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Design & Access Statement

The Green Dragon, Leek (7029)

2 St Edward Street,
Leek,
Staffordshire,
ST13 5DS



Proposal

The proposed works include the reconfiguration of the existing staff room to provide new male staff facilities comprising 1 no. WC and 1 no. changing room, and the conversion of the existing store room into a new staff room with associated female staff facilities comprising 1 no. WC and 1 no. changing room. The existing back-of-house corridor will receive new floor and wall finishes. Mechanical works include the installation of a new wall-mounted internal air conditioning unit within the staff room and a new external condenser located as indicated on the proposed plans included in this application.

Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by DV Architects Ltd on behalf of JD Wetherspoon in support of a full planning and listed building consent for The Green Dragon public house, Leek. The proposals comprise the reconfiguration and refurbishment of existing staff areas to provide improved welfare facilities, including new changing rooms, toilets, and a staff room, together with associated internal upgrades. Mechanical works include the installation of a new wall-mounted internal air conditioning unit within the staff room and a new external condenser located as indicated on the proposed plans included in this application. All works have been carefully developed to respect its historic character while supporting its continued and sustainable use.

Site & Context

The Green Dragon is located within the historic core of Leek, a traditional market town characterised by a rich architectural heritage and a strong association with the textile industry. The surrounding area is defined by a mix of historic buildings, many of which are listed, set within a dense urban grain of narrow streets and established plot patterns. The building occupies a prominent position within this context and contributes to the town's historic character and sense of place.

The site is well integrated within the town centre, benefitting from established pedestrian and vehicular access, and forms part of a wider network of commercial and social uses. Its long-standing use as a public house is consistent with the surrounding mix of retail, hospitality, and community functions, reinforcing its role as a key local landmark within the conservation setting.

Heritage Context

The Green Dragon is a Grade II listed, timber-framed building of considerable historic significance, widely regarded as the oldest inn in Leek, with origins dating back to the 16th century. The building has evolved over time, reflecting changing uses and identities, having operated under several historic names including The Angel and The Swan. Its long-standing role as a public house forms an integral part of the town's social and cultural history.

Beyond its function as an inn, the building has played a notable role in the cultural life of Leek. The assembly rooms to the rear historically hosted concerts, theatrical performances, and social gatherings, contributing to the town's development as a centre for arts and music during the 18th and 19th centuries. The pub's association with events such as the Charge of Balaclava, through former landlord Sgt Major John Allen, further adds to its historic interest.

Overall, The Green Dragon holds strong evidential, historic and communal value, reflecting both the architectural character of the period and the social evolution of Leek.

This design and access statement is to be read in conjunction with the heritage report.

Scope of Works

STAFF ROOM:

- Convert existing store room at first floor into new staff room and female change and toilet facilities.

Reconfigured by introducing stud partitions.
- New sanitary ware, furniture and staff room items introduced.
- New lighting introduced to suit JDW standards.
- All staff areas to receive new plastered wall finishes with white emulsion paint, new and existing doors to be decorated, new and existing skirting boards to be decorated, floor finishes to be replaced with Altro wood safety flooring.
- New suspended grid ceiling to be installed.
- Existing floor to be levelled on pedestal system – preserving the floor boards beneath.
- New HVAC and condenser as located on plans

STORE TO BASEMENT :

- New racking to basement store to be installed

STAFF FACILITIES TO EXISTING STAFF ROOM

- Existing staff facilities to be amended to new male toilet and change.
- New sanitary ware, furniture and staff room items introduced.
- New lighting introduced to suit JDW standards.
- All staff areas to receive new plastered wall finishes with white emulsion paint, new and existing doors to be decorated, new and existing skirting boards to be decorated, floor finishes to be replaced with Altro wood safety flooring.
- New suspended grid ceiling to be installed.

Amount

The proposal comprises minor internal alterations within the existing building to reconfigure underutilised staff areas. No extensions, additional floorspace, or changes to the building footprint are proposed. The quantum of development is limited to the subdivision and refurbishment of existing internal rooms, together with the installation of associated fittings, services, and storage. As such, the overall amount of development is negligible in spatial terms and does not alter the scale or volume of the building. One new condenser is proposed at roof level along side other existing plant equipment.

Layout

The proposed works rationalise the existing internal layout to provide clearly defined and functional staff facilities. At first floor level, an underutilised store is subdivided to accommodate a staff room alongside dedicated female changing and welfare spaces. The existing staff room is reconfigured to provide equivalent male facilities. Circulation routes are retained, with minimal intervention beyond the introduction of lightweight partitions. At basement level, the layout remains unchanged, with only the addition of storage racking to improve organisation and efficiency. The proposals optimise the use of existing space without altering the overall arrangement of the building.

Appearance

The proposals are limited to internal alterations, except for the new condenser. Internally, the works will introduce a consistent finish that will improve staff confort and bring the spaces in line with current standard. There will be new wall, floor and ceiling treatments, updated lighting, and refurbished joinery.

The overall appearance will enhance the quality and functionality of staff areas while remaining appropriate to the existing building.

Impact

The proposed works are necessary to improve staff welfare provision and ensure the continued efficient operation of the public house. All interventions are confined to existing internal spaces, and new condenser on the roof alongside existing plant equipment, the proposed work have been carefully designed to avoid adverse impact on the historic fabric and character of the building. The use of lightweight, reversible partitions and a non-invasive floor levelling system ensures that original features, including floorboards, are preserved. No structural alterations are proposed, and existing circulation and spatial hierarchy are maintained. Overall, the works represent a sensitive and proportionate enhancement that sustains the building's ongoing use without harming its historic significance.

Access

The proposals do not alter the existing access arrangements to or within the building. Established entrance points, circulation routes, and vertical access are retained without change. The reconfiguration of internal staff areas maintains clear and logical movement, ensuring continued safe and efficient access for staff. No impact on public access or inclusive access provision is proposed as part of these works.

Use

The proposed development does not involve any change of use. The building will remain in its established use as a public house (Use class Sui Generis), with the works limited to the new external condenser, internal reconfiguration with improvement of staff welfare facilities. The proposals support the continued viable operation of the premises without altering its primary function.

Sustainability

The proposals focus on the reuse and refurbishment of existing internal spaces, avoiding the need for extension or additional construction and thereby minimising material consumption. Works prioritise the retention of existing building fabric wherever possible, including the preservation of original floorboards. New fittings, lighting, and building services will improve operational efficiency and reduce energy demand in line with current standards. Overall, the scheme represents a low-impact, resource-efficient intervention that supports the long-term sustainable use of the building.

Heritage Considerations

The proposals have been carefully developed with full regard to the Grade II listed status of The Green Dragon and its historic significance. All works are confined to existing internal spaces, and new external condenser, and avoid any alteration to the building's external appearance or primary structure. The design adopts a light-touch approach, utilising reversible interventions such as stud partitions and a pedestal floor system to ensure that historic fabric, including original floorboards, is preserved and protected.

Where upgrades are required, they are limited to secondary spaces and are undertaken in a manner that respects the character and integrity of the building. The introduction of modern services and finishes is

sensitively integrated to support the building's ongoing use without detracting from its heritage value. Overall, the proposals represent a proportionate and sympathetic intervention that sustains and enhances the building's long-term viable use while safeguarding its historic significance.

Planning Policy

The proposed internal alterations to the Green Dragon Pub, a Grade II listed building in Leek, have been developed in accordance with relevant national and local planning policy, with a focus on heritage conservation and proportionate design.

At a national level, the proposal aligns with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), particularly Section 16 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment). The works are limited in scope and have been designed to preserve the significance of the listed building, ensuring that its special architectural and historic interest is unaffected. In line with the NPPF, the proposals represent a sensitive and sustainable approach to the continued viable use of a heritage asset.

At a local level, the scheme complies with the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020). In particular:

- **Policy DC2 (The Historic Environment):** The proposals safeguard the character and significance of the listed building through minimal and sympathetic internal alterations.
- **Policy DC1 (Design Considerations):** The design approach respects the existing layout, materials, and historic fabric of the building.
- **Policy SS1 (Development Principles):** The continued use and maintenance of the building supports its long-term conservation and ongoing contribution to the town centre.

Given the limited and minor nature of the works, the proposals are considered to fully accord with both national and local policy, ensuring the preservation of the building's heritage significance while supporting its viable use as a public house.

Conclusion

The proposed works represent a sensitive, well-considered internal refurbishment that enhances staff welfare and supports the ongoing operation of the Green Dragon public house. The scheme makes efficient use of existing space, introduces high-quality finishes in line with operational standards, and preserves the building's historic fabric through minimal and reversible interventions. With no external alterations except for the new condenser proposed to be located on the roof level along side existing plant equipment. There is no harm to heritage significance, the proposals deliver a clear functional improve-