

**STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE**

25th April 2024

Application No:	SMD/2024/0103	
Location	Nicholson Institute Stockwell Street Leek Staffordshire ST13 6DW	
Proposal	Application for Listed Building Consent for a programme of maintenance required for the lower ground floor of the Nicholson Institute building	
Applicant	Staffordshire Moorlands District Council	
Agent	Spellers Metcalfe	
Parish/ward	Leek	Date registered 12/3/24
If you have a question about this report please contact: Jane Curley jane.curley@staffsmoorlands.gov.uk.		

REFERRAL

This application is brought to the Planning Applications Committee as the applicant is SMDC. It is a Regulation 3 application under the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992 (i.e. the application is the Council's own development)

1. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE subject to conditions

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

2.1 This application relates to the lower ground floor only of the Nicholson Institute which is a Grade II* Listed building designed by local architects W Sugden and Son. It was built in 1884 as a library, museum, art gallery and school of art. Among the exterior architectural features of interest are a set of tableaux depicting activities at the school and a clock recessed into the lintel over the entrance door.

2.2 Historically the lower ground floor was used by Leek School of Art but this area has been vacant for some time and it is said to be unusable due to damp. It is this lower ground floor area to which the application relates

2.3 In 2023 the Council was successful in a bid to the Government's Levelling Up fund and was awarded £17.1m to regenerate Leek town centre. The refurbishment works to the lower ground floor of the Nicholson form one of the projects that the funding will be used to deliver.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL

3.1 This is a Listed Building consent application for internal and external repair and refurbishment works to the lower ground floor only of the building. The application is accompanied by a Heritage Statement which includes at Appendix 2 a separate report prepared by Cannon and Clarke specialists in structural damp issues for information purposes only

3.2 Details of the application including the plans, drawings, reports, consultation responses and letters received from local residents can be viewed at:
<http://publicaccess.staffs Moorlands.gov.uk/portal/servlets/ApplicationSearchServlet?PKID=177874>

4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

SMD/2017/0240 Commemorative blue heritage style plaque to front wall. Approved

SMD/2008/0036 Structural stabilisation and repairs. Approved

SMD/2008/0002 Internal alterations – replacement lighting, stud wall to form store, redecoration works, installation of bespoke lighting and hanging system for art displays. Approved

SMD/2007/0798 Installation of lift. Approved

5. PLANNING POLICIES RELEVANT TO THE DECISION

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (adopted September 2020)

- SS1 Development Principles
- SS5 Leek strategy
- SD1 Sustainable Use of Resources
- DC1 Design Considerations
- DC 2 Heritage

National Planning Policy NPPF

National Planning Policy Guidance

6. CONSULTATIONS CARRIED OUT

Site Notice expired.

Neighbours notified by letter. No letters of objection received

Town Council

No comments received

Conservation Officer

Does not see any contentious issues with the scheme therefore raises no objections subject to the following conditions and advisories:

7. OFFICER COMMENT AND PLANNING BALANCE

7.1 The issue to consider in this application is whether the proposed works will have an acceptable impact on the significance of this designated heritage asset

7.2 The Conservation Officer has carefully considered the application and the Heritage Statement which details the works proposed and assesses the impact on the significance of the building. It also includes a Maintenance schedule at Appendix 1. Taking each item listed therein the following assessment is provided, noting that some of these works amount to works of maintenance rather than works requiring consent. They are included clarity and completeness.

- a) Sandstone lintels to external vent openings in courtyard area to be replaced like for like.

Comment: No issue raised subject to condition to secure stone sample and mortar specification

- b) Ground level to be lowered in the planted area of the courtyard by 150mm to alleviate a damp problem.

Comment: This is a welcome element as it will alleviate a lot of the existing moisture issues. No issue raised

- c) Removal of non-breathable paint to internal brick walls and joinery.

Comment: As the Heritage Statement notes, not only is this unsightly but it has been applied to internal surfaces causing moisture to become trapped behind the paintwork. The Conservation Officer has no objection to the removal of the paint subject to a condition to secure a method statement for this to include a mortar specification for any pointing that may come detached as the paint is removed. She also requires that any new paint applied be subject to the written approval of the LPA. No new paint should be applied until the area has fully dried out.

- d) Overhauling of the windows including the two large cast iron windows to the courtyard elevation

Comment: The Heritage Statement notes that the windows are in poor condition and confirms that a specialist window contractor is to be engaged. The restoration will entail replacing broken glass and remediating the bowing sections of leadwork to ensure they are fully operational and water tight. The two large cast iron windows to the courtyard elevation will be carefully removed and taken offsite for restoration. The window frames will be sand blasted to remove all of the paint and corrosion. Doing so will allow for a detailed condition inspection of the iron frames. The full scope of the required remedial work will then be established. The opening lights will be cleared of corrosion and the hinges and catches will be restored to full working order.

The Conservation Officer has no objection to this subject to a condition to control joinery/unit details, materials, colour code and types of unit including any opening mechanisms. She says opening mechanisms should match the original. She particularly notes that the two largest window units have small and unusual openers suited to the character and span of the windows. She says details need to outline which glazing is to be kept/matched as obscure glass if at all, and what type of glazing for all (double/single/HistoGlass etc).

- e) Overhauling of the rainwater goods and timber fascia – cleaning out, redecoration.

Comment No issue raised.

- f) Overhauling of the lead roof above the two large cast iron windows – removal of moss and insertion of mesh to vents

Comment No issue raised

- g) Redecoration of wall vents

Comment A purely cosmetic measure; part of the long term maintenance. No issue raised

- h) Redecoration of the external cast iron wall vents

Comment No issue raised

- i) Refurbishment of the parquet flooring

Comment The Heritage Statement refers to this being sanded back and re treated with any damaged sections replaced. The Conservation Officer notes that the flooring is not in a particularly bad state to require any substantial refurbishment. She says it is simply patina and part of the character. She advises that a condition be imposed to control any sanding of the parquet flooring as she says it is vulnerable to shredding once the top layers are removed and this poses vulnerability in the long term. She advises that the condition include for a small test piece on one slip before any works, clarification as to whether the sanding would be by hand or machine and for details of any aftercare once any sanding is completed. With a suitable condition to provide this detail and control the extent of any refurbishment work to the parquet floor, no issue is raised

- j) Restoration of the cabinets – wall cabinets to carefully removed, overhauled and re-instated

Comment The Conservation Officer supports this. The cabinets are part of the buildings legible history and character. Clarification is being sought on the original worktops which are under the larger windows and form part of the fittings and fixtures adjacent to the original window cills and vents. The Conservation Officer says that they should be included in this consideration

7.3 In addition to the above items which are all detailed in the Heritage Statement, Appendix 2 of the Heritage Statement provides a report on structural damp issues in the building by specialists Cannon and Clarke. The report is submitted for information purposes only. Much of the work listed above forms part of the recommendations made by the specialists i.e. remove internal paint, lower external ground levels , overhaul the windows, clear out vents/drains etc. The damp proof report recommends further action if, as the Heritage Statement notes, the programme of maintenance for which approval is now sought is not successful in conserving the fabric of the building. These items do not form part of the schedule of works and for the avoidance of any doubt a condition to confirm this is recommended.

7.4 To conclude this is a welcome application. The works proposed will hopefully prevent any further deterioration of the fabric of the building, maintain and enhance its architectural significance and enable it to be brought back into beneficial use. A recommendation of approval is therefore made.

8. RECOMMENDATION

That Listed Building Consent be granted subject to the following conditions:-

1. The works hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this consent.

Reason: To comply with Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004 and Section 18 of the Listed Buildings Act.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:-

Location Plan (dated 29th Feb 2024)

Lower Ground Floor plan (Midland Survey Limited)

Existing North Elevation (Midland Survey Limited)

Existing East Elevation (Midland Survey Limited)

Heritage Statement February 2024

Reason:- For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3. No work shall commence on any paint removal of internal walls until such time that a Method Statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Method Statement should include:-

a) method for removal of paint

b) details of repointing if required with mortar specification

The works shall thereafter be carried out strictly in accordance with the agreed Method Statement

Reason:- To protect the fabric and integrity of the Listed building

4. No works for the replacement of any lintels (para 4.2 of Heritage Statement) shall take place until such time that a sample of the stone and mortar specification has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The stone sample shall be demonstrated in both wet and dry state. The works shall thereafter be carried out strictly in accordance with the agreed details

Reason:- To protect the character and integrity of the Listed building

4. No new paint shall be applied to any walls unless and until full details of the paint, application method and proposed use/design of the respective space has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Any new paint applied shall be done strictly in accordance with the agreed details

Reason:- To protect the fabric and integrity of the Listed building

5. Prior to any works of repair/refurbishment to the windows, full details shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority which shall include but not limited to:-

a) full joinery/unit details

b) materials

c) colour codes

d) type of unit

e) opening mechanism – to match the original as far as possible.

f) glazing type (double/single/histogram, obscure, clear for example)

The works shall thereafter be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved details

Reason:- To protect the character and integrity of the Listed building

6. No works for the refurbishment of the parquet flooring shall commence until such time that the following have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority:-

- a) Extent of flooring requiring refurbishment**
- b) Test piece of a chosen sanding system to be undertaken on one slip**
- c) Clarification as to the sanding will be by hand or machine**
- d) Full details of any aftercare**

Reason:- To protect the fabric and integrity of the Listed building

7. No permission is hereby implied or given for works referred to in the Damp proof report by Cannan and Clarke (Appendix 2 Heriatge Statement) which is provided for information purposes, save for those works included in the Heriatge Satatement and Maintenace schedule (Appendix 1)

Reason:- For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of protecting the fabric and integrity of the Listed building from harmful interventions

INFORMATIVE

- 1. The development is considered to be sustainable form of development in line with the provisions of thre NPPF**

B. In the event of any changes being needed to the wording of the Committee's decision (such as to delete, vary or add conditions/in formatives/planning obligations or reasons for approval/refusal) prior to the decision being issued, the Head of Development Services has delegated authority to do so in consultation with the Chairman of the Planning Applications Committee, provided that the changes do not exceed the substantive nature of the Committee's Decision.

