



Campus Redevelopment Heritage Statement

Buxton and Leek College

July 2013

HERITAGE STATEMENT

Project: Campus Redevelopment
Client: Buxton and Leek College, University of Derby
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report consists of a detailed assessment and examination of the “significance” of the Carr Gym and Mill Block – both curtilage buildings of the Nicholson Institute – a “designated heritage asset” – to inform campus redevelopment proposals for Leek College.

1.2 “Significance” and “heritage asset” are relatively new terms, introduced by PPS5: Planning for the Historic Environment, and carried forward into the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF is clear in setting out the requirements placed on applicants in preparing and presenting their proposals and on local authorities in dealing with them. This report follows these requirements.

1.3 The planning system has generally become more of an evidence based system, and hence this report draws upon existing sources including the English Heritage records, local history sources, and an examination and inspection of the buildings in question.

1.4 The analysis and approach identifies:

- The most significant parts of heritage assets which should be preserved and where possible enhanced; and
- Those parts which are of relatively minor significance whose removal and replacement with something more appropriate has positive benefits.

2 LOCATION AND GENERAL DESCRIPTION

2.1 The Nicholson Institute and its associated curtilage buildings are all located to the north of Stockwell Street on northern edge Leek Town Centre. The Nicholson Institute provides accommodation space for the Leek Library, associated museum and archive space, and some teaching space connected with the Art Faculty of Buxton and Leek College. The curtilage buildings of the Carr Gymnasium and Mill Block are respectively situated to the east and north east of the Nicholson Institute.

2.2 The Leek Conservation Area includes the Nicholson Institute and its later extension, but excludes the Carr Gymnasium and Mill Block.

2.3 The list description for the Nicholson Institute is as follows:

Name: NICHOLSON INSTITUTE AND LEEK COLLEGE OF FURTHER EDUCATION

List entry Number: 1268544

Grade: II*

Date first listed: 07-Jun-1972

Date of most recent amendment: 14-Oct-1996

Details

SJ 9856 NE LEEK STOCKWELL STREET

611-1/5/133 Nicholson Institute and Leek College of Further Education 07.06.1972 II*

Institute and library. 1882-4. By William Larnar Sugden; extended 1899-1900 by W.L. Sugden by addition of the Silk and General Technical School'. Brick (rusticated to ground floor) with stone dressings. Main roof not visible, but copper dome to tower. Renaissance style.

EXTERIOR: 2-storeyed with basement, 3-bay front, comprising Dutch gable to left, massive central mullioned and transomed window, and advanced entrance and stair-tower to right. Dutch gable has bow window with stone mullions to ground floor, flanked by square turret-towers built against the gable wall and 2-storeyed in height, surmounted by stone domed roofs. Gable rises above these, with pedimented head. Central 3-tier mullioned and transomed window with low-relief busts in entablature, and inscription plate above with enriched scroll-work and broken pediment below balustrading surmounted by urns. Advanced tower to right, the entrance raised up steps with cast and wrought-iron lamp standards and rail. Renaissance entrance, with round-arched doorway in pedimented case, with fluted composite shafts carrying angled entablature. Tablet at apex of pediment inscribed 'Nicholson Institute'. Pediment cuts into 4-tier mullioned and transomed window with broken pediment over. Stone pilasters in upper stage of tower and central lunette. Copper domed roof and lantern Return elevation has two 3-tier mullioned and transomed windows, and oriel window with Ipswich-style glazing at first floor. Rear wing beyond with 3 full-height round arched recessed with tiered mullioned and transomed windows. Fluted brick chimneys. Adjoining the Institute to rear right, the former Technical College (now Leek College of Further Education). Brick with plain-tiled roof. 2 storeys, 3-window range with central gable. Large mullioned and transomed windows, in round-arched recesses to first floor, segmentally-arched to lower storey.

Low-relief plasterwork in tympana. Plain brick pilasters between the windows. Entrance (remodelled) in left-hand bay.

INTERIOR of Institute retains many of the original features, including the entrance hall, the main staircase, and the museum and picture gallery in the attic, and studios on the ground floor with north lights; much of the original joinery and plasterwork remains intact. The technical school extension retains main staircase, moulded plaster tympanum with clock over doorway, and moulded brass memorial. SOURCES: [1] Buildings of England., p.170. [2] Girouard, M., Sweetness and Light, pp.88 and 89.

3 ARCHIVE MATERIALS

3.1 The following section of the Heritage Statement uses a variety of source materials to explore the history and significance of the Carr Gym and Mill Block. The section also looks at the wider context of these buildings and the people who instigated their existence and their uses.

Nicholson Institute

A History of the County of Stafford: Volume 7: Leek and the Moorlands - C R J Currie, M W Greenslade (Editors), A P Baggs, M F Cleverdon, D A Johnston, N J Tringham - 1996

The Nicholson Institute in Stockwell Street was presented to the town by Joshua Nicholson. Conceived c. 1875 as a monument to Richard Cobden, it was opened in 1884 and combined a free library, a museum, three picture galleries, and premises for Leek's school of art. The library contained c. 6,000 volumes chosen by J. O. Nicholson, eldest son of Joshua Nicholson, and was open to all adults living within 6 miles of Leek. From 1887 it was supported from the rates, the town's improvement commissioners having adopted the Public Libraries Act of 1855. Open access to the books had probably been introduced by 1933. The urban district council remained an independent library authority, the smallest in Staffordshire, until local government reorganization in 1974, when the library service was handed over to the county council. From 1974 to 1980 the county council also ran the museum and art gallery under an agency agreement with Staffordshire Moorlands district council, which took direct control in 1980. The museum exhibits and most of the paintings were put into store, where they remained in 1992.

The three-storeyed institute building, which stands back from the street and is partly masked by the 17th-century Greystones, is of brick with stone dressings and was designed in a Queen Anne style by W. Sugden & Son. It has a tower with a domed roof and lantern covered with copper; the base of the tower contains the main entrance, which is approached by a flight of stone steps. A large window in the façade incorporates a row of four stone portrait medallions carved by Stephen Webb. A three-storeyed extension was added in 1900 to house a high school and a silk school; it too was designed by Sugden & Son, with ornamental modelling and lettering by A. Broadbent.

Spirit of Leek – Cathryn Walton & Lindsey Porter

Queen Anne style building of brick with stone dressings – designed by William Sugden. Presented to the town by Joshua Nicholson and opened in 1884.

A History of Leek – M.W. Greenslade

Three large rooms for school of art when opened in 1884. An extension to the Nicholson Institute built in 1900 was partly for a county silk school, which was promoted by several leading mill owners. It was in direct response to a similar school in Macclesfield. In 1901 practical classes in silk dyeing and weaving were started at the new school.

In 1992 Leek College purchased the Carr Gymnasium from the Staffordshire Moorlands District Council.

The Nicholson Institute Leek – Pauline V. Smith

There was a need to “elevate the masses” by the provision of fine literature and art – Joshua Nicholson

‘Style of the building’ – classic Renaissance, and the materials used are thin hard-fired local bricks with black joints, dressings of red Roche and mottled Alton stone, and Broseley tiled roofs. Windows are glazed with faintly tinted antique glass in lead quarries.

Tower of building dominates street, 100 feet high but set back from street frontage.

24 July 1899 the cornerstone of the new educational buildings [the extension] was laid by Millicent, Duchess of Sutherland. It was opened by Prince George & Prince Mary, Duke and Duchess of York. The princess opened the new building, and the foundation stone for the Carr Gymnasium was laid on the same day.

A History of the County of Stafford: Volume 7: Leek and the Moorlands - C R J Currie, M W Greenslade (Editors), A P Baggs, M F Cleverdon, D A Johnston, N J Tringham - 1996

From 1868 the government's Science and Art Department supported a school of art set up that year by the Leek mechanics' institute. A tutor, hired from the art school at Stoke-upon-Trent, held classes at the institute and apparently at the Union Street British school. Attendance was poor, and the classes were abandoned in 1870. In 1874 the institute started new classes in science and art, again in connexion with the Science and Art Department. The art classes, taught by the headmaster of Hanley School of Art, were at first well attended. In 1879 they were moved from the institute to a hired room in Stockwell Street, which was large but badly lit and poorly ventilated. The Science and Art Department threatened to withdraw its grant unless better premises were found. In 1881, when average attendance had fallen to c. 30, Joshua Nicholson was persuaded to add accommodation for an art school to his projected institute at Leek. An independent committee was formed to manage the classes and to superintend their eventual move into the new institute.

When the Nicholson Institute in Stockwell Street was opened in 1884, it included three large rooms for the art school, for which the school's managing committee paid a nominal rent. A headmaster was appointed, and the school was established on a permanent basis. Almost half the cost of the furniture and equipment was raised by a bazaar in the town hall; the rest came from donations, Science and Art Department grants, and the profits of a lecture given by Oscar Wilde. Besides art classes some practical and technical instruction was offered, but in 1890–1 only a few of the 138 students took advantage of it.

The Leek improvement commissioners set up a technical instruction committee in 1889, shortly after the passing of the Technical Instruction Act that year. In 1891 they adopted the Act, and the committee started its own classes in the Nicholson Institute as Leek Technical School, complementing those offered by the committee of what had become Leek School of Art and Science. The Science and Art Department refused to sanction government grants to two separate committees running similar courses in the same building. The school of art and science and the technical school were accordingly merged in 1892, with the approval of the Science and Art Department, as Leek School of Art, Science and Technology. Average weekly attendance rose from 354 in 1892–3 to 694 in 1896–7. It was stated in 1897 that almost two-thirds of the pupils were artisans, clerks, warehousemen, and their children. Pupils included children from local elementary schools sent to the school for practical classes.

An extension to the Nicholson Institute built in 1900 was partly for a county silk school, which was promoted by several leading mill owners. They were irked that Macclesfield had a technical school which provided instruction in silk throwing, spinning, and weaving, while all that Leek offered was a class on the theories of silk dyeing. In 1901 practical classes in silk dyeing and weaving were started at the new school, but despite the pressure and encouragement of employers they aroused little enthusiasm among employees. In 1912–13 the number of pupils on the register was the same as the average attendance in 1902–3, 25 in the weaving classes and 7 in the dyeing. Classes continued as the County School of Hosiery Manufacture and Dyeing in the late 1930s.

Joshua Nicholson

Betty Cooper – The Phoenix Trust 2010 - <http://www.northstaffordshire.co.uk>

Born on October 26th, 1812 at Luddensfoot, a village near Halifax, he was the youngest son of builder Joshua Nicholson senior and his wife Rachel.

Apprenticed to a textile merchant in Bradford, young Joshua studied theology and politics in his spare time. He supported the free trade movement and campaigned for the abolition of the Corn Laws.

In January, 1837, Joshua left Yorkshire and came to Leek when he became a sales consultant for silk manufacturers J. & J. Brough.

A few months later, on September 13th, he married Ellen Oldfield, whose father was a saddler in Wakefield. The couple had four children, a daughter Mary and three sons Joshua junior, Arthur and Harry.

Hardworking and conscientious, Joshua became a partner in the firm. The company changed its name to Brough, Nicholson & Co. and he was made senior partner when the Broughs retired.

The Nicholsons were devout Christians who worshipped at the Congregational Church in Derby Street. Proud of his achievements, Joshua believed that workingmen should be given an education and the opportunity to better themselves. Helped by the Brough brothers, he established the Mechanics Institute in Russell Street where evening classes in art and science were held.

By the 1880s, Leek had 12 schools, including a boys' grammar school established in 1723 and a ragged school opened in 1870. The Mechanics Institute was too small to meet the growing demand for further education and Joshua decided to build the Nicholson Institute in Stockwell Street. Two architects, William Sugden and his son Larner, were employed to design the building whose foundation stone was laid by Joshua's wife Ellen on September 11th, 1882.

A three storey Renaissance style brick building, the Institute cost £20,000. Its front elevation facing Stockwell Street contained stone relief effigies of William Shakespeare, Joshua Reynolds, Isaac Newton and Lord Tennyson carved by sculptor Stephen Webb. The main entrance at the east end was at the base of a tower 100 feet high which had a domed roof covered with copper.

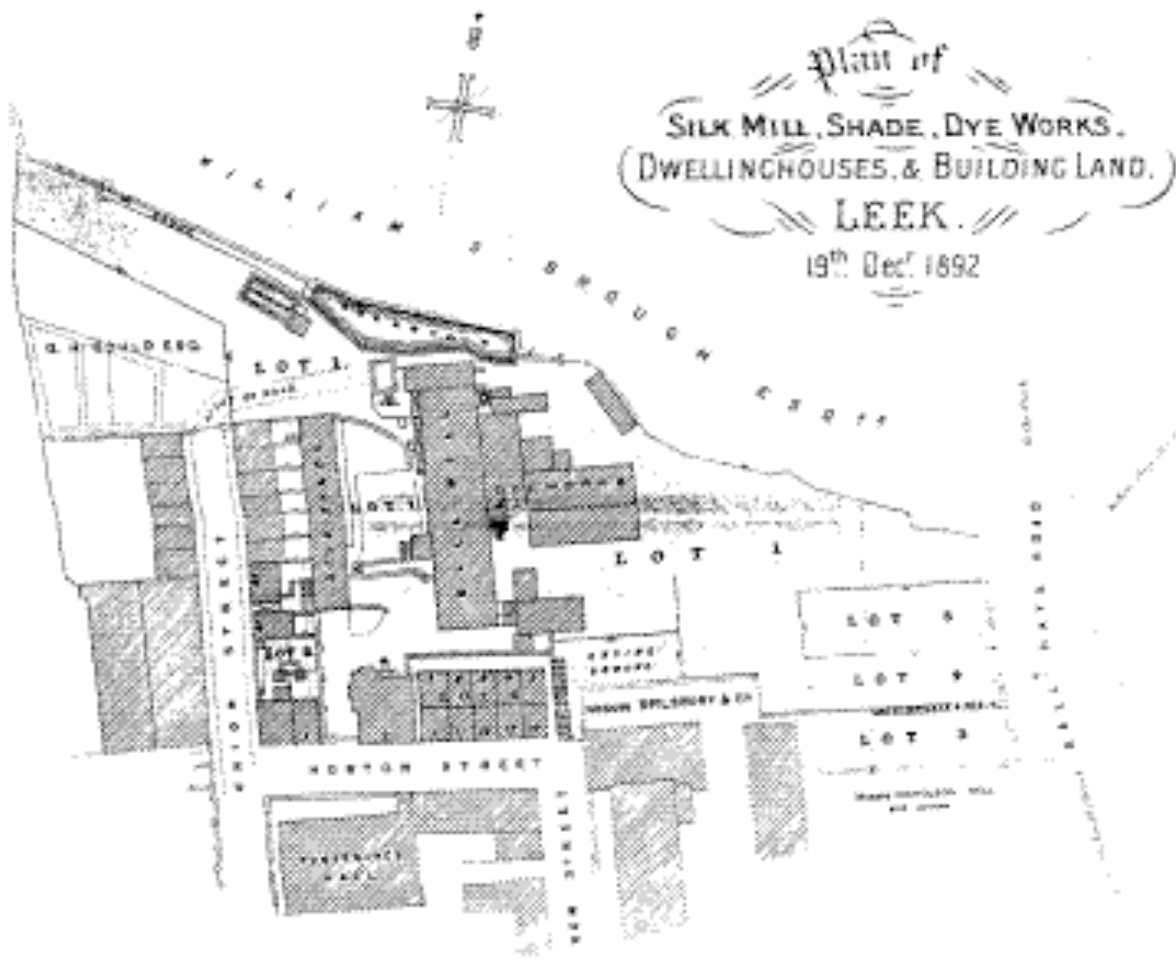
Opened by Staffordshire's Lord Lieutenant, Lord Wrottesley, on October 16th, 1884, the Institute housed a museum and art gallery, an art school and a library. William Hall was the librarian. His salary was £125 a year. The library contained 6,000 books and had a reading room containing newspapers and magazines. An exhibition of paintings by leading artists including Landseer, Rubens and Canaletto was held to celebrate the opening. The North Staffordshire Railway Company supported the exhibition and issued special cheap day return tickets for visitors from the Potteries.

Joshua died aged 72 on August 24th, 1885 and was buried in Leek cemetery.

Mill Block

A History of the County of Stafford: Volume 7: Leek and the Moorlands - C R J Currie, M W Greenslade (Editors), A P Baggs, M F Cleverdon, D A Johnston, N J Tringham - 1996

California Mill, so named by 1892, illustrates the steady concentration of all processes on a single site. Standing in Horton Street, it is claimed to date from the 1820s and to be the oldest brick textile mill still in use in the north of England. It was occupied in the 1830s by Glendinning & Gaunt, who had 10 steam-powered looms there in 1839, having earlier used Ball Haye brook to provide power. By the entrance there was a terrace of 10 back-to-back workers' cottages, evidently in existence by 1838. A shade was added on the Union Street side of the site in the mid 19th century and a dyeworks on the opposite side in the 1880s using water from Ball Haye brook. By 1878 there was a four-bedroomed house by the entrance, and it became the home of William Stannard after he acquired the mill in the early 1880s.



3.2 The map extract from “A History of the County of Stafford: Volume 7: Leek and the Moorlands” shown above details the California Mill and surrounding buildings. It shows the Mill Block in existence, alongside a building of similar footprint also thought to be a Mill (which has recently been demolished). Immediately to the north of the now demolished Mill building stands a row of workers houses fronting onto Union Street. These dwellings have since been demolished and the route now leads to the public car park and Brough Park.

3.3 The text extract which accompanies the map suggests that the Mill Block on the west side of Union Street was an overflow production area as the available land around the California Mill had been built on in the earlier stages of site's growth.



Fig 3.3 Mill Houses taken from The Spirit of Leek: 1 – C Walton and Lindsey Porter

Carr Gym

The Nicholson Institute Leek – Pauline V. Smith

24 July 1899 the cornerstone of the new educational buildings [the extension] was laid by Millicent, Duchess of Sutherland. It was opened by Prince George & Prince Mary, Duke and Duchess of York. The princess opened the new building, and the foundation stone for the Carr Gymnasium was laid on the same day.

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In 1900 the urban district council opened a mixed high school (Leek County High School) in the Nicholson Institute. From 1901 the school used the adjoining Carr gymnasium for extra teaching space as well as for physical training.

William and Larnar Sugden

A History of Leek - Wikipedia

In 1849 William Sugden (b. 1821 in Keighley) came to Leek. He was an architect and his work on the design of the stations for the Churnet Valley Railway brought him to the area. In 1850 William's son, Larnar Sugden, was born. After schooling in Yorkshire, Larnar returned to Leek in 1866 to be apprenticed to his father as an architect, and thus was formed Sugden & Son (Architects. The firm had offices in Derby Street. The building still survives, the ground floor now being occupied by Boots the Chemist.

The architectural output from Sugden & Son was both prolific and varied. Some of the buildings designed by the Sugdens are as follows: the Congregational Church with its 130' spire, (now Trinity Church), built in the Victorian Gothic Revival style (1863), Myatt's Mill in Earl Street (1864), Mill Street Methodist Chapel and Ragged School (1870), the Cottage Hospital, in memory of silk manufacturer James Allsop (1871), their own houses in Queen Street, complete with monograms for William, Larnar and for Larnar's French wife (1877), West Street School (extended in 1881), the District Bank, which exhibits a strong Richard Norman Shaw influence (1882) and the Leonard Street Police Station in Scottish Baronial style (1891). This last was probably the last joint venture of the father-and-son team because William Sugden died in 1892.

The Sugden masterpiece was, perhaps, the Nicholson Institute, built in the Queen Anne style, in 1882. The fact that this building is tucked away behind the 17th century 'Greystones' is an indication of Larnar's regard for old buildings. Larnar incorporated the busts of Shakespeare, Newton, Reynolds and Tennyson into the building representing 400 years of artistic and scientific achievement from the 16th to the 19th century and embracing literature, science, art and poetry.

4 ANALYSIS OF EXISTING BUILDINGS

Mill Block

4.1 The Mill Block to north of the development site is a three storey brick built structure dating from pre 1892. The archive material collated in this Heritage Statement clearly indicates that it was an outlying industrial building associated with the Silk, Shade and Dye Works at California Mill (now demolished).

4.2 The materials are typical of Mill buildings of this type. Imperial red brick walls and a slate pitched roof provide a linear form running on a north/south axis. Fenestration is regularly spaced, with stone lintels and cills giving a strong form to the east and west elevations. A number of openings have been altered, and in some cases closed as the building has needed to adapt to the requirements of modern education.

4.3 There is a considerable levels change across the building. This results in an appearance of a four storey elevation onto Union Street (three of which have fenestration), and a two storey elevation onto the inner courtyard of the College. The difference in levels has also meant the need to add external metal fire escapes and handrails on the west elevation.

4.4 Internally the Mill Block represents little of its original form. In its industrial past the floor spaces would have been wide open to achieve efficiency of manufacturing, and gain greatest benefit from the natural light. The College use of the space has meant sub-division of these spaces, insertion of split level floors, and lobby areas.

4.5 The east elevation of the Mill Block shows paintwork detail up to and including the first floor of windows. This suggests a further building was attached at some stage and has since been demolished. The 1892 extract map shows the footprint of the now demolished building. The footings of which can still be seen from Union Street.



Fig 4.5 East Elevation, Mill Block (A. Carter)



Fig 4.51 West Elevation, Mill Block (A. Carter)

Carr Gymnasium

4.6 The Carr Gymnasium was a gift from William Carr (a Silk and Dye magnate) and was designed by the Sugden and Son architectural partnership. It is most likely that Larnier Sugden designed the structure since his father William had died in 1892. The sculptor A Broadbent added the architectural details, although these are rather limited in comparison to his work on the Nicholson Extension.

4.7 The Gymnasium was opened in 1900 by the Duke of York and was used by Leek High School for physical education but also as overflow teaching facilities. In 1992 the Gymnasium was purchased by Leek College and has remained in use as a sports facility since this date. A decorative plaque detailing the architect, sculptor and date of the opening is positioned near the entrance to the Gymnasium.



Fig 4.7 Decorative plaque to Carr Gym (A. Carter)

4.8 The building has a corner entrance position from the courtyard that is formed by the Nicholson Institute and its later Extension. The entrance is in the form of a hexagonal two storey corner feature, not dissimilar to a stout tower, constructed from stone work and red brick. The main door entrance flows from the stone work, with pillars and a lintel overhang. This 'tower' also offers access to a first floor viewing gallery of the Gymnasium. The remainder of the building's externals are unremarkable, and it is likely that the 'tower' feature was designed in an attempt to give the Gymnasium some presence in the context of the impressive and dominant Nicholson Institute.



Fig 4.8 Entrance Tower to Carr Gym (A. Carter)

4.9 Of note externally is the yellow brick on the west and north elevations of the Gymnasium. This is a material not used locally in great numbers. A semi-circular window offers the only feature of note from the north of the building.



Fig 4.9 North elevation, semi-circular window (A. Carter)

4.10 Internally the Gymnasium is dated, with wooden supporting roof struts and minimal fenestration at a lower level. A large roof light at the central roof pitch offers natural light into the Gymnasium. A stage has been erected at the far side of the building suggesting it has been used for formal occasions and/or assemblies when the Leek High School occupied the space.

4.11 Of note internally is an ornamented plaster ceiling with a representation of the triumph of death. It is understood to have been removed from Hall House (now the Red Lion in the Market Place) which was built by the wealthy Jolliffe family in 1607 and likely the largest timber frame house in the area. The ceiling is thought to date from 1640, it is mounted on the wall of the Gymnasium, but is not integral to the structure of the building and is located adjacent to a think slot, now filled in, that was likley used for the installation.

The College has begun discussions regarding its safe removal and an agreement made with Alison Thomas, Arts Coordinator at Staffordshire Moorlands for the accession of the ceiling as part of the museum collection.



Fig 4.11 Ornamented plaster ceiling with a representation of the triumph of death (A. Carter)

5 HERITAGE PLANNING POLICY

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

5.1 The key extracts from the NPPF are set out below, they provide the tests and considerations that must be undertaken when assessing development proposals through would to the loss or harm of a heritage asset.

Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- *The nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site;*
- *No viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation;*
- *Conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and*
- *The harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use. (Para 133)*

- Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy (emerging document)

5.2 The local planning policy framework is set out by the emerging Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy. From the heritage perspective policy DC2: Historic Environment is key to the proposals.

5.3 The policy seeks to safeguard and where possible enhance the historic environment. This includes listed buildings and conservation areas. To achieve this aim the Local Planning Authority will resist development that would by its nature be harmful, promote development that would respect, enhance and sustain heritage assets, and prevent the loss of heritage assets unless their retention is not viable and their loss is outweighed by the public benefits of the proposals.

6 PROPOSALS AND JUSTIFICATION

6.1 The development proposals for the Leek College campus involve the creation of 1623sqm of new teaching and learning accommodation in the form of a new Engineering Building (subject to a separate application) and a new Art Building. To deliver these modern education facilities the site needs to be rationalised and new development space created. This will involve the demolition of the Mill Block, Carr Gym and the modern extension to the Nicholson Institute.

6.2 The condition of the Mill Block is relatively poor, and its ability to serve the needs of modern education requirements is limited. The College has adapted the building and made the best use of it since the manufacturing processes of dyeing ceased. However the design horizons of the building do not offer a feasible or viable conversion option that would deliver a space capable of achieving 21st century education standards.

6.3 Although it is noted earlier in this Heritage Statement that the Mill Block used to belong to the California Mill complex, the context of the built environment has changed markedly since the silk and dye manufacturing industries dominated this area. The renewal and expansion of the College will provide a significant benefit to Leek and its environs.

6.4 The Carr Gymnasium was the final Sugden and Son completed building on the Nicholson Institute site. As a sports facility it is dated, and offers a limited provision for the College. The building is a rather contrived structure which provides little to the architectural context of the impressive Grade II* Nicholson Institute. The frieze which is currently housed within the building would be relocated to a more appropriate location prior to the demolition of the building. Discussions about the location of the frieze are taking place separately of this planning application and the principle of relocating into the town Museum has been agreed with Alison Thomas, Arts Events Coordinator at Staffordshire Moorlands.

6.5 The removal of the Carr Gymnasium would open up views of the Nicholson Extension and the A. Broadbent low relief plaster decorations which offer considerable visual interest to that building. At present these decorations, which tell the story of the trades and crafts that were taught within the building, are largely hidden from view. The only position to properly view the majority of the plaster decorations on the east elevation of the Nicholson Extension is from the narrow passage that currently exists between the Carr Gymnasium and the extension.



Fig 6.5 East elevation of Nicholson Extension (A.Carter)



Fig 6.5 Dyeing plaster decoration (A.Carter)

6.6 To present the significant architectural merit of the Nicholson Institute and its Extension in the most appropriate setting the proposals include a central landscape 'courtyard' space in the area currently occupied by the Carr Gymnasium and partly occupied by the Mill Block. The removal of these two buildings and other associated non-listed campus structures will provide vista views to the Nicholson Institute from the elevated parts of Brough Park to the north east. These proposals therefore enhance the setting of the listed structure both in its immediate context and from the wider perspective of Brough Park. They also improve the setting of the Leek Conservation Area.

6.7 The landscape improvements together with the opening up of a pedestrian route directly into the site from Stockwell Street would improve the circulation spaces on the campus which are currently narrow and uninviting and what is rather a cramped site. It would also achieve a space for students to move between the buildings and dwell at the informal meeting spaces and surfaces.

6.8 Rationalising the campus through the demolition of the Mill Block and Carr Gymnasium and other non-listed structures also creates an opportunity to relocate the parking spaces which are currently in front of the Nicholson Institute. These vehicles represent visual clutter, which detract from the setting of the listed heritage asset.

6.9 The policy tests within the National Planning Policy Framework and Staffordshire Moorlands' emerging Core Strategy require the loss of heritage assets to be outweighed by the public benefits of the proposals. It is clear that the Mill Block and Carr Gymnasium are of some heritage value, however the condition of the buildings, and their ability to accommodate modern education requirements is relatively poor. Neither building is referenced within the listing details, and as curtilage structures they can be considered secondary to the Nicholson Institute.

6.10 The loss of the Mill Block and Carr Gymnasium will bring significant public benefits to Leek in the form of a new Art Building towards the northern edge of the site. A new Engineering Building is also proposed on land fronting Horton Street, this is subject to a separate planning application, and does not require listed building or conservation area consent. The net result of bringing these two campus buildings forward will create 1623sqm of much improved education and training facilities for Leek. The clear education benefits and the improved setting for the Nicholson Institute are considered to outweigh any negative impacts from the loss of the two curtilage structures.

7 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

7.1 The Nicholson Institute is a Grade II* listed building in the Leek Conservation Area, and is therefore by definition of special architectural and historic interest. The proposals do not include any alterations to this building. The Mill Block and Carr Gymnasium are curtilage structures, and are secondary in their level of importance.

7.2 The loss of the Mill Block and Carr Gymnasium are considered to be outweighed and offset by the significant benefits drawn from new education facilities for Leek College. The removal of these two buildings will also open up the immediate and wider context vistas of the Grade II* Nicholson Institute and present the building in a landscaped setting appropriate for a heritage asset of this quality.