

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2026/0159
Valid 10/04/2026

23-25 ST EDWARD STREET
LEEK

**CHANGE OF USE OF FORMER
DRINKING ESTABLISHMENT
TO RESIDENTIAL (2NO. 2-BED
FLATS)**

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

- Living conditions
- Loss of public house / community service facility
- Heritage – Leek Conservation Area and adjacent Listed Building

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

A striking and imposing two storey building with frontages to St Edward Street and Stanley Street in the Leek town centre – see Fig.1 below. The Stanley Street elevation is classed as ‘primary shopping frontage’ in the Local Plan.



Fig. 1

Due to the set back of buildings on the east side of St Edward Street the application building is very prominent in the approach from the south as can be seen in figure 2 below. The building marks a ‘gateway’ to the core pedestrianised retail zone.



Fig. 2

The location is within the Leek Conservation Area. The adjacent attached building to the north is Grade II Listed.

The building functioned as a popular public house through the 1990s and into the early 2000s. Restaurant dining operated from the first floor. Public house has remained the planning use up to the present time but its opening has been intermittent and more latterly it has been closed for a number of years and the building vacant since 2020.

The building is of likely early 19thC date and historically functioned as the Wheatsheaf Inn (p.132 Spirit of Leek II, Walton and Porter 2001).

PROPOSAL

The accompanying design access and heritage statement (15pp) states the ground floor as 115m² and the first floor as 91m². The proposal involves a single flat occupying the ground floor, accessed from St Edward Street with the second flat occupying the first floor, accessed independently by the existing side door in Stanley Street.

According to the planning statement: *“No significant changes are proposed to the elevations beyond repair and maintenance, general tidying up, and the replacement of the existing doors”*. According to the statement there is no associated external space and there are no associated parking spaces. However, it is also stated that a bin store for use by both flats is proposed at ground floor, with a separate external access, utilising an existing doorway on the side elevation. The arrangement is shown and is identifiable in the proposal drawing.

Existing window openings are to be used unaltered in the proposed conversion.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Local Plan (adopted 9th September 2020)

SS1	Development Principles
SS2	Settlement Hierarchy
SS5	Leek Area Strategy
DC1	Design Considerations
DC2	The Historic Environment
H1	New Housing Development
E3	Existing Employment Areas / Premises
C1	Creating Sustainable Communities
TCR 1	Development in the Town Centres
TCR 2	Primary Shopping Frontages
T1	Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework (Dec 2024)

Paragraph(s) 1 – 14;

Section(s) 4 – Decision making; 5 – Delivering a sufficient supply of homes; 6 – Building a strong and competitive economy; 7 – Ensuring the vitality of town centres; 8 – Promoting healthy and safe communities; 9 – Promoting sustainable transport; 11 – Making effective use of land; 12 – Achieving well designed places; 13 – Protecting Green Belt Land; 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment; 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Adopted Supplementary Planning Documents/Guidance (SPD/G):

- Space About Dwellings SPG
- Design Principles SPG
- Design Guide SPD adopted 21st February 2018

Local Plan Supporting Evidence Documents:

- Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment (2008)

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

SMD/2025/0109 - Proposed change of use from drinking establishment to retail – approved – not implemented

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 15.05.2026

Neighbour consultation period ends: 04.05.2026

Press Advert: 13.05.2026

Public Comments

None

Town / Parish Comments

Leek Town Council – none

SMDC Waste Collection Services

The proposed new dwellings should have sufficient storage space for 3 wheeled bins and a food waste caddy at each property. Bins should be presented for collection at the curtilage of the property for collection - adjacent to the public highway.

SMDC Environmental Health

Consulted – issues highlighted for consideration with 4 conditions recommended:

1. Construction Impacts (condition)
2. Lighting Impacts (condition)
3. Asbestos (Advisory)
4. External noise – commercial and highways noise (Condition)
- 5 Internal transmission of noise (Building regulations)

Number 4 above is recommended as a pre-commencement condition. The applicant however has requested this to be worded to be fulfilled prior to occupancy or alternatively to be submitted within one month of work commencing.

Staffordshire County Council Highways

Recommend acceptance. No conditions requested.

The property is located on St Edward Street at the junction with Stanley Street within Leek Town Centre. St Edward Street is an A classified road (Road No. A520) and Stanley Street is an unclassified road (Road No. D1287), both roads are subject to a 30-mph speed limit and benefit from streetlighting and footways, The surrounding area comprise of mix of commercial and residential properties.

There is a no waiting at any time restriction fronting the property on St Edward Street and Stanley Street. South of the property there is a restriction limiting parking to 30 mins every day from 8am until 6pm on both sides of St Edward Street.

It is noted no off-highway parking car provision is to be provided for the flats and there is insufficient land within the site to accommodate any. Staffordshire Moorlands Parking Standards require for properties of up to 3 bedrooms - 2 spaces (2.4 x 4.8m) for residents and visitors within the curtilage of the dwelling. However, the flats are in a highly sustainable and accessible location within Leek Town Centre a prime location within Leek Town Centre. Future residents will be within convenient walking and cycling distance of a wide range of public amenities, including shops, cafés, restaurants, and public transport services, reducing reliance on private car use.

Should off-highway parking be required, a public car park is located on High Street approximately 100 m from the site and would provide a practical alternative to on-site provision.

The previous commercial use generated traffic from commercial deliveries, employees, and customers vehicles. The change of use to residential may cause a reduction in trip generation, commercial deliveries and customers visits will cease. Given the properties (sustainable) location, accessibility to nearby shops and other services and transport links, I do not believe the lack of car parking provision is a material consideration for this application and therefore I have no objection (SMD/2026/0159).

SMDC Heritage Conservation Officer

Summary of Significance

The proposal is situated in Leek Conservation Area and in the vicinity of 19 St Edward Street, which is a Grade II Listed Building.

The Conservation Area was designated for its medieval origins as a market town which later expanded as a result of textile and brewing industries. Buildings are typically 2- and 3-storeys, constructed in a mixture of brickwork, render, stone and Staffordshire blue tiled or slate roofs. The architectural interest is an eclectic mix of the different historic phases of development, with the predominantly Georgian and Victorian commercial buildings and Edwardian civic architecture at the core and 19th and early 20th century mills and residential expansion on the fringes of the settlement. 23-25 St Edward Street was historically 2-storeys higher but later reduced in height to its current form. Nonetheless, its symmetrical facades and Neo-Classical detailing mean the building makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

19 St Edward Street (Grade II) is a late-18th century house with ground floor alterations to a shop. The building has 7 bays and is constructed in brick with a pitched plain tile roof. The façade is highly decorative with a central doorway with fluted columns and Corinthian capitals, an off-set late-19th century shopfront. The surrounding 18th and 19th century buildings along St Edward Street make a positive contribution to the building's special interest.

Assessment and Impact

The proposal would involve a change of use of the building to 2 apartments. The proposed plans indicate there would be no external alterations to the appearance of the building which would maintain its positive contribution to the Conservation Area and would have no impact on the setting of the adjacent Listed Building. Although the plans indicate no external alterations, it would still be recommended to condition details such as replacement windows, external doors and any external flues/vents that may be required to facilitate the change of use to ensure that these details are designed sympathetically to the historic environment.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In summary, the proposal would have a negligible impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and setting of Listed Buildings. Their special

interest would be preserved, which would satisfy the provisions of s.66 and 72 of the Act, Section 16 of NPPF and policy DC2 of the local development framework. There are no objections to the proposal from a Conservation perspective. For any consent granted, we would suggest the following conditions:

- Prior to the installation of any windows and external doors, details of their material, design, specification, method of opening, colour and finish, in the form of drawings and sections of no less than 1:20 scale, shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall thereafter be carried out only in accordance with the agreed details.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

- No development shall be commenced in respect of the features identified below, until details of their siting on the elevations and details of their design in the form of manufacturer's specification or drawings at a scale of not less than 1:10 have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall thereafter be carried out only in accordance with the agreed details.

- i. Any new external flues or extractor vents

- ii. Any new external soil vent pipes

Reason: To preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

Being within the Leek town development boundary the proposed residential use would be acceptable in principle in accordance with Local Plan policy SS5.

The main issues are heritage implications assessed with reference to LP policies SS5(4); DC1; DC2 and the NPPF, in particular section 16 and living conditions assessed with reference to SS5(1); DC1; H1 and the NPPF.

Despite the loss of some public houses in the town there are still numbers remaining and the loss of a pub at this location would not leave the town lacking in this type of community facility. Its loss by conversion to residential use can therefore be accepted.

Although partly addressing a primary shopping frontage the building does not have a conventional shop retail front and its conversion to residential use would not have a significant or obvious visual implication for the commercial characteristic of the location. Although a retail use was approved in 2025 this has not been implemented. On balance the more pressing requirement is to achieve a suitable use for the building given that the premises have been vacant since 2000. A residential use for this building at this location including at ground floor street front level where the change of use is taking the place of a former public house rather than that of a retail shop is not seen to be inappropriate or unsuitable.

Design / Heritage

The interior design implications specifically with regard to the nationally described space standard (NDSS) are discussed below under amenity.

The application is presented as involving no exterior changes. Nevertheless it is noted that the exterior woodwork is certainly in need of decoration and potentially in limited areas in need of remedial treatments. The conservation officer has therefore recommended conditions to ensure the exterior appearance is retained in keeping with its historic condition and the primacy of the building in the conservation area.

Amenity

Both flats are intended to have capacity for four person occupancy with each having two double bedrooms across a single storey. As single storey flats with two double bedrooms NDSS sets a minimum gross internal floor area of 70m². (Nb It is considered that the first floor flat can still be determined as a single storey provided that the staircase is kept out of the calculation.) Excluding the staircase the first floor flat has a gross internal floor area of c.88m². (As it happens this would exceed the 79m² minimum requirement for a two storey dwelling).

Double bedrooms must have a floor space of at least 11.5m². In this scheme the dimensions are:

GF 1 – 15m ²	FF 1 – 15m ²
GF 2 – 11.5m ²	FF 2 – 12m ²

In each case the bedrooms all meet the requirement to have at least a width of 2.75m. For a second bedroom this minimum width can be reduced to 2.55m but as noted this is exceeded in this scheme.

Although there is no dedicated private outside space that is not unusual in the town's flats. Excellent outdoor leisure amenity space is available At a little over 200 metres walking distance.

Due to the main road town centre location the potential for noise disturbance especially from traffic must be considered and hence the EH recommended condition for noise assessment and an appropriate scheme of mitigation as necessary. Whilst recommended as a pre commencement condition the applicant has requested for this to be concluded prior to occupation. Alternatively they would equally accept for the submissions required by the condition to be made within one month of work commencing.

The EH recommended conditions for restricting noise during the development work and the condition to require submission of a noise control scheme to protect the residents of the development from noise should be attached. The other EH-recommended conditions are not judged as being justified for the scale and form of the development or its location.

Highway Safety

Given the HA response there are no highways issues.

Waste Collection

In this highly public location including the pedestrianised Stanley Street it is important to consider the implications of bin storage and collection. Fortunately this proposal is able to provide an enclosed bin yard. It would be recommended that a condition be attached to exclude bins from being presented to the St Edward Street frontage where the pavement is narrow and unsuitable.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

As discussed in the report the loss of the vacant public house as a community facility can be accepted and with no overt visual changes or alterations to the street front elevations the scheme can be judged fully acceptable in visual design and in heritage terms in the Conservation Area.

With no adverse implications identified, the development can be welcomed as bringing a much-needed functional use to an important street scene building currently vacant within the Leek Conservation Area, subject to the recommended conditions as discussed. Considered 'in the round' the scheme represents a sustainable development proposal for the town.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : **approve**

Case Officer: Arne Swithenbank

Recommendation Date: 05.06.2026

X 

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council