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Heritage 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 Heritage Statement has been prepared by DV Architects Ltd on behalf of JD Wetherspoon in support of applications for internal alterations at The Green Dragon, Leek, a Grade II listed building. The statement assesses the significance of the heritage asset and considers the potential impact of the proposed works, which are limited to the reconfiguration and upgrading of staff facilities and a new condenser mounted externally. It demonstrates that the proposals have been sensitively designed to preserve the building's historic fabric, character, and significance while supporting its continued viable use.

Planning & Legislative Context

The proposed development has been prepared in accordance with the statutory duties of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which requires special regard to be given to the preservation of listed buildings, their settings, and features of architectural or historic interest.

National policy set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) places great weight on the conservation of designated heritage assets and supports proposals that sustain and enhance their significance, particularly where they secure the asset's optimum viable use.

At a local level, the proposals align with adopted development plan policies that seek to protect and conserve heritage assets while supporting appropriate, well-considered changes that enable their continued use. The scheme has been designed to fully comply with this policy context, ensuring that the significance of the Grade II listed building is preserved.

Description

The Green Dragon is a Grade II listed, two-storey timber-framed public house with a plain tiled roof, prominent within the historic core of Leek. The building is arranged in a main range with a cross-wing, the latter forming the principal accommodation. The exterior has been subject to later alterations, including render and mock timber framing, and an early 20th century public house frontage with canted bay windows and sash windows above.

Additional elements include a single-storey extension and a basement level to the rear, reflecting the building's phased development. The structure retains its historic form and character, illustrating its long-standing use and adaptation as a public house.

Methodology and Sources

This Heritage Statement has been prepared using a proportionate desk-based assessment of the site and its historical development, informed by available documentary sources and an understanding of the existing building fabric.

Key sources include the National Heritage List for England (NHLE) listing description, published historical information relating to the origins and relocation of the barns, and relevant local authority documentation, including conservation area guidance. A review of the building's form, materials, and construction has also informed the assessment of its significance.

The impact of the proposed works has been evaluated with reference to the identified significance of the heritage asset, in accordance with the principles set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and relevant Historic England guidance.

Historical Development of the Site

The Green Dragon Pub occupies a building of historic origin within the established urban fabric of Leek, a market town with a long tradition of commercial and social activity dating back to the medieval period. Leek developed significantly during the 18th and 19th centuries, driven by its role as a regional market centre and later by the growth of the textile industry, particularly silk production. The town's historic core, within which the Green Dragon is located, reflects this period of expansion, characterised by narrow streets, traditional plot patterns, and a mix of commercial and residential uses.

The building itself is understood to date from the late 18th to early 19th century, a period during which inns and public houses played an important role in supporting trade, travel, and local commerce. As a public house, the Green Dragon would have functioned not only as a place of social gathering but also as a hub for business exchange and accommodation for travellers, reflecting the broader role of such establishments in market towns of this era.

Historic mapping and urban grain suggest that the footprint of the building has remained largely consistent over time, indicating a high degree of continuity in its use and form. While some internal alterations and reconfigurations are likely to have occurred throughout the 19th and 20th centuries reflecting changing operational needs and modernisation these changes are typical of public houses that have remained in active use. Despite such adaptations, the building retains its historic character and continues to express its original function.

The designation of the Green Dragon as a Grade II listed building recognises its architectural and historic significance, including its contribution to the character and appearance of Leek's historic town centre. Its continued use as a public house is an important aspect of its significance, representing both tangible heritage (in its fabric and form) and intangible heritage (in its long-standing social function).

Overall, the historical development of the site is characterised by continuity of use, incremental adaptation, and retention of historic form, all of which contribute positively to its significance as a designated heritage asset.

English Heritage Listing Entry

SJ9856NW ST EDWARD STREET 611-1/4/108 (West side) 13/04/51 No.2 The Swan Hotel
GV II
Listing NGR: SJ9828256592

Public house. Probably originally early C17. Timber-framed with mock timber and render over the original framing; plain-tiled roof. EXTERIOR: 2 storeys, main range and cross-wing plan; the main range in fact largely occupied by carriage entry to rear, and the cross-wing comprising the principal accommodation. Off-centre doorway in gable of wing, flanked by canted bay windows, all comprising an early C20 public house frontage. 2 tripartite sash windows above. Single-storeyed extension to right (probably early C19) with basement storey to Overton Bank in the return elevation. 4-window range return to Overton Bank, with tripartite sash windows and a 12-pane sash window with margin lights in the extension. Coped rear gable (of roughly coursed and squared rubble) with end wall stack. INTERIOR: not inspected.

Architectural Description

The pub is probably of early 17th-century origin, with later extensions and alterations. The structure is timber-framed, now concealed beneath render with applied mock timbering, and is roofed in plain clay tiles.

The building is arranged over two storeys to a hall and cross-wing plan, with the cross-wing forming the principal street-facing element. The main range is partially occupied by a former carriage entry, with the cross-wing containing the primary accommodation.

The principal elevation is characterised by a gable-fronted projection with an off-centre entrance, flanked by canted bay windows, forming an early 20th-century pub frontage. At first floor level, there are tripartite timber sash windows, consistent with the fenestration seen elsewhere on the building.

A single-storey extension to the right, likely early 19th century, incorporates a basement storey expressed along the Overton Bank return. This elevation extends across four bays and includes a mix of tripartite sash windows and a 12-pane sash with margin lights.

To the rear, a coped gable constructed in roughly coursed rubble stone survives, with an end-wall chimney stack, evidencing the building's historic fabric and construction.

The building's architectural interest lies in its surviving timber-framed structure, evolved plan form, and layered additions, reflecting its adaptation to public house use over time.

Assessment of Significance

Historical Significance
The building holds significant communal and historic value as one of Leek's oldest inns, closely associated with the social and cultural development of the town. Its long-standing use as a public house, together with its role in hosting gatherings and events, reinforces its importance within the historic townscape. Overall, the asset derives its significance from a combination of its age, evolving fabric, architectural character, and enduring social function.

Evidential Significance
The Green Dragon possesses evidential significance through the survival of its historic fabric and plan form, which provide physical evidence of the building's development from an early timber-framed structure to its later use as a public house. The surviving timber frame, hall-and-cross-wing arrangement, masonry elements and historic roof structure have the potential to illustrate construction techniques and patterns of adaptation spanning several centuries. Although altered over time, the building retains legible evidence of its phased evolution, contributing to an understanding of the architectural and social history of Leek's historic town centre.

Architectural Significance
Architecturally, the building is a strong example of vernacular timber-framed construction, reflecting traditional building methods, while later alterations, including the early 20th century public house frontage, illustrate its continued adaptation and use. The plan form, including the cross-wing arrangement and historic carriage access, contributes to its evidential value.

Townscape Significance
Within the Leek Conservation Area, the building makes a positive contribution to the character and ap-

pearance of the historic town centre. Its distinctive form, scale, and materiality provide visual interest and reinforce the layered historic environment, despite its relocated nature.

Overall Significance
The Green Dragon is a designated heritage asset of high significance, deriving from its architectural quality, historic associations, and contribution to the conservation area. Its value lies in both its physical fabric and its continued viable use, which supports its long-term preservation.

Description of Proposed Work

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.

Impact Assessment

The proposed works are limited to internal alterations within secondary areas of the building, and for the new condenser located on the roof along side other existing plant equipment, and have been designed to avoid harm to its significance as a Grade II listed heritage asset. Interventions are lightweight and reversible, ensuring that historic fabric is preserved, including the retention of original floorboards beneath a non-invasive floor system.

The works will result in a negligible level of impact on the building's architectural and historic interest, while delivering clear functional benefits through improved staff facilities. Overall, the proposals represent a sensitive and proportionate intervention that sustains the building's ongoing use and secures its long-term conservation.

Assessment of Imapct on Setting

The proposed works are predominantly confined to the interior of the building, comprising the reconfiguration of existing staff accommodation and associated welfare facilities. The only external alteration relates to the installation of a new air conditioning condenser required to serve the staff room. The condenser has been positioned in a discreet location and represents a minor, functional addition that does not necessitate alteration to the building's historic fabric. Given its limited scale, utilitarian nature, and unobtrusive siting, the proposal will have a negligible visual impact on the building and will not adversely affect its character, appearance, or heritage significance.

Justification of Works

The proposed works are necessary to provide appropriate, modern staff welfare facilities that meet current operational standards and support the continued viable use of the public house. Existing arrangements are limited and do not adequately serve the needs of staff.

The scheme has been carefully designed to minimise intervention, focusing on the sensitive reconfiguration of underutilised internal spaces. All works are confined to secondary areas and utilise lightweight, reversible construction methods to preserve the historic fabric. The proposals therefore represent a pro-

portionate and justified response, enabling functional improvement while safeguarding the building's significance.

The proposed external condenser is required to ensure an appropriate internal environment within the premises. The unit has been located in a discreet position to minimise its visual impact on the building and surrounding heritage assets, and the proposal will not result in any material harm to the character, appearance, or significance of the property.

Consideration of Alternatives

Alternative approaches, including retaining the existing layout or undertaking more extensive reconfiguration, were considered but discounted. Retention of the current arrangement would not address deficiencies in staff welfare provision, while more invasive works would risk unnecessary impact on the historic fabric.

The proposed scheme represents the most balanced solution, delivering the required functional improvements through minimal, targeted interventions within secondary spaces, and ensuring that the significance of the listed building is preserved.

Conclusion

The proposed works constitute a sensitive, minimal intervention that preserves the significance, fabric, and setting of the Grade II listed Green Dragon. By delivering essential improvements to staff facilities and mecanical services through reversible, low-impact measures, the scheme supports the building's continued viable use while safeguarding its historic character.