the

one that cause the least amount of heritage harm (par.15 of the Planning Practice Guidance). It is not clear in this instance if this is the optimum viable use as, firstly, the proposal does not clearly outline what physical works would be required to facilitate the change of use and, secondly, it does not robustly demonstrate that this is the option that would cause the least amount of harm to the heritage significance of the Listed Building. At this stage, we cannot support the proposal from a conservation perspective and suggest that further information is provided to outline works required to facilitate the conversion and any further justification on securing the optimal viable use for the building.

**Conservation Officer:** Megan Atkinson