

REPORT SUMMARY

REFERENCE NO - 23/00807/LBC			
APPLICATION PROPOSAL Listed Building Consent - Installation of a damp-proof membrane to wall of corridor leading to public viewing gallery (corridor wall, return walls and ceiling); Installation of moisture resistant plasterboards over aluminium studwork with all new boards to be plastered			
ADDRESS Town Hall, Mount Pleasant Road, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN1 1RS			
RECOMMENDATION - Grant subject to conditions (see section 11 of the Report for the full recommendation)			
SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The proposed works are considered to be proportionate.• The proposed works would not harm the significance of the Grade II listed building.			
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 N/A	
DECISION DUE DATE 26/06/23	PUBLICITY EXPIRY DATE 19/05/23	OFFICER SITE VISIT DATE Various (external)	
RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY (including appeals and relevant history on adjoining sites):			
23/00420/FULL	Change of use from Council Offices to a mixed use of Council Offices and Class E(g) (i) Co-Working Space and Café	Granted	23/03/23
22/03217/LBC	Listed Building Consent - Install new vision panels in all doors throughout the Town Hall, install acoustic infills in door openings	Granted	08/12/22
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	Granted	20/10/22

	design		
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	Called in by Secretary of State - Granted	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
99/01470/ADV	Advertisement - Non illuminated banner-type sign to be located on footpath in civic way	Granted	22/09/99
97/01730/LBC	Listed Building Consent - Alteration to housing advice reception area	Called in by Secretary of State - Granted	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/TWBRG3	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 DESCRIPTION OF SITE

- 1.01 This application relates to the Town Hall which provides Local Government Offices for Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. It has frontages along Crescent Road and Mount Pleasant Road. It is Grade II Listed.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.01 Listed building consent is sought for the installation of a damp-proof membrane to the wall of corridor leading from the stairs by the main entrance to the public viewing gallery within the Council Chamber (corridor wall, return walls and ceiling) as well as the installation of moisture resistant plasterboards over the aluminium studwork, with all new boards to be plastered.

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)

Development Plan:
Tunbridge Wells Core Strategy 2010:
Core Policy 4 - Environment

Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan 2006:
Policy EN1 - General development criteria

Tunbridge Wells Borough Submission Local Plan 2020-2038
Policy EN1: Sustainable Design
Policy EN5: Heritage Assets

6.0 LOCAL REPRESENTATIONS

- 6.01 Three site notices were displayed on 19 April 2023. One was displayed by the exit door on Monson Way, and the other two on Civic Way.
- 6.02 The application was also advertised in a local newspaper.
- 6.03 No representations have been received in response.

7.0 CONSULTATIONS

Principal Conservation Officer

- 7.01 **(09/05/23):** have reviewed the application drawings and supporting documents.
- 7.02 The proposal is for a membrane and false wall to be erected to allow for the cosmetic redecoration of the space. The water ingress and damp problems are significant and

have occurred over a significant time period. While earlier repairs were not done in the most appropriate materials, it is likely that the problem would remain even with the use of a plaster mix to match the original. The existing mortar and intricacy of the brickwork are an issue in achieving weather tightness. The existing mortar is a Portland cement mix with some lime and a sand base. It is not a particularly breathable mix and re-pointing may not resolve the issue on its own.

- 7.03 While the proposal is a relatively major intervention for a damp issue in this location, it is proportionate to the current problem and will allow for the area to be reused.
- 7.04 On the basis of the above, would raise no objection from a heritage perspective.
- 7.05 Would seek a condition for details at a scale of 1:10 for the installation including at the floor junction and the ceiling junction.

8.0 APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING COMMENTS

- 8.01 The Design & Access Statement sets out that the corridor leading to the public viewing gallery has high levels of damp, and has been intermittently repaired over the last 10-20 years. The situation has become worse and the plaster is no longer able to be repaired. This continues, stating that encapsulating the wall within a stud wall system and being covered by a Newton membrane would enable the new surface of the wall to be damp free without making large changes to the existing wall.
- 8.02 The works are required to make the corridor usable.
- 8.03 The Design & Access Statement discusses that the outside of the wall is constructed at first floor level from unusual brick profiles and also has several corbels, shelves and other innate design details which would make re-pointing an expensive task to be carried out by a specialist. Whilst it is proposed to undertake a re-pointing programme for the whole of Town Hall, it is acknowledged that this is not in the immediate future, and so carrying out these works in the interim would allowed the continued use of corridor.

9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS AND PLANS

Application Form;
Drawing Number A3K1M PL01 – Location Plan (received 27/03/23)
Public Viewing Gallery New Wall Build Up Plan (received 27/03/23)
Public Viewing Gallery Corridor (received 27/03/23)
3x Photographs of Public Viewing Gallery Corridor (received 27/03/23)
Design & Access Statement (received 27/03/23)

10.0 APPRAISAL

Impact upon the special architectural or historic interest of the Grade II listed building

- 10.01 NPPF Paragraph 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 Paragraph 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 Paragraph 202 states: *'Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.'*
- 10.04 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. The works are internal, and therefore planning permission is not required for the work.
- 10.05 The comments from the Principal Conservation Officer carry significant weight in the determination of this application. In their view, the proposed works are proportionate to the current problem and will allow for the area to be reused. They do not consider that a harmful impact will arise from the proposed works.
- 10.06 No objections are therefore raised from a heritage perspective, subject to the addition of the suggested condition (as below).
- 10.07 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:

Public Viewing Gallery New Wall Build Up Plan (received 27/03/23)

Reason: To clarify which plans have been approved.

- (3) Notwithstanding the submitted drawings and all supporting documentation, prior to commencement of the works hereby approved, the following details shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority;

a) Full detail sections and elevations to a scale of 1:10 for the installation including of the proposed floor and ceiling junctions.

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

Reason: To preserve the character and historic fabric of the building.

Case Officer: Abby Shillingford

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.