DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

PROPOSAL : **New shopfront and internal alterations**

ADDRESS : **23-25 Derby Street, Leek**

APPLICANT : **Butters John Bee**

DATE : **April 2008** **JOB No.** : **2008-1536**

DESIGN

ASSESSMENT

Assessment Area

The premises are a Grade II Listed Building located in a town centre location. Derby Street is a primary shopping frontage in the Leek Conservation Area. The premises are currently used as a charity shop and are within a terrace of similar shops. Given the nature of the proposal, it is considered that the appropriate Assessment Area should consist of the application building and shop premises within 50m of the application site.

Physical

The physical characteristics of the Assessment Area consist of two and three storeys, generally 19th/early 20th Century former dwellings (some incorporating much earlier original structures) which have been converted into shops. The application building is a wide 3 storey red brick building. It is Listed for group value but is understood to incorporate a 17th Century core. At ground floor there is a wide shop front faced in a black marble thought to have been installed in the late 1970's. The central part of the shop front is set back. The neighbouring buildings are not of a uniform style, but are all constructed with a local dark red brick with a clay tile roof. The buildings either side of the application site have bay windows at first floor; the building to the west has a mock Tudor black and white panel in its gable.

Shopfronts in the Assessment Area are generally modern and comprise a variety of designs and materials. The majority of shopfronts have plinths. Above the glazing, there is no firm pattern to the fascia signs. The fascia to the east is narrow, and the one to the west is particularly deep. Where illumination is present, this is generally externally lit. There are some projecting board signs at first floor level, but not at the application premises.

Where the application proposes the removal of internal walls within the building, these represent modern partition structures.

Economic

The application premises are within the core of town's shopping centre. It is important that the town centre retains its vitality through appropriate investment in existing commercial enterprises.

Planning Policy

The Development Plan for the area comprises the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Conservation Area and the Staffordshire Moorlands Local plan. The **Local Plan** shows the premises located within a Town Centre Shopping Street and therefore subject to Policy S7 which seeks to retain retail frontages. There are no 'saved' Conservation Area and Listed Building Local plan policies. Policy B13 encourages good quality design in proposals.

Paragraph 3.2 of **PPG15 Planning and the Historic Environment** confirms that listed building consent is required for all works, both external and internal, that would affect a building's

special interest. Paragraph 3.3 states that local planning authorities should 'have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses'. Paragraph 3.4 states that applicants for listed building consent must be able to justify their proposals, and that if the works would affect the character of a listed building, they must show why these are desirable or necessary.
Paragraphs 4.19 and 4.20 confirm that planning decisions in respect of development proposed to be carried out in Conservation Areas must give high priority to preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area.

EVALUATION
Planning policy guides the proposed scheme towards one that avoids changes to the historic quality and character of the building, and seeks to enhance the character of the Conservation Area. The application proposes a replacement shopfront and minor internal alterations to the premises.
The existing shopfront is dated and considered to have little historic or architectural merit. The application proposes a shopfront that incorporates historic detailing and proportions that is more appropriate to the qualities of the building and the character of the Conservation Area.
The internal alterations are driven by means of escape legislation and the need to provide comfortable staff services. At present the means of escape from first floor level is via a staircase at the rear of the shop, through the length of the shop to the front door. The proposal is to provide a new escape door at the rear of the shop where there is currently a window. The existing staffroom is very small. It is proposed to remove the kitchen and toilet furniture, remove a stud partition and to make good, and to use this first floor room as a store. The staffroom will be relocated to the front of the first floor and involves the installation of new kitchen units and toilet.
The new floor works relate to the extension of the existing concrete slab to cover the new internal area created at the front of the shop by the reduction of the 'set-back' in the existing shopfront.

DESIGN
General
The application proposes a new shopfront with the same overall dimensions. Within that framework, the scheme proposes a slight reduction in the depth of the fascia from 0.8m to 0.75m. The shopfront glazing is proposed to take on a vertical emphasis incorporating a larger number of narrower sections. The proposal will incorporate a set back entrance, but smaller than the current scheme. The design includes a glazed fanlight which will incorporate an etched property number. It also incorporates a stallriser in a brick to match. The application also proposes decorated timber pilasters and corbels.
The proposed internal alterations are at a minor scale and do not effect the historic features of the building.
It is considered that the proposed scheme complies with conservation and listed building policy by resulting in a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the application building and enhancing the Leek Conservation Area.

ACCESS

VEHICULAR AND TRANSPORT LINKS
These are not affected by the proposal.

INCLUSIVE ACCESS
Floor levels at the proposed new shop doorway will provide suitable access for less abled people.