

REPORT SUMMARY

REFERENCE NO - 22/02788/LBC			
APPLICATION PROPOSAL Listed Building Consent: Removal of a stud wall between rooms 119 and 119A of the Town Hall to return to the room to its original design			
ADDRESS Town Hall Mount Pleasant Road Royal Tunbridge Wells Kent TN1 1RS			
RECOMMENDATION GRANT subject to conditions (see section 11.0 of report for full recommendation)			
SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposal would not result in a harmful impact to the listed building and would therefore sustain its significance as a heritage asset; Other issues raised have been assessed and there are not any which would warrant refusal of the application or which cannot be satisfactorily controlled by condition. 			
INFORMATION ABOUT FINANCIAL BENEFITS OF PROPOSAL The following are considered to be material to the application: Contributions (to be secured through Section 106 legal agreement/unilateral undertaking): N/A Net increase in numbers of jobs: N/A Estimated average annual workplace salary spend in Borough through net increase in numbers of jobs: N/A The following are not considered to be material to the application: Estimated annual council tax benefit for Borough: N/A Estimated annual council tax benefit total: N/A Estimated annual business rates benefits for Borough: N/A			
REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE Tunbridge Wells Borough Council are the landowners and the applicants (under Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992)			
WARD Park	PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL N/A	APPLICANT Tunbridge Wells Borough Council AGENT Mr Sam Clee	
DECISION DUE DATE 10/11/22	PUBLICITY EXPIRY DATE 14/10/22	OFFICER SITE VISIT DATE Various	
RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY (including appeals and relevant history on adjoining sites):			
22/01156/LDLB	Lawful Development Certificate (Proposed Works to a Listed Building): Repair and decoration works to all sash windows (other than those repaired and decorated during the emergency works of 2020) within the Town Hall and Assembly Hall Theatre	Granted	30/06/22
21/03715/LBC	Listed Building Consent: Installation of helical bars to the external brick wall on roof J	Granted	08/04/22

20/00114/LDLB	Lawful Development Certificate (Proposed Works to a Listed Building) – Repairs or replacement of timber sash windows (see schedule of works)	Granted	17/04/20
12/02781/LBC	Listed Building Consent - Installation of a stand-by generator on new concrete plinth in courtyard of Town Hall; fuel supply line from adjacent road; Installation of cabling and switchgear to connect generator to existing electrical distribution circuits	Granted	04/12/12
11/01946/LBC	Listed Building Consent: Alterations to widen existing door opening	Granted by Secretary of State	16/09/11
06/02275/LBC	Listed Building Consent - Removal of toilet fittings and partitions from Room 5	Granted	07/09/06
04/01639/LBC	Listed Building Consent - Alterations to existing disabled toilet on ground floor	Granted	18/08/04
04/01569/LBC	Listed Building Consent - Conversion of storage room to training room	Granted	30/07/04
03/03119/LBC	Listed Building Consent - Alterations to gents WC on first floor. Alterations to mayors store to provide disabled WC	Granted	19/03/04
03/00323/LBC	Listed Building Consent - Proposed electric warm air heaters in main entrance and planning/housing entrance	Granted	16/04/03
97/01730/LBC	Listed Building Consent - Alteration to housing advice reception area	Called in by Secretary of State	03/02/98
97/00658/LBC	Listed Building Consent - Installation of a platform stairlift for wheelchair access to Council Chamber	Granted	08/08/97
96/00266/LBC	Listed Building Consent - to extend existing glasshouse at first floor level to form additional offices	Granted	24/07/96
96/00265/TWB RG3	Regulation 3 (TWBC) - First floor extension to glasshouse to provide offices	Granted	19/06/96
81/00668/FUL	Extension on roof of Town Hall to provide additional offices	Granted	07/08/81

MAIN REPORT

1.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 1.01 The Town Hall is sited in a prominent location on the north-east corner of the central cross-roads formed by Church Road, Crescent Road and Mount Pleasant Road in Royal Tunbridge Wells. The building was purpose built for local government administration. The complex accommodates Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.
- 1.02 The Town Hall was listed at Grade II in 1995 and the Historic England list description is as follows:

“Town Hall. Built in 1939, one of a series of linked municipal buildings designed by Percy Thomas and Ernest Prestwich after a competition in 1934. Neo-Georgian with “Moderne” details. Brown brick in Flemish bond with Portland stone dressings, band

below cornice and band above plinth. Flat roof. Symmetrical building of 2 storeys of splayed shape. Centre has 3 bays. Centre has raised parapet with shield and the motto "Do well Doubt not", flanked by giant pilasters and giant round-headed window with balcony and stone architrave with double doors. Two flights of stone steps with circular planters by doorcase and rectangular planters by steps. One 20-pane sash on each side. Seven sashes to right side elevation and 12 to left. Interior has marble staircase of white marble with black marble plinth and coping. Giant stylised pilasters and gilded stylised Greek Key decoration to cornice. Original circular and half-cylindrical light fittings. Council Chamber has Greek Key design to ceiling and balcony. Domed vestibule."

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.01 Listed Building Consent is sought for the removal of an internal non-structural stud wall on the first floor of the building, on the northern wing between rooms 119 and 119A. The wall is not an original feature and was added at some point after the building was originally constructed and brought in to use, around the 1970s/1980s. As the works are internal only planning permission is not required.

3.0 SUMMARY INFORMATION

Not applicable due to nature of works

4.0 PLANNING CONSTRAINTS

Grade II listed building (*statutory duty to preserve or enhance the significance of heritage assets under the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990*)

5.0 POLICY AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021)
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Tunbridge Wells Borough Core Strategy 2010
Core Policy 4: Environment

Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan 2006
Policy EN1: Environment

Submission Local Plan 2022
Policy EN5: Heritage Assets

6.0 LOCAL REPRESENTATIONS

- 6.01 A site notice was displayed at the site entrance to the Town Hall. The application was also publicised in the local press.
- 6.02 No representations have been received in response.
- 6.03 The Agenda containing this report has been published after the date on the site notice expired (this was 8th October 2022) but before the date shown in the newspaper advertisement expires (14th October 2022). Any comments received after the publication of this Agenda, but before the date of the Committee meeting, will be verbally reported to Members at that meeting.

7.0 CONSULTATIONS

Principal Conservation Officer

- 7.01 **(16/09/2022)** - have reviewed the application drawings and supporting documents. The proposal is to remove a single timber and plasterboard wall between two small rooms.
- 7.02 This proposal seeks the removal of a non structural stud and plasterboard wall. This wall was not part of the original design layout of the building where it appears all internal subdividing walls are of solid construction. The interior of the building has seen many alterations including the removal of masonry walls and the insertion of both masonry and stud and plasterboard walls. Having reviewed the planning history there are a number of occasions where installation of new partitions have received listed building consent. There are no details on these files. A 2003 application to works to the first floor show this wall in existence at that time. There are no listed building consent applications prior to 2003.
- 7.03 The application includes a drawing that seems to show the original layout of this part of the building. This makes sense as the roof lantern which currently spans two rooms is placed centrally within the room shown on this early plan.
- 7.04 Given that the wall to be removed is a later insertion, conflicts with the existing roof lantern and is of easily removed stud and plasterboard, Suggest that the works would not cause harm to the significance of the building.

8.0 APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING COMMENTS *(taken from Statement of Significance)*

- 8.01 The stud wall was likely erected in the 1970's or 1980's in order to create two small offices. Therefore, the materials being removed are not significant.
- 8.02 An original municipal drawing of the Town Hall layout is included in the application pack. Titled 'Original drawing of 1st floor with open plan office', the drawing shows that by removing the stud wall the layout of the office will be returned to its original 1930's design. This will have a positive impact on the historic fabric of the building

9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS AND PLANS

- 9.01 Statement of Significance
Application form
A3P22 E1 A Existing First Floor Plan
A3K1M PL01 Site Location Plan
CIV003 Existing First Floor Plan
Photographs x 2

10.0 APPRAISAL

Impact upon the special character of the Grade II listed building

- 10.01 NPPF Para 199 states that *'When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.'*

- 10.02 Para 200 further advises; *‘Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.’*
- 10.03 Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) requires the local planning authority to 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.
- 10.04 The wall was likely to have been installed in the 1970s/1980s, before the building was listed in 1995. It is a modern intervention which detracts from the significance of the building as it subdivides a space which was originally designed to be one room. As wholly internal works, the wall would not have required planning permission.
- 10.05 The comments of the Principal Conservation Officer carry significant weight in the determination of this application. In their view the works to remove the modern stud wall will not cause any harm to the significance of the listed building. Thus it would sustain that significance.
- 10.06 On that basis, it is recommended that listed building consent is granted.

11.0 RECOMMENDATION – GRANT subject to the following conditions;

- (1) The development to which this consent relates shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this decision.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

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

A3P22 E1 B (Proposed First Floor Layout)

Reason: To clarify which plans are approved.

Case Officer: Richard Hazelgrove

NB For full details of all papers submitted with this application please refer to the relevant Public Access pages on the council’s website.

The conditions set out in the report may be subject to such reasonable change as is necessary to ensure accuracy and enforceability.