

REPORT SUMMARY

REFERENCE NO - 23/01546/LBC			
APPLICATION PROPOSAL			
Listed Building Consent: Construction of new internal walling			
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.• The proposal would allow the re-use of a building within the town centre for flexible office purposes;• 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 (under Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992)			
WARD Park	PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL N/A	APPLICANT Mrs Mandy Weston AGENT N/A	
DECISION DUE DATE 04/08/23	PUBLICITY EXPIRY DATE 07/07/23	OFFICER SITE VISIT DATE Various	
RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY (including appeals and relevant history on adjoining sites):			
23/00807/LBC	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	Pending consideration	

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 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/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 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 to install internal partitioning within various rooms at basement and ground floor level.
- 2.02 This LBC application follows the grant of planning permission for 'Change of use from Council Offices to a mixed use of Council Offices and Class E(g) (i) Co-Working Space and Café' granted earlier this year (ref: 23/00420/FULL). That permission involved the change of use of the building to a mixed use, combining local authority administrative offices (and associated civic meetings and functions) with use by a company which lets office 'co-working space'. It did not permit any internal alterations.
- 2.03 Specifically, the proposed internal works for which LBC is now sought are as follows;
- Within room LG29 (basement) and rooms 10, 18/19 and 25 (ground floor): the use of a demountable non-load bearing, light weight performance office partitioning system.
 - Within room 32 (ground floor - the former finance hall) - removing existing partitioning (which in itself does not require LBC owing to its design and method of fixing); and installing new partitioning as shown in the attached drawing. This will be made up of fixed full and some glass partitioning. This is the proposed coworking and coffee shop space.

2.04 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 side entrance to the Town Hall. The application was also publicised in the local press.

6.02 No representations have been received in response.

7.0 CONSULTATIONS

Principal Conservation Officer

7.01 **(04/07/23)** - The proposal is for the insertion of a number of lightweight partitions within the office areas of the town hall. These areas were designed to be reasonably flexible spaces with a mix of small and larger office spaces. The significance of the building would therefore remain unaffected by the additions and therefore there would be no harm.

7.02 On the basis of the above, would raise no objections from a heritage perspective.

8.0 APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING COMMENTS

None submitted

9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS AND PLANS

Application form

Site Location Plan

Conservation Statement

A3P22K1 AP1 Proposed Basement Floor Plan

A3P22K1 AP2 Proposed Ground Floor Plan

Appendix 1 Proposed Works Details

Appendix 2 Proposed Basement Floor Plan

Appendix 3 System 4000 Partitioning details

Appendix 4 Siniat Smartmix Technical Data Sheet

Appendix 5 Gyproc EasiFill 60 Product Data Sheet

Appendix 6 Proposed Ground Floor Plan

Appendix 7 Detailed Co Working Plan

Appendix 8 Apton Quartz Glazed Partition System doors

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 to enable the implementation of the co-working office space granted permission earlier this year. The scheme would allow individuals, likely operating as sole traders and micro/small-medium enterprises to rent a desk/meeting room for a period of time (typically daily/weekly). This included provision of smaller offices, plus a small coffee shop area that will be open to anyone working in the building and the general public for light refreshments.
- 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 AP1	Proposed Basement Floor Plan
A3P22K1 AP2	Proposed Ground Floor Plan
Appendix 1	Proposed Works Details
Appendix 2	Proposed Basement Floor Plan
Appendix 3	System 4000 Partitioning details
Appendix 4	Siniat Smartmix Technical Data Sheet
Appendix 5	Gyproc EasiFill 60 Product Data Sheet
Appendix 7	Detailed Co Working Plan
Appendix 8	Apton Quartz Glazed Partition System doors

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.