

Conservation Team Advice

Date: 2nd July 2026
Application Ref: SMD/2026/0276
Site Address: Nicholson Institute, Stockwell Street, Leek
Proposal: Application for the Variation of Conditions 2 and 7 in relation to SMD/2025/0225 - We wish to vary the approved method of paint removal from walnut shell blasting to DOFF steam cleaning

Heritage assets affected:		
Designated Heritage Asset(s):	☒	Nicholson Institute and Leek College of Further Education – Grade II* (listing ref: 1268544)
Non-Designated Heritage Asset(s):	☐	

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Summary of Significance

The Nicholson Institute (Grade II*) was constructed 1882-4 as a school of art, museum, art gallery and public library. The building was building was given to the town by Joshua Nicholson and designed by local architectural firm W.Sugden & Son. The building is constructed in red brick and designed in mid-17th century revival style. The significance derives from its historic association with the development of public buildings in the late-Victorian period, association with local notable architects, architectural grandeur, internal decor and distinctive domed tower which dominates the skyline of Leek.

Assessment and Impact

The proposal seeks to vary the internal brick cleaning method to the lower ground floor of the building. The details were previously agreed to be walnut shot blasting under approved listed building consent (ref: SMD/2025/0225). This application seeks to alter this cleaning method to DOFF cleaning system.

A sample panel of the proposed new cleaning method has been viewed on site and showed that this would be a sensitive way to remove the modern paintwork without damaging the face of the brickwork. The works would not harm the fabric of the Listed Building and would better reveal its architectural interest as well as removing modern inappropriate later alterations.

Legislation and Policy

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

The local planning authority should have a desirability of preserving the special interest of the Listed Building (s.16).

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).

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

The proposal would not alter the level of impact on the special interest and significance of the Listed Building previously identified. There would be no objections to the proposed variation from a conservation perspective. We would recommend the conditions are varied to reflect the updated information in par. 3.3.1, 3.3.2 and 3.3.3 of the revised Design and Access Statement.

Conservation Officer: Megan Atkinson