

## REPORT SUMMARY

<b>REFERENCE NO - 22/03217/LBC</b>			
<b>APPLICATION PROPOSAL</b> Listed Building Consent - Install new vision panels in all doors throughout the Town Hall, install acoustic infills in door openings			
<b>ADDRESS</b> Town Hall Mount Pleasant Road Royal Tunbridge Wells Kent TN1 1RS			
<b>RECOMMENDATION</b> GRANT subject to conditions (see section 11.0 of report for full recommendation)			
<b>SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proposal would not result in a harmful impact to the listed building and would therefore sustain its significance as a heritage asset.</li> </ul>			
<b>INFORMATION ABOUT FINANCIAL BENEFITS OF PROPOSAL</b>			
The following are considered to be material to the application:			
<b>Contributions (to be secured through Section 106 legal agreement/unilateral undertaking): N/A</b>			
<b>Net increase in numbers of jobs: N/A</b>			
<b>Estimated average annual workplace salary spend in Borough through net increase in numbers of jobs: N/A</b>			
The following are not considered to be material to the application:			
<b>Estimated annual council tax benefit for Borough: N/A</b>			
<b>Estimated annual council tax benefit total: N/A</b>			
<b>Estimated annual business rates benefits for Borough: N/A</b>			
<b>REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE</b>			
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council are the landowners and the applicants (under Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992)			
<b>WARD</b> Park	<b>PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL</b> N/A	<b>APPLICANT</b> Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Property And Estates <b>AGENT</b> N/A	
<b>DECISION DUE DATE</b> 28/12/22	<b>PUBLICITY EXPIRY DATE</b> 02/12/22	<b>OFFICER SITE VISIT DATE</b> Various	
<b>RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY (including appeals and relevant history on adjoining sites):</b>			
22/02788/LBC	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	Granted	20/10/22
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 following;
- New vision panels to be installed within all existing timber flush doors
  - New acoustic partitions to be installed within a number of existing door openings on the first floor
- 2.02 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 24<sup>th</sup> November 2022) but before the date shown in the newspaper advertisement expires (2<sup>nd</sup> December 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 (11/11/22) - There are two separate proposals.
- 7.02 Firstly, the installation of vision panels within the doors. Most of these doors appear to be original to the building in original door sets. Requirements for office health and safety have moved on since the buildings construction and while the Building Regulations cannot be enforced in retrospect, any proposals to upgrade would be subject to compliance. It has been noted that some doors have previously been upgraded with vision panels and a variety of methods have been used. These previous alterations have not had an impact on the buildings significance but do provide positive safety benefits.
- 7.03 The proposal is to cover all remaining doors within the building so that there is a level of consistency to prevent the current slightly diverse methods of installation. The second proposal is the replacement of a number of doors, or the infill of door openings where does no longer exist with an acoustic fill. The proposal allows for all door sets to be retained insitu and no alteration to the frames themselves. While this is an alteration that affects the character of the building, the alteration itself will not cause harm to the significance of the building.
- 7.04 On the basis of the above, would raise no objection to the proposals from a heritage perspective.

## **8.0 APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING COMMENTS (taken from heritage statement)**

- 8.01 The reason for the proposed door alterations to fit vision panels is that the Town Hall is being refurbished to enable private companies and individual to rent or lease office space. The existing doors do not comply with the current Building Regulations Approved Document K which requires all doors to have vision panels in specific locations. The proposals will, where possible, upgrade the existing doors to comply with the regulations.
- 8.02 The new acoustic infill panels in the existing door openings will increase acoustic privacy which will be necessary when Tunbridge Wells Borough Council relocate staff to the first floor area as some rooms will be quiet areas or confidential areas.
- 8.03 The proposals are considered to be necessary to update the existing offices to current modern office standards and will cause less than substantial harm to the listed building.

## **9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS AND PLANS**

- 9.01 Application form  
Design, Access and Heritage Statement  
A3P22 E3 A Existing Door Details  
A3P22K1 E1 B Existing First Floor Plan

## **10.0 APPRAISAL**

### **Impact upon the special architectural or historic interest 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 works are relatively minor and are necessary for compliance with the current Building Regulations. The new acoustic infill panels in the existing door openings will increase acoustic privacy for rooms intended to be quiet areas or confidential areas.
- 10.05 The comments of the Principal Conservation Officer carry significant weight in the determination of this application. In their view the works 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:

A3P22K1 P6 A Proposed Vision Panels  
A3P22K1 P7 A Proposed Acoustic Partitions

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.